



St. Peter's Lutheran Church

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Dear friends in Christ:

Some of us remember the days when a family's most prized possession was the set of fine china or crystal received as a wedding gift or passed down as a cherished heirloom. It was an investment in a family's ability to provide hospitality, a valuable status symbol on display for guests, and a promise of family gatherings to come.

Nowadays, however, garage sales and rummage sales have plenty of sets of china and silver. They often sell for a fraction of what would be expected based on their initial purchase price, or are donated because a buyer could not be found. The increased mobility in our society today means that expensive, fragile items are not the same treasures they used to be.

What do we value and why? The answer to that question changes, sometimes dramatically, over generations. Today our world is more likely to value power and public image over Grandma's china. Social media influencers have plenty of advice to share about the latest must-have item and how you should use it. It sounds strange to some of us, but every generation goes through this process of evaluating what has been handed on to them, what they need to leave behind, and what they want to carry forward into the future.

Treasures can become burdens. China and crystal and silver need to be carefully packed and cleaned and cared for, and are a liability when you load your dishwasher or move to a new home. Influencer status only lasts as long as other people think you're interesting—and guess what, trends always change. Things that we once thought were valuable can become millstones around our necks. **The only treasure that never becomes a burden is God's amazing grace**, made known in Jesus Christ. It is priceless.

For our stewardship time this year, we will focus on the theme of **“True Value.”** Through the years, St. Peter's Lutheran Church has been one of those truly valuable things in our lives that continues to bring us purpose, meaning and belonging. The promise of God's resurrecting love, lived out among us, never gets old.

(continued on reverse)

St. Peter's is a place and a people called to follow Jesus by welcoming everyone and anyone. Through the Holy Spirit, we can be here for each other and for our community and our world, no matter what else may happen. Life means something here. People can find a place to belong here. St. Peter's is a treasure for us all. Together we can work to ensure that the value and vitality of St. Peter's continues.

This is the time of year when we invite you to reflect on what value St. Peter's holds for you and prayerfully consider how you might support St. Peter's in the coming year. During the month of November, we will welcome a few guest speakers to Sunday morning worship, sharing what "true value" St. Peter's holds for them. I hope you will receive their stories while also pondering your own.

Enclosed in this envelope is a 2024 giving card and privacy envelope. If you haven't completed and returned it in previous years, we invite you to do so this year, even if you are sure your gift is so small it won't make a difference. **Everyone's gift, no matter the size, has the power to make a difference.** For those who are able, we humbly ask you to consider growing in your giving by even a small amount, not merely to pay the bills (although that's necessary!), but to allow us to do even more of God's work in the year to come.

Once you have made your plans, please take a moment to complete the giving card, keep the stub for your records, and return the card to St. Peter's or directly to Paula Bishop, our financial secretary. You can place it in the offering plate or in Paula's box any time between now and December 31, although it is most helpful for her to receive it by November 30. You can also email the pertinent information directly to Paula at pbishop2344@icloud.com or complete the card on our website at stpetersverona.org (under "Giving" at the top, click on "Stewardship").

Rest assured that Paula will be the only person to see your information, and that you can change your giving plan at any time during the year if your situation changes. **Why do this?** Making a giving plan empowers you to give sustainably without shame or guilt. Sharing your plan with us helps us to use your gifts wisely.

Thank you, St. Peter's, for continuing to meet the challenges of sifting through the temporary things of this world and focusing on the things that matter most, the treasures that give our lives meaning and purpose. Together we are the body of Christ, doing more than any one of us could ever do alone, and continuing the mission of Jesus in the world.

Together in Christ,

Pastor Katie Yahns