



Dear St. John's family and friends,

The world needs more **justice and love**, more love and justice!

Over the last 3 weeks, we've been exploring some of what Jesus means by "abundant life," and how St. John's is called to share it with the world. First, by being a vibrant, welcoming community – because the world needs more community. Second, through genuine, joyful acts of compassion – because the world needs more compassion.

This week, as we approach Giving Sunday on November 5, our minds turn to the justice and love at the heart of God's vision for abundance – because the world urgently needs more justice and love.

Justice means fairness and equity. It means sharing the gifts of the community with the community as a whole – and accordingly, it means speaking up for those who are left out or left behind. As the philosopher and theologian Cornel West has put it, "Justice is what love looks like in public."

St. John's has a long history of working on behalf of God's loving justice. From being the first free church of Pennsylvania to our ministries with our LGBT+ community, our neighbors who are returning from prison, or refugees rebuilding their lives here, St. John's has faithfully taken a stand. We believe Jesus came that we might have abundant life – and that "we" includes all of God's children.

On the other side of this letter, you'll find a brief testimony from Sue Heilman about how God's justice and love create abundant life. We hope you'll read her thoughts on what God has done through our congregation so far, and where God might be calling us in the future.

The world needs more community, more compassion, more justice and love – and with your help, St. John's can continue to provide these vital treasures, these signs and sources of abundant life. As each one of us generously gives, we know and trust the God of abundance will make more out of our gifts than we can accomplish on our own. More community. More compassion. More justice. More love.

Finally, be sure to join us on **November 5 at 9:00 a.m.** for Giving Sunday, when we'll celebrate the ways God's abundance has shaped our community, as well as the ways we seek to continue sharing that abundance with the world. Don't forget to bring your pledge card, ready to be offered with joy and thanksgiving!

See you Sunday,

Pam Loose, Leslie Morgan, Debbie Carter, Rosemary Coverly, Jen Trenary, Amanda Knouse

P.S. The Vestry has determined that we need \$425,000 in pledges, an increase from last year, to balance our 2024 "Abundant Life" budget. Your generosity makes a difference.

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I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.  
+ John 10:10



Dorothy Day of the Catholic Worker movement is one of my cherished heroes. Her life and teachings helped me understand what doing the Works of Mercy as talked about in Matthew 25 are all about. Besides her amazing acts of 'personalism' (personally loving the poor who she chose to live and work with), she also taught about the importance of systemic change in bringing God's Kingdom incarnationally (through us) to Earth, right here and right now.

I arrived at St. John's in 1988 and have been consistently uplifted and strongly encouraged to Do Justice, Love Mercy, and Walk Humbly with Our God (Micah 6:8) while worshipping and forming community here. The preaching and teaching that we receive every Sunday and the nurturing of God's Beloved Community ripples out to empower each of us to STAND UP for what's right and advocate for those hurting in our midst and around the world.

The works of mercy at St. John's are abundant: feeding and clothing the poor through the Blessing Box and Martha's Ministry, weekly Food Pantry, monthly Breakfast Program, the annual Yard Give, and Soles for Souls collection. Visiting the lonely, sick, and imprisoned through our Eucharistic Ministers and other visitors to our friends at home, worshiping and visiting those at Lancaster's Prison, F3 (Food, Faith & Fellowship) with single moms and their children reunited after returning from being imprisoned, and by loving on folks who come through our doors (via the many Anonymous Support groups on campus and those coming to do community service here) or not even coming through our doors (Angel Tree).

The examples of how St. John's chooses to Do Justice, inviting systemic change, are as equally abundant:

- Walking alongside refugees and advocating for them as they adjust to the American way of life
- Lobbying for fair funding for public schools in Pennsylvania
- Installing a massive rain garden in our front yard to help take care of our Earth
- Educating ourselves and others about current issues and events through forums, film series, and MLK Day events with adults and kids (on the environment, gun violence, homelessness, mental health)
- Participating in diocesan initiatives such as Saving Lives: Ending Gun Violence (check the Messenger for more information and please join us on November 15!)

It is important to remember that we are called to be faithful, to do justice, and to share the gifts of the community with the community as a whole.

May the mysterious peace that is Christ be with us all as we live into our own abundance!

*Sue Heilman*

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