

CRIBB<S>NOTE

We are not always comfortable talking about money. That is, money in our pockets and bank accounts. Yet, almost everywhere we turn there is something about money staring us in the face. Banks advertise their services. Mortgage lenders seduce us to do business with them. Casinos and gambling dens blare huge messages of false promises about all the cash you *may* win if you just come and spend time in their establishments. So, while we may not like to talk about our money, there's a lot of talk about money all around us.

Today, Stewardship Sunday, we need to talk about money as a means to support the ministries of San Marino Congregational United Church of Christ. Money is one way we express our commitment to the church. It is more than simply paying bills, keeping the lights on and the furnace turned up through winter. Money is a tool to assist us in meeting the needs of strangers and encouraging the work of our partners locally, across the country and around the world. It makes it possible for us to say, "Yes!" when we receive requests to participate in programs and community service opportunities.

Stewardship Sunday is dedicated to everyone who takes faith seriously. It informs us about managing our time so we can be available to the various tasks needed to keep the church viable. We are stewards who attend to our lives in ways that help to keep us healthy and strong. When and where we spend our time is important and can determine our level of support to the ministries of our congregation.

Today, we celebrate our many gifts and talents. We have educators, artists, accountants, health care workers, gardeners, business people, beauticians, actors, musicians, and an array of professionals worshipping among us. We are a human bouquet crafted by God to serve humanity. Our gifts are given to us so we can provide vital assistance to our sisters and brothers who need us.

Imagine the possibilities when we bring together our resources for the single purpose of making life beautiful. Right here at San Marino UCC we are capable of literally changing the world. We have access to everything necessary to make a positive difference in our lives. We have money, time, and talent. From my observation, we have the will and commitment to go forward with confidence and strength; faithfully trusting in God to empower, guide, and increase our efforts to advance goodness, justice, and righteousness.

Now, what shall we do with all our power? Everything we desire and need is given to us from God's abundance. There is no scarcity. How shall we be good stewards over the magnificent gifts, talents, and resources we have in our hands?

Today we are invited to consider God's many blessings and extend ourselves in a way that is bold, unusual, generous, courageous, and uplifting. We are asked to search our hearts and act in a way that will cause the world to take notice. We pray God will find favor in our lives and urge us forward. We are stewards of God's great work. Let us give our lives to Christ and dedicate our resources cheerfully.