



Parkway Heights Family,

It is stewardship time again at Parkway Heights. That's the season where we ask you to remember your commitment to your church and church community. Everybody usually hates stewardship season. Most churches I've served have viewed it as a necessary evil that allows them to keep their budget afloat for a bit longer. They are pinching pennies and praying for a benevolent benefactor to deliver them from their financial ruin. I know it sounds like a promising strategy, but I assure you that it's experienced as no fun by most people involved.

I always find that attitude and approach to be disappointing. Stewardship shouldn't be a time of begging or shaming. It should be a time of celebration and thanksgiving. It's the culmination of the faithfulness of the previous year that allowed great ministry to occur. Without the gifts of time, talent, gifts, service, and witness, the work of the church ceases. We certainly haven't experienced that in the life of our church.

When I took an Old Testament survey class in seminary, the teacher told us that we didn't understand the ancient Middle Eastern culture. He reminded us often that they understood the world as a "limited good" environment. This led to a scarcity mentality. The easiest way to think of this is like balancing equations in chemistry. If you change something on one side, you have to change it on the other. In order to gain wealth, someone else had to become poor and vice versa. To put it in "churchy" terms, one grumpy member told me during a capital campaign, "You show me how I can make money by giving it away, and you can have it." That's a limited good understanding. If you move it from me, it's gone forever. It'll never benefit me again.

This Old Testament teacher said that this was not the way God worked. Instead, we should live in a space of abundance. To put that in "churchy" terms too, one church member told me, "You can't out-give God." He would often tell me that God could do more than I ever imagined. Now, before you get upset, realize this church member wasn't talking about a prosperity gospel mindset, where we get a lot if we believe enough. He was talking about the satisfaction of knowing that everything already belonged to God. You can't out-give God because you're just giving God back what you borrowed. We have to learn that we were holding it for its real purpose.

Our stewardship theme this year is "Embrace Abundance." This church already has. That's not to say that we can't be more generous, but I want to express my gratitude for your generosity, which has placed our church in a healthy financial position. I hope we can continue to be that kind of people. Please consider how you can more fully live into a spirit of abundance. What can you freely release? What can you give? Time, talent, gifts, and service go a long way to accomplishing God's good intentions. I don't want to be a "limited good" church. I want to work, worship, and serve amongst a people who are invested in the abundant return of God's ministry.

Think about how you can faithfully see every gift as a gift from God this upcoming year. **Please return your financial pledge card on or before Consecration Sunday, November 23, or pledge online at [parkwayheights.org/give](http://parkwayheights.org/give).**

Will you make good use of what you're borrowing? Release scarcity. Embrace abundance.

Love in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith Keats". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Bro. Keith