

## Preparation for G172 -On Becoming a Steward

We are members and friends of the First Unitarian Church of San José. But we are also stewards. According to the UUA, “Stewardship is about taking care of something we value and enabling it to grow. When we become stewards, we take responsibility and contribute our time, talent, and treasure... The image of stewardship draws together the many threads of the web: the earth upon which we live, the elements of community we value, and the institutions that forward our values and provide services we think are important. Stewards are caretakers with a forward vision. They hold something in trust. They ensure that it will be there in the future for the benefit of others. This is true regardless of whether we are stewards of the earth, institutions, people, or our Unitarian Universalist faith.”

Let’s explore the concept of stewardship as it relates to giving of our time and talents. It’s obvious how stewardship benefits the church—and our faith movement — but how can it create meaningful, satisfying personal experiences for us? These exercises explore the potential for joy in stewardship.

1. Frederick Buechner said, “*Vocation is the place where your deep gladness meets the world’s deep need.*” If you desire to become a steward, and to serve the church in a way that brings you true satisfaction and the opportunity for personal growth, you must first find “your vocation” in the church community.

Imagine your ideal contribution to the church community if there were no limits on your time, energy, physical abilities, money, or skills. For a few moments, banish all those internal judgmental voices that say you *can’t* do or be a particular thing—or that you *should* do a particular thing just because you already know how. Is there a desire or creative urge within you that might have expression within the rich and varied life of our church? What would it be? Is it different from tasks or jobs you perform in other areas of your life? It is risky for you? Why could it bring you “deep gladness”?

2. Think of a volunteer experience you had within the church that was particularly satisfying, risky, successful, or challenging. Tell a story about it. Why did you take on that task? How did you go about it? Who helped you? How did it turn out? Who was affected? What did you learn? What was its impact on your life? Would you ever do it again?
3. Mother Teresa said, “*We cannot do great things on this earth. We can only do little things with great love.*” Think about the following “little things” in the church (or make your own list).
  - Preparing coffee hour.
  - Setting out hymnals.
  - Cleaning dishes after a potluck.
  - Pruning roses in front of the church.
  - Bringing doughnuts to church.
  - Washing the toys in the nursery.
  - Counting the offering.
  - Folding the newsletter.
  - Copying the orders of service.
  - Sending get-well cards.
  - Greeting newcomers.
  - Taking the Caring Quilt to someone.
  - Repairing furniture.
  - Answering the phones in the office.
  - Canvassing members for pledges
  - Tape-recording worship services.

Have you ever done any of these jobs? Do you know someone who does? What is each task’s inherent worth and dignity? How could it be performed “with great love”?