

A Reflection on Stewardship by Suzie Hart from October 6, 2019

I'm Suzie Hart – one of your Vestry members. At ECA I play a role in our Servant Ministries and outside of the church, I am a Social Worker -

After a recent 2 weeks in Fort Lauderdale with the Red Cross putting together Social Service Teams to go to the Bahamas to help displaced people in Marsh Harbor Island and the Abaco Islands (demolished in Hurricane Dorian) and checking on some of those that have been brought to Florida (from these areas) for temporary respite in homes, I left with some overwhelming thoughts and feelings that I wanted to share with you...

Most everyone has dealt with the loss of friends, family members, jobs, perhaps your home to a fire or financial issue –

*Unless we have gone through a major weather disaster or related crisis, one can not begin to fathom what it is like for the thousands of those in the Islands that recently lost **all** of the above... **and at the same time.***

*Digest that for a moment...to survive the wind, rain and trauma of a horrific storm and to come out of it knowing that loved ones are dead or can't be found...your home (and all structures, as far as the eye can see) are demolished. There is no food, water or job to return to. You are left with – **literally nothing.** But you are "alive".*

*Think about it...every layer of one's being has been peeled away. One of the most powerful things that overwhelmed me is that **everyone** comes together – those "things" we all are consumed with on a daily basis...notoriety, greed, competition with each other for a myriad of reasons, racism, bigotry, etc...they are ALL gone. Strangers hold on to each other with **love for their brothers and sisters. That's all there is for the moment –***

*Screaming in my head is the question "**Isn't this the way Christians are supposed to be ALL the time?**" Why do we wait for a crisis before we – simply and with no agenda – just love each other?*

Most of us try to do our parts in our everyday lives with "helping our neighbor" but on a different level. We can choose when and how with planned, intentional giving – there is nothing wrong with this, of course, but maybe we need to be more conscious of the strangers we pass on the street and our own loved ones. Right the wrongs and love each other, because there isn't time!

When I look into the eyes of people that are living this nightmare, I am reminded (profoundly) of the Power of the Devine and His great love. It is that, which enables survival.

Wanting to tie things in with the kick off of our Stewardship Season, I would like to pass on a small portion of a conversation I had with the wife of a Hospice patient that I see. She was explaining to me the "whys" of contributing to one's church and the simplicity and clarity of it was profound to me.

She said "When you are part of a family, in order for it to flourish and sustain, everyone pitches in, whether it is dusting the furniture or folding laundry".

At ECA we need involvement...your time, talent and treasure. The fact is that there is a lot to do in order for us to continue to be a beacon of love and light for each other and our community of souls that need a place to worship.

Prayerfully ask God to help you figure out what your special gift is to share – because everyone has something.

Each time I help with the Red Cross, when I arrive home I am overwhelmed with how much I have and ask myself "just what is it that I really need?". I also feel guilty, knowing that there are so many with little or nothing and I have so much.

For me, I have found that God is what I need and being able to serve Him is my beacon.

*Reach deep down in your heart and listen to God's direction because He is leading us all somewhere...and if we **really** listen...we can discover what He wants us to do for Him.*