

# St. John's Parish of Winthrop, Inc. ~ The Episcopal Church in Winthrop, MA

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October 26, 2023

*"Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's,  
and to God the things that are God's." (Mt 22:21b)*

Dear Parishioner(s),

Jesus' adversaries tried to trap him on the question of whether they should pay tribute to their overlord, Caesar Tiberius. In turn, Jesus reveals their hypocrisy by asking them to show the coin used to pay the imperial tax. The coin in question has an image of Caesar and true Sovereign worthy of complete loyalty and tribute.

Even today, Jesus' clever response prompts continued questions of our ultimate loyalty. To whom or to what do we pledge our heart's allegiance? What is our ultimate concern? A political figure is definitely the wrong answer! And so isn't your career, the golf course, your shoe collection or even your crafts. Nothing should supplant the Holy One, and that's not to say that we cannot also serve God in and through our other loyalties and commitments such as family and community.

Unlike the Imperial coinage, we bare the image and likeness of God. Moreover, we have been sealed by the Spirit in baptism and claimed as God's beloved children. In a manner of speaking, we are the currency of God's Kingdom, and it is with our selves, our souls and bodies, that we present a holy and living sacrifice unto God. The Kingdom of Heaven is indeed built with the currency of our lives in how we invest and spend our time, talent and treasure to God's glory.

On the Feast of Christ King (Nov. 26) we celebrate our loyalty - to Jesus and God's Kingdom. And so, I invite you to renew your allegiance to Jesus as we bring our stewardship campaign to close on Advent One (Dec. 3) by making a financial commitment to the work of Christ that we collectively share at Saint John's Parish. Please fill out the enclosed Pledge Card and return it to the Parish Office, or place it in the collection plate. Stewardship is a journey that doesn't happen overnight. So, begin where you are, and ask yourself if you can increase your pledge by, say 10%, from \$20 to \$22 per week, or 5%, from \$20 to \$21 per week. If you did not pledge last year, I invite you to consider a pledge for 2024 as your "yes" to God and God's work among us. A timely response would be appreciated. We help God make the future possible by giving generously and faithfully in the present.

In gratitude for our shared tribute,

*Father Walter*