



*We are a community of Christians, open to all, who serve God in Jesus Christ through worship, education, mission, and fellowship.*



*Howard Park*

# Stewardship 2025



Dear Parishioners and Friends,

On the bookshelf that contains the books I return to the most is the 1991 classic in spirituality by Zen Buddhist teacher Thich Nhat Hanh. *Peace is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life* demonstrates how we tend to lose touch with the peace that is available in each moment. By creating or finding peace in every step, author Thich Nhat Hanh shows the reader how to make positive use of the very situations that usually pressure and antagonize us. St. Paul takes a similar life affirming approach when he tells the Ephesians to “Walk in love as Christ loved us.”

There are over 400 uses of the word “walk” in the Bible, the vast majority referring to the literal sense of moving along or making one’s way on foot, the primary means of transportation in the ancient world. In the Book of Genesis (Gen 3:8) God is portrayed as walking in the garden in the cool of the evening. In Psalm 116:9 the Psalmist proclaims: “I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living” and in Psalm 119:1 the Psalmist rejoices: “Happy are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord.”

In the New Testament miracles of walking on water and walking being restored to those unable to stand are recounted in the Gospels. In the Epistles there is a noticeable shift in how the word “walk” is used. From the early followers of Jesus, the community clearly recognizes that to *walk in love* is to walk with a new identity of love, purpose and sacrifice, as known in the life and death of Jesus Christ. Such walking denotes a new rule of life created at baptism. And, there is no walking back to old ways of hatred and division.

“Walk in love as Christ loved us,” we read in the letter to the Ephesians, to which I sometimes think, “Really? I mean, really, just like Jesus? You have got to be kidding?!?” There is a similar connection to this command to follow in the footsteps of Christ in: “This is My commandment, That you love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” Imitation of Christ is in that power of showing mercy, which is brought by serving and sacrifice.

Such walking in love is a lifelong journey. It just isn’t in our nature to give away what we have worked hard to acquire or to donate our time without compensation. It takes something as transformative as love to inspire us to share our time, talent, and treasure with others. This is a journey we make together, a Walk in Love.

As we have lived with the Gospel of St. Mark this past year, we have been brought into a world turned fundamentally upside down. The laws and customs that had been in place for centuries were challenged, power and dominion have been questioned, and a culture hemmed in from all sides by oppression and subjection desperately seeks a way forward. Jesus offers a new way of walking, of being, by daring to reach out to the outcast and teach others to do the same. He walks in love with the marginalized, with the poor, with the sick, and brings us along with him on his journey.

The most miraculous gift of love is that, like peace, it was there within us all along. All we had to do was find it, tap into it, and begin growing it. And look what happened? We learned to share, to give, to volunteer, to accompany others, to feed, to pray, to visit, to strive for change. This year as our Stewardship Campaign kicks off, we will be highlighting stories of how we *Walk in Love* with each other in our congregation and in our communities. I invite you to share your stories of inspiration and connection with our shared ministry in this place and with each other. I invite you to *Walk in Love*.

Mother Anita



Dear Parishioners and Friends,



Welcome to this autumn season of stewardship. We are asking you to pledge as generously as you can to Saint Ann's during our 2025 campaign, which runs from September 27 through Stewardship Sunday, October 27. But first, please take a moment to reflect on Saint Ann's and what it has meant to you this past year. We have done so much—for each other and for the broader community—simply by “walking in love” together.

“Stewardship” encompasses all the ways we give to Saint Ann's: of our time, our talent, and our treasure. Even with all the generous time volunteered by our members, and with frugal oversight by the Vestry, the costs of operating grow every year. Your annual pledges are the most important pillar of our finances.

But rarely are we inspired by talk of budgets and spreadsheets and bottom lines. As Mother Anita reminds us, “We don't give to a budget—we give to a mission.” We find meaning in our giving because of our shared purpose and love for one other. In this season of stewardship, let us celebrate how important Saint Ann's is in our week-to-week lives, and the church's growing role as a beacon reaching out into the community at large. Saint Ann's isn't just a building where our families gather on Sundays—although we do that quite joyfully!

This letter doesn't have room to recount all the many things your gifts make possible (which are covered in depth in our annual report). But we'd like to remind you of just a few of the ministries—inside and outside our walls—that are blessed by your generosity:

#### ***Inside the church...***

- **Worship:** our choir, Choir Director, administrator, Altar Guild, lectors, intercessors, ushers, chalice bearers, crucifers, and rector create beauty and order week after week.
- **Fellowship:** we invite, welcome, and connect our community through dinners, coffee hours, the parish picnic, the tailgate party, and more.
- **Pastoral Care Team & Intercessory Prayer:** we send cards, make phone calls, visit homes and facilities, bring food, and provide essential pastoral care.
- **Christian Formation:** our Godly Play Sunday school continues to grow, while Bible Study, the Lenten reading group and Griswold Forums explore and deepen our faith.
- **Music:** our magnificent music program partners beyond Sunday services to reach new audiences.

#### ***In the broader community...***

- **Essex Shoreline Soup Kitchen:** dedicated parishioners serve free dinners monthly.
- **Shoreline Food Pantry:** over a 16-year partnership, the pantry has served meals to over 250,000 guests.
- **Sewing Ministry:** from the church basement, parishioners make items for children and families in need.
- **Knitting Ministry:** providing hats, scarves, and more to the Seaman's Church Institute.
- **Nearly New Shop:** selling gently used items at modest prices, raising funds to support our outreach initiatives, especially the New London Homeless Hospitality Center.
- **Donations of time and money:** We partner to directly support many groups, including the Old Lyme Refugee Resettlement Committee, the Lymes Youth Service Bureau, the Connecticut River Conservancy, Marc Regis' Camp Hispaniola, Safe Futures of SE CT, and the Lyme-Old Lyme Food Share Garden.

Our goal this year is to receive pledges from **100% of our members**. Last year we had a record-setting 19 new pledges! Let's go from strength to strength so we can maintain and grow our mission.

When we walk together, we can accomplish great things. Please join us by using the enclosed pledge card to support Saint Ann's—and thank you.

Along with the enclosed pledge card, you can find a pledge card on our website which can be filled out electronically at <http://www.saintannsoldlyme.org/pledge>.

Yours in Christ,

The Stewardship Committee

*Tom Angers, Drew Behnke, Charlie Brinley, Tammy Hinckley, Bob Jennings, Sue Joffray, Alden Murphy, Howard Park, Becca Pote, Charlie Potts, Kathy Rowe, Jacob Russell (chair), Manon Zum-  
baum*



#### RAISE A TOAST WITH US

This year, we will celebrate **Stewardship Sunday** on **October 27**, with festive coffee hours after each service. We will raise a cider toast to all the ways in which together we steward Saint Ann's and make it such a beloved treasure in our community. Please consider bringing your pledge cards to church on that Sunday—although you are welcome to return them sooner!—and join us to celebrate our accomplishments as we walk in love together.