

Good morning. My name is Geoff Wright. I've been a parishioner here at St. Dan's since 1999, along with my wife Ellen and my three children, Aaron, Jacob and Rachel. Like most of you here today, we are also confirmed and devout 11 o'clockers. I'm here this morning to speak to you briefly about my personal experience of Christian Stewardship here at St. Daniel Parish, and the rewards that have come with it.

During my preparation for this talk, I found a description of stewardship as "...the grateful response of a Christian disciple who recognizes and receives God's gifts, and shares these gifts in love of God and neighbor." In short, stewardship is the sharing of our time, talent, and treasure. Christian Stewardship has grown to be an important part of my life, and today I call on you for personal reflection and a commitment to share your own time, talent, and treasure.

My family and I have always enjoyed the various activities and programs available at the parish as **participants**, but it wasn't until recently that I began to become more active in parish life.

Last month, even though it meant getting up for 9 o'clock mass, I decided to join the St. Dan's choir – and, yes, we're always looking for more voices to make a joyful noise.

Another ministry I actively participate in is Christ Renews His Parish, affectionately referred to as *chirp*. Last August I attended the semi-annual retreat for men. It was during that weekend that I felt a calling to continue my participation on the *chirp* team and share my experience with the next group of

men at our upcoming retreat weekend this February 27th and 28th right here at St. Dan's. This has been an experience which has rewarded me with friendship, a renewal of discipleship, and a deeper relationship with God.

For the past (2) years, I have also enjoyed serving as a Catechist for our 6th and 7th graders. To those of you who have chosen educating middle school students as a profession – I have a newfound respect for your patience and your passion for teaching. While my students may sometimes be a challenge, there are many occasions in the classroom when **I** become the student, and it is then that I realize that God's blessings are many, and sometimes they come from the most unexpected places.

Remember, too, that our stewardship extends beyond our parish and into our community. I have been fortunate to be an active member of Council 5436 of the Knights of Columbus here in Clarkston, and also with Christmas in Action, a group which helps the less fortunate in our community with much-needed repairs and renovations to their homes. It is through this activity that I have also been able to share the gift of stewardship with my (2) sons, as they learn through personal experience what it means to give of their time and talent, and the blessings that come from service to God and our fellow man.

Like many in our community, our household was affected by the loss of employment during the recent economic downturn. This was a time of concern for us, as our priorities of maintaining a household and saving for our children's college were in jeopardy. As the situation persisted, we began to realize that it's

important, even when times are tough, to look for reasons to express our gratitude for all that God has given to us. Indeed, we didn't need more to be thankful for, we just needed to be more thankful. As the bible says in First Peter "As each one has received a gift, use it serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace." So no matter your situation, search your heart and ask yourself, "Am I giving back to God a portion of what he has so generously given to me?" I hope that you, too, will sow the seeds of stewardship in your family and reap the unconditional love that the Lord has for us all.

This is Stewardship Commitment Weekend. Please get involved in our parish by completing the Time and Talent Opportunities Form (*hold up the form*). Even if you already volunteer for a ministry or service, please fill out the form since this is an annual commitment. Also, please pray about your fair share offertory gift as you complete the annual Treasure Renewal Form. We commit to a home mortgage and car payments; why not commit to how much we give back to God?"

Thank you for listening. Now go fill out those forms!