

Remaining Generous

We greet you with a resilient hope emanating from our faith in God through Christ Jesus.

Our prayer for each of you has centered around calmness and clarity as you navigate these uncharted waters. It seems almost impossible to recall how we entered 2020, with our engines set at full speed destined for a productive and successful year. Then, in what seemed like the twinkling of an eye, our engines idled. Business as usual, including church plans, slowed to a crawl. The whisper of COVID-19 brought turbulence to our daily routines. The economic roller coaster has taken job security on an unpredictable ride. And the game of hopscotch that families are engaging to sustain balance has caused fear and anxiety among us all. What in the world are we, the faith community, to do in times such as these? Where is our hope? How will we remain productive during such a crisis? "The answer is: by remaining generous."

As you consider how you will remain generous to your Regional church, allow me to share a story. Yes, you knew I would have at least one to tell. This story is about Jesus attending worship in the temple, and when it was time for offering, he watched how the crowd gave. Jesus noticed that some had an abundance to offer, and they did so. Sharing from abundance is commendable. The story continues, there was another person present in worship. The story lifts the presence of a woman, described as a poor widow who came forward to bring her offering, just two copper coins. How in the world could so small amount mean anything to the offering? Right then, Jesus employed a teaching moment. Although the widow's gift might be seen by some as far less in value to the church treasury than those who had immense wealth, she gave the more significant offering. You see, being a widow meant her circumstances had also faced a drastic change. The death of her husband had impoverished her life, and whatever security she once enjoyed, was now obsolete.

Three noteworthy things happened in this story. **The widow still believed**, which meant the change in circumstance did not diminish her relationship with God or her faithfulness. **The widow still showed up**, even after the loss of her loved one she kept attending church, finding solace and acceptance among the community of faith. **The widow remained generous**, by stepping forward to bring her meager offering, we see a giving heart displaying hope amid the uncertainties of life.

Regional family, I invite you to remain generous by sharing an offering to help your Regional church continue the work of being the bridge connecting each individual and congregation. You see, we do have much in common with the widow. During unfavorable situations, our faith in your generosity remains firm; we have witnessed it time and time again. We invite you to remain generous as we support pastors who are discovering the *new normal* for ministry and performing strenuous efforts on your behalf. Remain generous with your Regional church as we prepare those discerning God's call to ministry. God is always calling, even now. Remain generous with us as we care for Camp Caroline and discover how to offer innovations for spiritual renewal and recreation. Today, we invite you in whatever way you can to step forward and bring your offering, especially if it seems to be a meager but mighty one. Your generosity will make a difference because the Regional engine continues to run.

Please prayerfully consider a group or individual gift. Your support is our lifeline. Checks should be made payable to the **Christian Church in NC** with a memo: **Remaining Generous Gift** and mail to **P. O. Box 1568, Wilson, NC, 27894** or you may make a donation online at ncdisciples.org by clicking the **donate** button on the menu bar and selecting **Remaining Generous Gift**.

With a Resilient Hope,
Bishop Valerie Melvin, Regional Minister

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