

November 12, 2020

To the members and friends of the First Presbyterian Church of Everett,

This past Sunday, I preached using the text Matthew 25:14-30. This is the story of a ruler giving out large sums of money to his servants and with no direction, goes on an exceptionally long journey. When the master comes back, the first two servants present their accounting of doubling their master's money, and the master is pleased. The third servant justifies his action of burying the money because he was afraid of his master. He did not waste it, lose it, or mismanage it, and he gives it back.

For those of us who have heard this parable, we 'know' we are to use our gifts and talents, not bury or hide them, to the glory of God. But what would have happened if any of the money was lost? Is Jesus only saying the correct way to use gifts and talents is when we double them, add value, or gain interest?

Throughout the gospels, Jesus calls people to follow him. He asks people to have faith in him. He sets a high bar of discipleship. And the disciples wonder about their future security, they doubt, they do not get it, they get angry, and at the end, one abandons, and another betrays. The life of a disciple is risky. We risk our lives to follow Jesus and love him with our entire being.

This year we have risked. In 2020, our vital ministry and mission continue: we have gone digital, we are using new tools, and we serve members of our community. Our 2020 budget is \$401,287. We have done well, but our income has declined, partly due to the lack of a consistent offering during worship and significant decrease of room use income. We have worked hard to keep expenses down, yet with projects and unforeseen needs to our facility, we have exceeded our facilities portion of our budget.

Currently, we have a deficit in our budget of \$23,000. We do have reserves to cover this deficit, but we are hopeful with six weeks left in this year to make up some of this. As we look to 2021, we are mindful of our resources and know deficit spending is not a long-term solution.

We are praying and relying on God's steadfast faithfulness which always guides us. We will risk and we will celebrate how Jesus calls us to follow. We will joyfully work with the resources we have to bless the ministry and mission where the Spirit leads.

Yes, in 2021, we are going to celebrate together. We are going to laugh, encourage each other, share good news, worship joyfully, and use our time, talents, and treasures to honor God. We will risk because Jesus does not call us to make more just to make more, but to use our gifts for his glory.

On November 22nd, Christ the King Sunday, we will dedicate our pledges for the upcoming year. Loyal donors like you provide the consistent annual support to help sustain our ministry. Please use the included form to consider your contribution for 2021. These can be mailed into the office or dropped off through the end of the year.

Peace,



Rev. Dr. Alan Dorway
And the 2020 FPCE Session