

OUR STORIES

A Mission of Gratitude
from Father Stephen Stanley

*An inspiring story from our parish to fill
your day with joy.*



Generosity Stories

We are excited to share that our Stewardship Team will continue to work with the program hosted by the Lutheran synod called Stewardship for All Seasons. As a part of this program, our overall goal for our congregation is to build a culture of generosity. We have so many wonderful stories of generosity right here in our own community, and we will be sharing those with you. Be on the lookout for "Our Stories" in your email, in our Weekly Announcements, on our website, and on our Facebook page. We are grateful for those who are sharing their stories.

After my "retirement" from full-time parish ministry (in 2015), I initially approached Pastor Philip about doing my doctoral thesis project on Ecumenical Religious Identity and how people "belong" to an ecumenical church.

After meeting with Pastor Philip and learning more about Trinity Ecumenical Parish, and coming down from Roanoke to worship here, I soon discovered that I was being drawn to LOVE the parish and belong to it, not STUDY it! Soon, I was asked to join a spiritual formation team (now called Companions for the Journey). Everything I was seeking in my doctoral study, I found here at Trinity, and so much more! While I am still an Episcopal priest, I largely identify as a Celtic Ecumenical Christian now and continue to feel the love of God's Family in this place.

There is a wonderful richness of diversity in this parish, accompanied by a gracious balance, where the whole is indeed greater than the parts! Our Mission of "Loving, Serving, Learning and Growing in Christ," is not just words on the wall. In fact, Trinity Ecumenical Parish is a Christ-and-mission-centered parish.

I learned what "generosity of spirit" means from my father, a WWII Army Doctor and then country doctor in Western North Carolina. His stewardship started in his heart, not just in his mind or his wallet. He left the world a better place and left that legacy for his sons to share.

For us, choosing to pledge and tithe is not a way of giving, but a way of living. I like to imagine what Jesus would do with our dollars in 2024. Trinity Ecumenical Parish seeks this Christ-Way-of-Giving out of its Christ-Way-of-Living in the world.

One of my several greatest hopes for Trinity Ecumenical Parish, is that it grows, not just in numbers, but in diversity. We should never forget that all of the natural beauty that surrounds us was God's in the Beginning and will remain God's to the end. May the next generations grow in their capacity to be Children of God's Creation and Children of God's Justice for all humankind.

-Father Stephen Stanley

