



And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. And all ate and were filled. What was left over was gathered up, twelve baskets of broken pieces. Luke 9:16-17, NRSV

26 October 2022

Dear Grace Memorial Family and Friends,

I am grateful to you, and to all the members of our parish family. Throughout the year I have witnessed such generosity as you contribute your ideas, your funds, and your time to our community. Every dollar that we raise, every minute of volunteerism, every good plan comes from the heart and goes toward our mission.

Our pledge campaign this year focuses on the miracle of sharing, the ways in which our means meet the needs of the world, the ways in which we respond to the Gospel, the ways in which we sustain our community. Our theology of giving focuses on the three-legged stool of *Wealth, Works, and Wisdom*, the ways in which we make our gifts to the world. In today's letter, I would like to focus on Wisdom.

Our ancient texts treat Wisdom in a personified manner, in some of our traditions, almost as a fourth member of the Godhead. Wisdom is a source of inspiration, creativity, and guidance that has been a part of the world since it was chaos. Wisdom smooths out the edges of our Creation and gives us ways to make order, plan for change, prepare for renewal, appreciate what we have. She (the pronoun often ascribed to Wisdom) is in all of us, resonant, reactive, reaching forward to make connections with our traditions and culture and experience.

More Than Enough, the theme for our campaign, brings us back to that moment of miracle described in Luke's Gospel, having just been fed by Jesus from a scant few loaves and fishes. The people in that story heard Jesus' call to share what they had in order that all might benefit; and that is what you do with the gift of Wisdom you possess. When we have strategies that need to be developed, or committees that need to be staffed, or problems that need to be solved, you answer the call of your church, and share your wisdom and experience.

Wisdom adds to wisdom, and our whole community is filled with inspiration and action. You are that inspiration and action, without whom our church and our ministry would be diminished. In the coming weeks, you will receive an invitation to name and pledge the gifts you will make in the coming year to help our church and our neighbors. I ask that you pray with us as we launch our annual gathering of gifts and gratitude, and consider how you will contribute your gift of wisdom.

In Abundant Gratitude,

The Rev. Alan B. Cowart
Rector, Grace Memorial