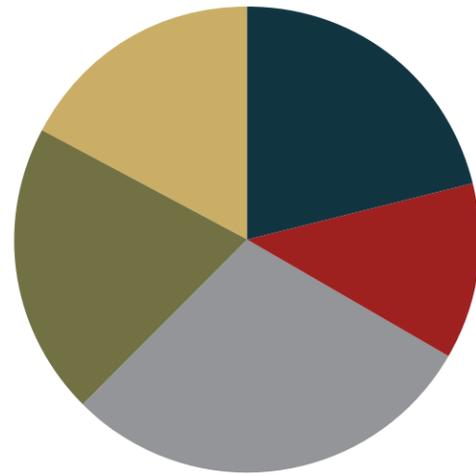


Income

Pledged/Unpledged gifts	80%
I & T and Poss Shop	9%
Earned income	7%
Other contributions	4%



Expenses

Buildings/grounds	29%
Worship/music	21%
Faith formation	20%
Mission/social action	17%
Church family	12%

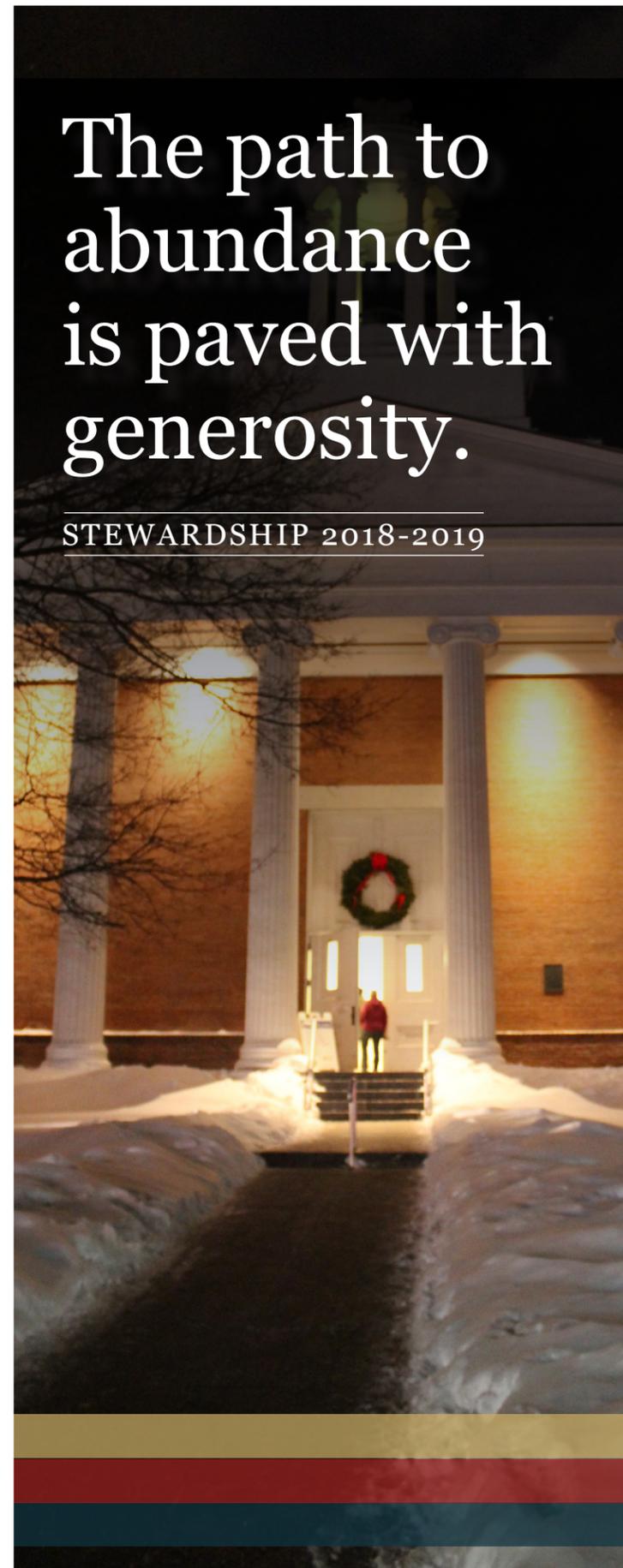
At the end of the parable of the prodigal son, the older, "good" brother, watching his younger brother come home to great fanfare and celebration after squandering his inheritance and ruining his reputation, is at a loss. "This is not fair!" he argues. To which his father responds, "Oh, my son, you have always been mine, and everything I have is yours." What we learn from the father's response to the prodigal son is that there is nothing we can do to lose God's love. And what we learn from the father's response to his older brother is that there is nothing we can do to earn God's love.

This is how I see abundance. We are swimming in it. Though our natural disposition and surrounding culture teach us to think transactionally, the ways of our creator show us something else is at work. We belong to our Creator, and everything in creation has always been ours. There is nothing we can do to earn or lose this gift. What a blessing and what an invitation! An invitation to be stewards of all that has been given to us, and assurance that there is nothing we can do to lose all that we have been given. As we consider what we will give, we can reflect on this promise. Let us remember that what we have been given also belongs to all of creation. It's up to us to participate in the abundance of the universe by offering what we have been given back to the One from which it came.

written by Ava Kelly

The path to abundance is paved with generosity.

STEWARDSHIP 2018-2019



As I was reading my morning meditation (February 20) from this year's UCC Lenten devotional, I encountered once more the exchange between God and Abraham as they talk about God's proposed covenant. Abraham's words of worry about what would become of all his "stuff"—that it would go to a 'mere' servant since he had no legitimate heirs—really stopped me. God assures Abraham that he will have children, and taking him out into the canopy of night, God says "You will have an abundance of offspring, as many as the stars in this sky."

What struck me is that Abraham and God are talking about apples and oranges. Abraham, like most of us human beings, is concerned about his accumulation of things in his lifetime. God is concerned about people, and relationship with them, and love among them. "Stuff" is truly immaterial to God. Using the stunning natural example of the millions of stars, God invites Abram to understand what abundance REALLY is about. God invites Abraham to be grateful that God is offering that non-physical but irreplaceably immense gift to him and Sarah. Abundance and gratitude. That's God's language.

Which language will you choose, human or divine, when it comes to your gift to the church?



Your Pastor,
Carrie
Rev. Carrie Bail
Interim Senior Minister



Mission & Social Justice New

- Participating in ecumenical summit on sanctuary (migrant justice)
- Intergenerational service projects

Continue to offer:

- Monthly – Dismas House meals, sandwiches for Small Potatoes, deliver MOW's, Legal Clinic
- Ongoing – JUMP, Ronald McDonald House, Possibility Shop, mission contributions to National Conference, refugee resettlement work, James Hospital
- Seasonal – Christmas/Easter: special mission offering (recipients change each year), Share Christmas, alternative giving fair, walks for COTS, CROP Hunger, Vermont Pride



Worship And Music New

- Less traditional worship experiences during the week and/or on Sunday
- New high school music experience

Continue to offer:

- Sunday worship at 8 and 10
- Special services such as Blue Christmas, Fifth Sunday lay led, youth and children's
- Organ and choir music



Buildings & Grounds New

- Chapel entry and steeple painting improvements
- Fresh paint and decorative elements in Narthex, hallways, bathrooms
- Major kitchen renovations
- Planning more activities to take place on lawn
- Increasing signs of welcome to all

Continue to offer:

- Routine care of buildings and grounds



Faith Formation New

- Reflection on personal strengths and collective purpose as a church during Noorha workshops
- Weekly Lenten gatherings offered at three different times and with different leaders
- Children and youth involved in writing the script for Christmas pageant
- YETS trips to Atlanta for high school youth to Wing and a Prayer Farm, Shaftsbury, VT for middle school youth
- New ways to grow in faith through music, prayer and scripture

Continue to offer:

- Sunday educational programs for children, youth and adults



Church Family New

- Informational gatherings for those considering membership
- Reformatting "Faithful Friday" to better meet family needs
- Auction to support middle and high school trips
- Revitalizing connection with UVM's campus ministry

Continue to offer:

- Partners in Pastoral Care
- Fellowship after worship, book discussions, men's breakfast, Pick-A-Party gatherings
- Baptisms, wedding and funeral services
- receptions for special events, community and church dinners/meals

