

2024 FIRST CHURCH STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

I challenge you to imbue your money with soul—your soul—and let it stand for who you are, your love, your heart, your word, and your humanity.

- Lynne Twist

The Flow Of Money

There is a natural law of abundance which pervades the entire universe, but it will not flow through a doorway of belief in lack and limitation.

- Paul Zaiter

While money is a part of our everyday lives and often drives our decisions and goals, it only has capacity to carry the values and purpose we give to it. Too often we unconsciously absorb the values and ideas of our present culture without considering the truer values of our faith. As people made in the image of an abundantly generous Creator, we are called to consider how our faith invites us to live with, use, and direct the flow of money. In her book, *The Soul of Money,* Lynne Twist writes that "money is like water." We may not be able to fully determine whether that flow of resources is a rushing current or a trickle, however, we can direct the flow of whatever money we have with soulful purpose. We can make sure the money that flows through our lives carries the values we hold most dear and the hope we have for all of creation.

This booklet is intended to help you navigate discussions about the flow of money personally, as a family, and/or with friends. You are encouraged to spend time each week journaling and centering in prayer as you read the suggested Scriptures. In addition, you are invited to use the questions as prompts to facilitate discussions around the themes each week. The more we lean in and explore this topic both within ourselves and with those in our community, the more insight we will find around our intentions and how we want to direct the flow of money in our lives.

Our Relationship With Money

Listen to your life. See it for the fathomless mystery it is, in the boredom and pain of it, no less than in the excitement and gladness: touch, taste, smell your way to the holy and hidden heart of it, because in the last analysis all moments are key moments, and life itself is grace.

- Frederick Buechner

As you consider your personal narrative with money, give thought to the following questions and statements:

What are your earliest childhood memories of money?

How did your parents discuss money?

Growing up, did you have more/less/about the same as your peers?

4

Do you have feelings of guilt about money?

Do you think you deserve money?

My current relationship with money is....

SCRIPTURE for REFLECTION

THE WIDOW LOOKING FOR HER LOST COIN LUKE 15:8-10

THE RICH YOUNG RULER

LUKE 18:18-30

How do you imagine each of these individuals would have answered the questions on the previous pages?

The Myths We Believe About Money

When you let go of trying to get more of what you don't really need, it frees up oceans of energy to make a difference with what you have. When you make a difference with what you have, it expands.

- Lynne Twist

MYTH#1 There Isn't Enough

When we assume that everyone cannot have what is needed for life, we are driven to look out for ourselves and our family over and above others which creates unhealthy competition for resources instead of supporting one another by sharing.

As you consider Myth #1, ask yourself the following questions:

What do you fear there isn't enough of in your life?

How do you know when you have enough?

MYTH#2 More Is Better

When we think that more is always better, then we never get to rest and feel satisfied with what we have. No matter how hard we work we will never have enough and can never enjoy the gifts we have right now.

As you consider Myth #2, ask yourself the following questions:

What do you neglect to appreciate and savor because you fear you need more of it?

How did your parents discuss money?

MYTH#3 That's Just the Way It Is

Resignation keeps us complacent and severely limits our creativity to dream of the way things can be. We forget we are children of God made in a generous image that is called to love and care for creation and one another in community. We create the world in which we want to live by what we choose to believe and give weight to.

As you consider Myth #3, ask yourself the following questions:

Where in your life have you resigned yourself to the idea that nothing can change and that this is the way things are?

What is the world you feel you are called to live into? How can you become empowered to live into that world?

SCRIPTURE for REFLECTION

BURIED TALENTS MATTHEW 25:14-30

THE SHREWD MANAGER LUKE 16:1-13

Which of the myths do these parables bring to your attention?

Do they question any of the myths or reinforce them?

What We Appreciate Appreciates

In the context of sufficiency, appreciation becomes a powerful practice of creating new value in our deliberate attention to the value of what we already have.

- Lynne Twist

Money is like water. It flows to us and then beyond us. We each have the opportunity to allow our money, no matter the amount, to express our highest values as a person of faith. In this way our money is a conduit of our very selves and the values by which we are hoping to shape the world.

Ask yourself the following questions:

What are your values?

In what ways do you use your money to express your values and faith already?

What role does First Church play in helping support your values and faith?

SCRIPTURE for REFLECTION

THE WIDOW'S MITE LUKE 21: 1-4

STORY OF ZACCHAEUS LUKE 19: 1-10

Which of the myths do these parables bring to your attention?

HERSHEL AND THE HANNUKAH GOBLIN BY ERIK KIMMEL

WE INVITE YOU TO READ OR LISTEN TO THIS STORY OF THE WAYS THAT GREED CAN HOLD US PRISONER.

What do you need to release in order to have greater freedom and to experience the abundance of the life you have now?

Greating a Legacy of Enough

There are no haves and have-nots. We are all haves and our assets are diverse. In the alchemy of collaboration, we become equal partners; we create wholeness and sufficiency for everyone.

- Lynne Twist

A pledge is your best effort at estimating what you can give financially in the coming year to First Church. Pledging allows us to imagine what is possible in the year ahead when our individual resources flow together. Collectively we can do so much more to reshape the world according to the values of our faith than any of us can do alone.

Ask yourself the following questions:

How does this booklet's framing of money and giving shift your thinking about pledging to First Church?

What new ways of thinking does it open for you? What ways does it challenge you?

What do you/your family plan to give through your pledge in the coming year?

What percentage of your income does your pledge represent?

Growing Our Pledges

Consistent growing pledges are essential for us to reach beyond our doors as we seek to welcome all into a place where they belong and feel loved. We ask all those connected with First Church to fill out a pledge card yearly and prayerfully consider growing their pledge as they live more fully into their values. By growing our gifts we have the potential for even greater impact in our own lives, in the lives of those we love, and in the life of the community around us. Every gift matters at First Church and our collective generosity makes a difference we cannot make on our own.

Ask yourself the following questions:

Have you grown your pledge recently? If so, by what percentage or amount?

What would you need to reorder in your life to grow your gift to First Church?

What values would become highlighted by growing your gift?

How to Give

One of the best ways you can help your church is by filling out your pledge card online **HERE** and then clicking through to set up online giving. Setting up an automatic draft enables your giving to continue and ministry to thrive whether we can meet in-person or virtually. Click **HERE** to set up your online giving. If you have used online giving in the past, we remind you to login and make any necessary adjustments to reflect your planned giving for 2024.

The Importance of Remembering First Church In Your Will

First Church would not be where it is today without generous legacy gifts made by individuals who were committed to propelling their values forward beyond themselves through their bequests and wills. These gifts have enabled the church to continue life-giving ministry even during times of struggle. These gifts continue to secure our future through their ongoing legacy of generosity.

Ask yourself the following questions:

How do you plan for your money to live out your values even after your death?

How might leaving a gift to First Church help you continue to shape the world in ways that honor your faith and values?

The life you live is the legacy you leave. - Lynne Twist

What is the legacy you want to leave?

