

## Stewards of God's Grace: March 2022

### *Giving when it's messy!*

March is such a messy month. Melting snow, freezing rain, mud puddles and sudden snowstorms are all possible as winter winds down. Signs of spring, also known as Canada geese, honk their way across skies to land on the thin ice of lakes and wetlands. It is exhilarating to get to the official start of spring. We have survived another prairie winter!



Survival is a theme currently in world and national news. Pandemic dissatisfaction and unrest have increased; tension between world powers is extremely high; inflation is going up; weather patterns are changing. Anxiety is everywhere. One of things humans do when we are anxious is to protect what we have against outside threats. Some folks stop listening to the news. Some argue with or ignore people with whom they don't agree. Some hoard supplies. Some stop spending on anything but necessities. Some stop giving. All of this is a natural response to feeling anxious. But it is not the only way to respond.

Another response to anxiety is to engage with our fears, reach out to others and tackle the problems we see around us. Some people do this by learning more about what's happening. Some join with others trying to make a difference. Some donate what it is in their supply cupboard to people who need it more. Some increase their giving to their faith community and other causes they value.

Jesus lived in tumultuous times — political tensions were high and many were desperate for their daily bread. Life was hard. Luke's gospel shows Jesus at the Temple observing the crowds and talking with his disciples. He watches rich people put their gifts in the treasury followed by a poor woman adding her two small copper coins. He does not comment on the **amount** of money each gave but rather on what **proportion** it was of their income. *"Truly I tell you that this poor widow has put in more than all of them; for all of them contributed out of their abundance but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on."* (21:3-4) For Jesus she was an example of extraordinary faith and generosity. She understood that her security lay not in what she had but in the One through whom life is given.

This March we may feel as though we are on thin ice that could suddenly break beneath us. Whether that break comes from civil strife, armed conflict, rising prices or erratic climate events does not matter as much as how we respond to that sense of danger. Fear can drive us away from one another and tells us we are alone. Faith can pull us toward one another and remind us we are together in Christ. More than ever our communities need places of hope, faith and love in which people can be supported and helped to deal with tumultuous times. When things seem uncertain giving to our faith communities is an act of courage and hope. Giving more proportionally is an act of faith.

And remember — thin ice in March is a danger only if we don't heed its reality! When we help each other navigate the danger thin ice is also a sign of hope. Warmer days and open water are ahead.

*Written by the Ven. Cheryl Toth, Stewardship Officer, Diocese of Qu'Appelle*