



September 30, 2023

Dear Parish Family,

It is a true privilege for me to serve as Chairman for this year's Stewardship Campaign. The Advent is a special place for my family and me. It is where Frances and I were married and later where the gospel broke through my heart of stone, and I first believed the good news. It has provided us with rich fellowship, including our small group that has done life together over the past ten years. It is where Frances and I bring our children every week to be reminded of our desperate need for Jesus and the good news that God, in his love and mercy, has indeed saved us and called us into a relationship with Him.

The Lord has blessed me so richly through the Advent's ministry that I could never repay the debt. Yet, I must confess that instead of cheerfully returning to the Lord what He has so graciously given to me, I find myself defaulting to false beliefs that what I have is mine and that I am in control of my life. A common question that runs through my mind goes something like this, "How much can I give this year but still be comfortable, do everything I want to do, and maintain my picture of financial security?" Although there is certainly nothing wrong with sound financial planning, I am afraid that at the root of this question is my idolatry of financial security and my insistence that my will – and not God's will – be done.

I am grateful for the opportunity that stewardship season provides to reflect upon my relationship with money and to repent. In doing so, I am reminded that God's grace is always sufficient, and that "He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?" (Romans 8:32). My prayer this season is that I would really believe this, and as a result, I would let go of the things of this world and instead "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33).

Enclosed you will find a pledge card. I invite you to reflect upon the sufficiency of Jesus Christ in your life and to consider prayerfully what you will return back to God this year in response to His love for you. You may return your pledge card in-person on one of our Stewardship Sundays (October 8 and 15), by mail, or online at AdventBirmingham.org/Give.

In Christ,

W. Steven Nichols
Stewardship Chairman