

Good morning! My name is Matt Dodds and this is my wife Kara. We have two sons, Trenton and Tyler, who are both in college in Minnesota which makes us new empty nesters. We were asked to speak to you this morning about Stewardship. As a family our lives have been touched and enhanced in numerous ways during the 18 years we've been members of Resurrection. We have been presented with many opportunities to be able to support our parish community. Stewardship is unique for each individual in our parish and for Kara and I stewardship is a continuous journey of prayer, reflection, self improvement, and it has become a way of life for us .

We frequently hear those words "Time, Talent, and Treasure" at mass or in the bulletin. We all have different God-given **talents** and fortunately for all of us our parish has needs and opportunities for us to share these gifts. I am a former teacher who likes to be organized. So, teaching Children's Liturgy of the Word and coordinating donut hosts each week are within my comfort zone and I enjoy serving in those ways. Matt has a great speaking voice and uses it as a reader and a greeter. Consider sharing your **talents**. There are many ways you can share those talents right here at Resurrection! Are you quiet and prayerful? Join the prayer chain. Do you enjoy reading? Join a Bible study group. Are you good at listening to others and sharing your opinion? Join a committee. Are you super busy and don't think you have much or any time to give? I guarantee there is a way for each of you to share your talent by giving just some of your time...even if it means getting out of your comfort zone, like I am right now - speaking in front of all of you today! It's so good for the heart, soul, and for building your relationship with Christ.

Consider sharing your **time**: When our kids were young, we were SO busy, like many of you, but we knew it was important to give of our time and to model being stewards of our faith for them. When our boys were old enough, we encouraged them to serve in church in some way. They altar served, became eucharistic ministers and helped with donuts...and I don't mean just eating them! No matter how busy our lives were, we tried to serve in some way, even if it was being greeters just once every few months. We've also been on committees, participated and served in retreats and Bible studies, and co-chaired our parish festival. We didn't get involved right away, but as soon as we did, we were so glad because it helped us to get to know other parishioners and feel more connected to this vibrant faith community. What may have started out as something we thought we HAD to do became our way of life. It costs **nothing** to give our time and there are always meaningful opportunities to say yes to.

Consider sharing your **treasure**! Since Matt is the finance guy, I had asked him earlier in our marriage "How do you determine the amount we give each week for offering?" As a child, I had remembered my parents giving me a dollar to put in the offering basket and them pulling out some other cash to put in. So I wondered if we just gave what was in our wallet each week? Matt told me he believes that everything we have in life is a gift from God and that we should challenge ourselves to increase what we give back each year. We now make a commitment to supporting our parish, fellow parishioners and to giving back to God instead of just what we happen to have in our wallet that week. We've had times where money is tight, as maybe some of you have, therefore what we've tithed has ebbed and flowed through the years. We know that our church would be there for us if we ever found ourselves in financial need. And so we encourage you to think about giving more or giving differently. Increase your tithing by a little each year, change to auto pay so you are able to give on the weekends you aren't able to be here, or give to our current school campaign.

The COVID pandemic was a dark time for us, as I am sure it was for many of you. It was difficult to feel connected to our faith when we couldn't physically come to the altar. During this time, our hearts went out to Father Phil and the members of our church, as we were all isolated from being with our church family. Many of us fell from practicing our faith during this time and were hesitant to return to mass when we could for various reasons. We believe now is the time - more than ever- to turn to God, to our parish community, and to our faith, and let it grow. To get back to some normalcy in a safe way. Do it not only for others, but do something for yourself. Join a faith sharing group, find a way to enhance how you share your talent with our parish community, increase your tithing, share your faith with others.

Stewardship is a reflection of who we are and what we believe. Stewardship is our opportunity to live like disciples. Stewardship is a challenge. Please view the completion of your Stewardship packet as an opportunity to give back, not because you "have to" give but because as God's disciples you HAVE A NEED to give.

May God be with you now and bless you always.