

Christ Episcopal Church
7145 Fieldcrest Drive
Lockport, NY 14094



“Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above...” James 1:17, NRSV

August 27, 2021

Dear Members,

Every pledge campaign begins with Gratitude, a recognition of a gift given freely from the heart. I want to begin my message to you this year by thanking you for all that you have done for the people of Christ Church and the general Lockport Community. I am inspired by your generosity – by the single acts of love and kindness, and by the unseen work you have done in the service of God and our church community. **Thank You!** I cannot say it enough.

Our pledge campaign this year focuses on our gifts; all the gifts that we give throughout the year. We frequently talk about the three-legged stool of *Time, Talent, and Treasure* when we discuss our gifts, without really focusing on the power of each of those elements. I am grateful for the ways in which you have given all three, and today I want to focus on your time.

Time, they say, is the greatest gift because it is a gift that we can't replace. When we give of our treasure or our talent, they come, to some extent, from renewable streams. But time is different; once given, it cannot be taken back, reclaimed. This is precisely why I am inspired by the ways that you give of your time to this community. Whether these gifts of time are measured in hours spent carrying out a ministry, participating in our services, or volunteering in the community, or in minutes spent on the phone or in person reaching out to each other, taking care of each other, our faith community is generous with its time!

In his timeless work, *The Little Prince*, Saint-Exupéry says, of the Prince's tending of his beloved rose, "It is the time you have spent on your rose, that makes your rose so important." I like to think that the Gospel of Jesus is that rose. You have tended it gently and generously by the effort, love, prayer, and time you give to it, so that it blooms for all to see.

In this season where we give thanks for our gifts, I give thanks to God for you and the light, and love you bring to our common life together. You are a gift, each of you, and you are gifts to each other and to a world in need of God's healing love now more than ever. Thank you for being that healing gift from above.

Blessings to you,

Fr. Thomas