

A talk regarding the stewardship of gifts,  
presented on October 2, 2011 at the 10:30am Sunday Service  
in St. John's Episcopal Church, West Hartford, CT  
by Dr. Geoffrey Emerick

Good morning. I'm here representing the stewardship committee, but instead I'd like us to consider, briefly, something most people actually like talking about: presents. Gifts, really. Not the ones we get on birthdays or at Christmas, but the ones we get every day - our families, friends, and loved ones; our health (hopefully), our abilities, our resources. And, our church.

When Karan and I walked through those red doors 5 years ago, we knew what a great gift we had received in St. John's. And it just keeps on giving, every day, to all of us and to our community. We all just received the gift of an inspiring sermon, and uplifting music and voices. The children have received the gift of learning how to be Christians. We have a table prepared for us by loving hands, in a beautiful worship space.

We have received all these gifts. But we are also asked to give back. We can and we do give in many ways and in many places. In the next few days you will be receiving some information in the mail describing one of those ways. Please open it, read it, and reflect on it. If you have not made regular gifts to St. John's before, make this the year. If you have, make this the year you make giving to St. John's your first priority.

A couple of weeks ago, Joe mentioned in the forum the idea of "thin places;" places or times where the distance between heaven and earth is much less; where we are closer to God. But you don't have to travel far to find such places - I often find them right here at St. John's. Think about what a gift that is, and how your gift in return can secure the future of this thin place - for us and for the community we live in, now and for many many years to come.