Stewardship Moment: Why I Give to Penbrook UCC

Matthew 6:21 — "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Why do I give to Penbrook United Church of Christ?

To answer that question, I have to take us back to over 15 years ago. It seems fitting to talk about this moment, considering today is National Coming Out Day. It was over 15 years ago that I attended a "welcoming" Presbyterian church in Butler, PA. During that time, I was asked to serve communion. As folks came forward that particular Sunday, I noticed people were getting out of my line. I was later told that it was because folks didn't want to receive communion from someone who is gay.

Fast forwarding to the present, here at Penbrook, when I serve communion, you don't get out of line. Not only do you stay in line, but you have all supported my call to ministry. This kind of radical hospitality, love, and welcome matter. I give to Penbrook because you show love to all of God's children, regardless of differences.

I give to Penbrook because I believe in and believe that we are a church who practices extravagant welcome—a church where people do not have to check their questions, their doubts, or who they are at the door. I give because I want Penbrook UCC to continue to be a place where people who have been told they don't belong can discover that they are indeed beloved children of God.

I give because I believe the church should be more than a place we come to worship on Sunday morning. It should be a community where we find connection, where we care for one another, and where we put our faith into action throughout the week.

I give because our ministry matters. Whether we are gathering around the communion table, supporting our neighbors in need through Manna Food Pantry, or simply showing up for someone who is struggling, we have opportunities to make God's love tangible in the world. Our generosity helps make those moments possible.

Jesus tells us, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." I think this verse invites us to consider not just how much we give, but what our giving says about what we value. When I give to Penbrook UCC, I am investing in a community and a vision of faith that I want to see grow and flourish.

I don't give because the church is perfect or because the work is finished. I give because I believe in what we are called to be together. I give because I believe God is still speaking to us, still working among us, and inviting us to become a more loving, compassionate, and welcoming community.

So, why do I give to Penbrook UCC? I give because this is a ministry worth investing in, a community worth nurturing, and a vision worth sharing. My giving is one way I put my faith where my heart is.

As we reflect on our own generosity, may we ask ourselves: What do we treasure? What kind of church do we hope to become? And how can our gifts help us live out that vision?

I invite you to consider giving something a little extra this coming year. I recognize that costs are up all around us, which means that our expenses are also up as a faith community. I invite us to come and see where God is stretching us this year- whether through our financial giving, our volunteerism, or in our time together.

May our giving be an expression of gratitude for what God has done, faith in what God is doing, and hope for what God will do through us.

Amen.