

Thinking I needed to be educated and inspired to write this letter, I approached it like a homework assignment. I read about stewardship in the United Methodist Book of Discipline and other publications; I read the pertinent scripture referenced in those documents. And words I read that made an impression were like these:

God gives us all three blessings: time on earth living in God's creation, unique abilities to do and be, and resources. God is the Master of these three gifts; we are merely the stewards or trustees. Unless we invest our gifts to do good, unless we are generous and share what we have been given, we are like the servant in Jesus' parable who buried the money given him instead of investing it for the master like the other two servants did. As the United Methodist Book of Resolutions has said, unless we share the abundance God has given us to work for the repair of God's creation, we are actually "complicit in its destruction."

As meaningful as all these powerful words are though, I've realized on this lovely fall day that the reason I want to give has more to do with simple mental pictures than with those grand words rattling around in my mind. I want to give because of picturing our pastors in the pulpit reminding me every Sunday, not just during stewardship season, that God expects me to be loving, compassionate, and generous. I want to give because of picturing myself worshipping and learning about my duty to share with others by taking advantage of opportunities like UMCOR helping victims of weather disasters I see on tv and our church helping the children of Hope Valley Elementary, the school I see down the street. I want to give because of picturing our three daughters growing up in Sunday School classes, because of picturing our granddaughter Fiona being baptized recently at Epworth, and because of picturing another beautiful October day several years ago when Pastor Karen joined Fiona's parents, our daughter Lauren and Travis, in Christian marriage. Maybe the pictures that make me want to give are really pictures not in my mind, but in my heart.

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