

... You Are Enough

Rev. Dr. Leah Grundset Davis
Ravensworth Baptist Church
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Matthew 6

Stewardship Sunday is today—thankful for Cathy Baskin for creating the amazing slideshow that was playing as we came into worship. When we think of this holistic view of stewardship, we realize that it's an identity. How we care for each other, this place, and our larger community is an outward demonstration of an inward practice, an inward identity.

We care for each other in this place because we believe we are each beloved children of God.

A few years ago, before I was on staff, Leadership Council commissioned a task group to look at the RBC Covenant. It's always dangerous to try and remember who was on a committee, but I believe it was: Cathy Baskin, Susan Bell, Patti Brockmeier, Nancy Koehler, Brian Hall, and me. We began our work, took an extended pause, and then in the fall of 2017, resumed our work. The question was about whether the language in our covenant still best represented who we were. It wasn't that the heart of RBC had changed, but words mean things, and did those words best communicate who we were.

In the end, only a few words were changed and we only added a few more. Our task, over several soup suppers and congregational discussions was sacred. We were listening to Holy Spirit and trying to figure out together what we could best proclaim about who we were. In the end, the congregation decided to accept the suggested revisions and we all blessed the covenant that you find on the front of your bulletin.

I loved the process because the process itself was a case study in stewardship—the need presented, a group gathered to discern, an offering brought, and a congregation that blessed the outcome.

Let's read it together—

One Body, Many Members

Having been led by the Spirit to serve God as followers of Jesus Christ, and having chosen to enter into fellowship with Ravensworth Baptist Church,

We covenant together

To proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to one another and to the world, to love all of God's children, and to do justice;

To commit to a life of stewardship in support of our church and its missions;

To engage regularly in worshiping God, studying the Bible, and caring for our community;

To equip ourselves and one another for a life of faith, expressed in an inward journey of prayer and devotion, and an outward journey of reconciliation and service.

Sounds like us, right? It's a good identity statement. And you probably heard it in there—one line that we've always committed to was "a life of stewardship in support of our church and its missions." ¹

¹ RBC Covenant and Mission: [Learn more.](#)

Over the past few weeks, you likely received a letter from our faithful Administrative Commission. Inside it, you saw the proposed budget for our next fiscal year, which begins in April. Committee and commission chairs, committees and commissions, staff, and the congregation—aka, all of us, have worked to listen for the Spirit of God at work and propose a budget that reflects the places to where we believe we are being called to share love, do justice, and build community in the coming year.

We invite annual financial pledges because it helps us know how we can work in our community. It helps us all plan a budget for the year that focuses on our ministry priorities. Within the letter was a pledge card. Some of us can increase our pledge, some of us will keep it the same, some of us need to decrease because life looks differently this cycle. This is why we do life together. Because we commit to living alongside one another honestly and hopefully.

Often in church, we don't like to talk about money because we've all heard from terrible preachers who *only* talk about money and that *worship* money. And there are quite a few reckless so-called theologians out there who want to prescribe giving with a certain number and shame people for the generous, Spirit-filled gifts they give. All of those examples are pain-filled, abusive, and just bad theology.

And that's just not what we believe around here. We are all in this together. We've made a covenant to each other and to God.

We are beloved and shine bright and are salty and we are people who pray the Lord's Prayer every week—we ask "how then should we live" and talking about it together.

We talk about other aspects of stewardship with some energy and enthusiasm—the way we give of our time, our spiritual gifts, our creativity, our listening for the Spirit of God at work.

And part of our stewardship is the way we support this work of Ravensworth financially. I think one of the most beautiful pieces about financial stewardship is that we really show up for each other. We each give what we can. And that's a different amount, a different percentage, and it changes and ebbs and flows for each of us. No one should ever feel ashamed for the gifts they give. They are a gift and they are received with joy and deep gratitude.

In community, we receive gifts with joy and gratitude.

We all give what we can, however we can. Ravensworth is rich with the giftedness of people.

That's exciting stuff! This is the heart of our calling to share love, do justice, and build community. Life together and caring for one another and our mission is stewardship.

I've enjoyed our time together in the Sermon on the Mount. In reading as one big sermon and not little snippets, we really get to hear about how Jesus' is preaching about his idea of community.

At the time, Jesus was talking to the people seated in front of him. And that was a solid group of people from different backgrounds, social standings, vocational giftings, ages, and a pretty motley crew. And somehow he thought they could care for one another by claiming their identities as beloved, and bright, and salty, and prayer-filled.

Somehow he thought they could impact the world. 2000 years later, it's pretty clear that they did. Because they took what they had and offered it up together into a living breathing, Body of Christ.

In the selection today from the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus preached more famous soundbites.

Confession: If anyone tells me "don't worry," I tune out immediately. This section of the Sermon on the Mount ends with Jesus' famous words, "So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own." It's a pithy line, Jesus was being hyperbolic, but I still recoil every time I hear it. I figure if I confessed it in the pulpit, then I'd be forced to examine Jesus' comments about worrying in a more expansive way.

Of course, Jesus is not describing chronic anxiety or the need for basic necessities. Remember, he had just said the Beatitudes—he knew who was in front of him. But he also knew there was this creeping influence of materialism at play. Some people found value in what they wore, what dinner parties they were invited to, and what wine clubs they could afford to be a part of. Surely, that doesn't apply in 2020.

Jesus was not saying, "that nourishment and clothing do not matter. What is forbidden is a materialism that monopolizes human actions and commitments and defines identity and lifestyle. This community is to exhibit an alternative witness."²

"This new idea of living in community was not bound by material goods. By encountering the reign of God as beloved children, by having this light of the world provide a focus of daily living, by serving God in prayer, the community learns not to treasure or despise wealth, but to use it mercifully and justly, with the completion of God's purposes as their priority."³

Jesus was giving more identity statements. It was an invitation to believe your identity is rooted in God. The possibilities of life in community make life richer.

Believe that you are enough.

Believe that we are enough together—together we show up for each other, together believe, and together we live out the witness of Jesus.

² Warren Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 176.

³ *Ibid*, 175-176.

Because you've heard it said...
you are not smart enough,
not rich enough,
not busy enough,
not accomplished enough,
not a part of enough wine clubs,
not a church with enough members with three services,

but Jesus says...
you are beautifully and wonderfully made,
you are blessed,
you are the light of the world and the salt of the earth,
you are a people who pray for one another,
you are more important than the birds of the air and the flowers of the field.
You are a church that believes in theology of abundance and community, not scarcity and isolationism.

You are enough,
We are enough.

This is the good news. Thanks be to God. Amen.