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*And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. And all ate and were filled. What was left over was gathered up, twelve baskets of broken pieces*. Luke 9:16-17, NRSV

October 7, 2022

Dear Ones,

When I was asked to serve as your Senior Warden last year, I had no idea what a gift it would turn out to be. More than being the chair of our leadership, I have been blessed throughout the year to witness the many ways that you contribute to the church and to our neighbors. My eyes have been opened to our relationships with the diocese, the community, and the missions we serve. While we do spend a lot of time in our meetings talking about our own finances and operations, we spend even more discussing how we can serve our neighbors and focus our work as a beloved community.

*More Than Enough,* our campaign for this year’s pledge campaign, calls us to remember that when we share what we have with the world, miracles happen. Our theology of giving focuses on the three-legged stool of *Wealth, Works, and Wisdom,* the ways in which we make our gifts to the world. In today’s letter, I would like to focus on Works.

In his epistle, St. James reminds us that our faith and our works are both necessary to activate our true calling as Christians. It is not enough to simply believe, but we must act on that faith to serve our neighbors and change the world. You do this all the time, in so many ways. You contribute to the diaper drives, the food drive for the Bridgeport Rescue Mission; you volunteer at Nourish Bridgeport packing groceries, preparing meals, and serving the needy; you help the school children in Haiti by purchasing needed supplies and making contributions throughout the year. With our Concerts on the Hill, you welcomed our neighbors, acknowledged our past history of racism with contributions to the NAACP, and supported the LGBTQ+ community. Internally, you serve on the many ministries that allow our parish of Christ Church to operate. Truly, your deeds are like the miracle of the loaves and fishes that keeps on giving. You have such generous hearts and hands!

Your works are not just about the programs our church sponsors or arranges in our community, or the things we pray for on Sundays; they are also about the way you raise your family, pursue your career, participate in the civic life of our community, volunteer your time in schools and social causes. We are called to be the body, and I have seen you be the hands, heart, and face of God in our community. Inspired and informed by your faith, you give so much to our neighbors.

Bless you! Thank you for all that you do for the Church and for the world. In a couple of weeks, you will be receiving an invitation to estimate your gifts for the year to come. I ask that you pray with us as we launch our annual gathering of gifts and gratitude, and consider how you will contribute your gifts to bring about the beloved kingdom of God.

With humble thanks and abiding love,

Vicki MarkAnthony