



Rooted in Abundance Stewardship Talk by Russ Charbonnet at the 10 am mass on October 8, 2023

I am Russ and I am going to speak with you a little bit this morning about stewardship and why me and my husband Stewart give to this amazing church.

In 2020, we left an Episcopal church across town that we truly loved and felt at home in. This church blessed our wedding back in 2016 just one week before the great flood of 2016 and we thought we would remain there forever. However, we took a chance on St. Margaret's mainly due to the pandemic, our familiarity with Fr Tommy, and a transition in priests at our former church. Honestly, we had every intention of returning to that church once the dust had settled and things became almost "normal" again. But by the time the smoke had cleared and we were coming back to church without reserving our isolated seats and coffee hour was reinstated (which we had never experienced at St. Margaret's) we started to meet some of the most wonderful and kind people we had ever met, and so we decided to stay a bit longer to see what this place had to offer.

Then, last October Stewart was diagnosed with pre-cancer for multiple myeloma (a bone marrow cancer) and we were in shock. He only found this out due to some routine blood work ordered by his doctor, so it caught us completely off guard. We received so much love, prayers and support from this amazing congregation and it got us through an otherwise difficult and scary time in our lives! On top of all the emotional support, we were given a prayer shawl made by members of this congregation and that was to us a God send. We spent a good deal of time traveling to and from MD Anderson in Houston, and that shawl was with us every trip! We would go into the hospital chapel and pray with that shawl draped across our laps. I can't tell you what it meant to us!

Stewart and I have always tried to give back where we could and many years ago we latched on to two major charities, while also trying to support other causes during the year. As former Catholics, we also felt the need to give something, though very minimal, to the collection plate each Sunday before we darted out after communion to beat the traffic.

However, as Episcopalians and especially members of this congregation, we have a whole new outlook and are very proud to give weekly to this church through ach transfers from our bank. We have moved St. Margaret's to the top of our long standing charity list because of all of the wonderful things we are doing for not just this community, but beyond. St. Margaret's has touched so many lives from all walks of life and we know that our money is being used wisely and responsibly with love and compassion!

We have so much talent in this congregation as evidenced by our amazing choir and by the extraordinary art work we have seen on display by our own congregation. However, some of us (like myself and Stewart) are not so gifted, so we have to find other ways to provide for this wonderful place. In fact, Stewart is behind me right now literally -(behind the wall) running the video so that our church family who cannot be with us in person can participate in the celebration of the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

I know you all love this place like Stewart and I do, and I am asking you today to please consider giving of your time, talents and/or treasures to help us continue to grow and to spread the love of Jesus throughout this community! Believe me when I say that there is no gift (monetarily or time-wise) too small and it really does take all of us working together to continue to do the work of Christ in this community!

Thank you Fr Tommy for all that you do! Thank you to our vestry and thanks to each and everyone of you!

