God's Abundance

Michael Patterson, Sunday, Oct 4, 2026

In place of the Epistle, I shall share a story of God's abundance. Twenty-one years ago I was in Iraq as the medical officer for a Marine Corps recon battalion. A suspected insurgent had been shot in the lower extremity as he fled after detonating an IED, improvised explosive device. He was captured and brought in for medical attention.

As I headed over to evaluate his injury, I was full of anger, even hatred, when I thought of this individual who had tried to kill my Marines and my Navy corpsmen. As I approached him, he was blindfolded and handcuffed. Our Arabic interpreter stood by his side. I reached out and placed my hand on his shoulder. My words were soft as I stated that I was the American doctor, that I was going to evaluate his injury and that if it hurt during my exam, he should inform me and I would stop. My mind had been in a very different place, yet my kind words flowed without effort, almost unconsciously. That encounter was transformative for me, and possibly for the patient as well. I truly felt the abundance of God's presence at that moment.

Week after week we hear of the plentiful outreach and generosity from St Bede's. I feel extremely blessed to be member of this community, which has both the physical and the heartfelt means to care for others.

Sally Malavé, "Beloved Community"
October 11, 2026

Good morning, my name is Sally Malavé.

When Richard Bentley asked me to address the congregation today about the stewardship campaign's theme "Room for Everyone", I initially declined because I'm generally not comfortable speaking to a large group. That was before I read Richard's email asking me to address two topics specifically.

- Tell about a time you felt welcome at St Bede's, and
- How has St Bede's shown radical welcome to you or to others.

When I saw those topics, I called Richard right back and told him, "I can do that."

I arrived at St. Bede's in 2011 or 2012. For about a year or two before then, I had stopped going to church for reasons I don't need to talk about here, but there came a point where, because I had grown up in a vibrant Catholic church in the Bronx, I really missed being part of a faith community. So, I came to St. Bede's one Sunday at my husband's urging because he knew and liked Fr. Richard Murphy, a former rector here, and Fr. Murphy had invited my husband to services many times.

When it came time for communion on that Sunday, I did not stand to receive communion, in part, because I had never been to an Episcopal church, I didn't know the rules, and I didn't want to be disrespectful. Christine Johnson, a former parishioner here, must have heard the discussion I was having with myself in that moment because she quietly sat down next to me and said, "if you have been baptized anywhere, you are welcome to go up and receive communion here." That was it. I returned the following Sundays and here I am still.

How else does St. Bede's show radical welcome to me and others? I'm guessing (without knowing) that most of us here today live comfortably

without real concern about where we'll sleep tonight and whether or what we'll have for breakfast, lunch or dinner on any given day, but we cannot deny that there is a lot of need in our beautiful little city and beyond. We see that need here most Thursday mornings between 9 and 11 am, when you'll likely find Mother Dru, Ron Ferguson, Mike Davis and me working

with the church's Food Pantry, welcoming and offering what assistance we can to anyone who comes through the door.

That assistance takes shape in the form of listening to their stories of hardship, sometimes reassuring them that there is no shame in needing or asking for help, helping them get groceries from our modest pantry table, or picking out a few items of clothing or just clean socks or a hat or gloves from our cloth's rack.

Finally, we distribute Smith's gift cards, which most people refer to as a gas card because they can use the card not only in Smith's market but also, and more importantly for many, at Smith's gas station. We also offer limited assistance with people's utility bills, which is especially important in the coming cold weather months. For me, I will say that I participate in this ministry because I am grateful for the grace God has shown in my life and I want to share that Grace and comfort with the people who need it most.

Thank you for listening.

Carol Neelley,
"Sharing Our Plenty"
October 18, 2026

SHARING OUR PLENTY

Good morning, My name is Carol Neelley and I've been asked to speak on the theme "Sharing our Plenty."

I lost my sister to cancer in June of 2023. The course of that disease is different for each person, and my sister's situation was particularly fraught for me because she was a dear sweet person, but was intensely private in her cancer journey, seeing her doctors and receiving her treatments but not willing to go on hospice, have any outside caregivers, and no friends or family into her house and her bedroom except her husband Brad. Brad worked full time as a welder and when he got home from work was her only person.

The day my sister died I took Brad to the airport to pick up his mother and sister. This was in Houston and as we traveled inbound on I-10 we passed a cluster of midrise office buildings which housed the Memorial Herman Cancer Center. He looked out the window and said, that blue building, that's where Mary got her chemo. And that parking garage next to it is where I flew my kite. I did a second take, where you flew your kite?

He said yes. When she went in for her chemo treatment they wouldn't let me into the building to be with her (this was at the height of the covid epidemic) and so I told her to look down to the top of the parking garage next door and

she'd see a surprise. I took my kite to the top and flew it for her to see while she was receiving the treatment.

At that moment my heart flooded and I realized there is an abundance of plenty in all our lives. With God's help we create it for ourselves and for each other.

Rob Peach, "Sharing Our Plenty"
October 25, 2026

Today, in place of the Epistle, I want to offer a few words about Sharing Our Plenty. This theme recalls a memory of entering those glass double doors in the spring of 2022 when my late husband Eric and I were first greeted here by Karl Steiner. He ushered us to the pews as if our company was expected like, “Where have you been? We’ve been waiting for you.” We walked away that Sunday feeling like we had found a faith family without knowing anyone.

Granted, my own bitterness at institutional religion, especially the Roman Catholic tradition in which I was reared and, for a time, deeply invested, hardened my heart to the kind of involvement Eric embodied while here in the flesh: music ministry, preaching, and adult formation.

Yet, it was on a future Sunday three weeks after his death in February of this year, that I was given a gift of consolation I knew I could not find anywhere else in Santa Fe – one for which I was unconsciously thirsting. Our choir director Jerry Nelson began that sunrise service with a prelude, a sweet, if melancholy, piece called, “One Thing Remains (Your Love Never Fails).” I was no good after that. Or perhaps, I was better. Tears streaming, I felt I had somehow reached home again, a place somewhere inside the core of my own being, where God is – an experience of return I could not have anticipated while Eric was still here in his physical body.

Since then, I have found joy in receiving his place in the choir, albeit with the clumsy of someone who's just learning to read music and has, up to this point, had no formal training in voice. But I’m finding it, after all, here, in this sanctuary of plenty, that is St. Bede’s. A place of embrace, where I've found unexpected kinship with folks who’ve stepped with me through the trauma of grief and with whom I hope to accompany others in word, presence, and, yes, even if faltering, in song.

And so, infinite thanks to this space, the beautiful people who fill it Sunday after Sunday in a shared chorus of gratitude and praise for this one wild and precious life which we do not walk alone.

Rob Peach
10/18/2026

Meredith Tilp, "Beloved Community"
October 25, 2026

I learned from Bishop Desmond Tutu to always begin with humor.

Many of his worldwide friends received a thank-you note.

This one is my favorite. It was addressed to my mother (who required thank you notes)

after Bishop Tutu's visit to St. Peter's in Morristown. It reads:

June 4, 2020
Dear Friends,

Thank you for bearing Meredith. She is something special.

Much Love and Blessings,

Desmond Tutu

I treasure this card because I always thought it was a lovely compliment to my parents. But recently, I began to ponder those words a little more closely.

I wondered if, when he wrote "thank you for bearing Meredith," he might actually have meant, "Thank you for putting up with Meredith!"

Knowing his wonderful sense of humor—and his fondness for playing a few tricks—I wouldn't put it past him!

Upon further reflection, I realized that the word *bear* has many meanings. And that brings me to us, here at St. Bede's.

We bear witness.

We bear witness to what is happening in our community, including the abductions of people by ICE. We bear witness by standing as sentries and by driving people to El Paso for their court dates.

We bear witness to the hardships of those living on the streets by providing bags filled with special treats, water, and snacks.

We bear witness by giving backpacks to schoolchildren and knitting prayer shawls for those who need comfort and care.

All of this we bear in a spirit of giving especially as we weigh our annual parish contribution of time and talents

We bear witness through our faith and worship: by reading the Gospel, participating in the liturgy, and listening to beautiful music and thoughtful sermons.

We also bear one another's burdens.

As members of our parish family face cancer, grieve the loss of loved ones, endure unexpected financial crises, and navigate the many challenges of life, we are there for one another.

We offer our prayers, our presence, and our helping hands.

And on special occasions, like Nicodemus, we come bearing gifts—gifts of kindness, generosity, and love.

Finally, there is one more meaning of *bear*: to grin and bear it.

Life can be difficult. The world can be painful and unjust. Yet our faith reminds us that goodness can overcome evil, and that we do not have to carry our burdens alone.

So, I leave you with one final thought—and a gentle reminder from Bishop Tutu's spirit of joy: **Please, smile a little more.**

Matthew Lakey, “Beloved Community”, October 25th, 2026

Today, in place of the reading of the Epistle, I was asked to speak briefly on the theme of “beloved community” for our “Plenty Good Room” stewardship campaign. My life has been blessed by being a part of the St. Bede’s community; I think back fondly on time spent in community at Thanksgiving potlucks and the annual Pride march, and I will always remember the prayer offered by this congregation as Carina and I prepare to travel to our wedding.

But – as those of you who attended my Adult Forum talk this year know – I like to think and speak about faith in more uncomfortable ways. And when I think of how God has built, and is building, beloved community at St. Bede’s, what comes to mind is the time our congregation has spent in Christ-centered discussion and prayer for congregational reconciliation. In recent years, we have experienced deep congregational disagreements and personal hurts. It would have been easy, faced with deep discomfort, for our congregation to give up, to allow a breakdown of our beloved community. But that is not who we are as St. Bede’s. That is not what God had planned for us.

Instead, for the better part of a year, we were blessed to spend time in the difficult work of prayerful discussion, listening and sharing our hurts. Through this time, God inspired us towards reconciliation with one another and new hope for our community together. Through Holy Week, as we brought our hurts to Christ’s altar and offered them up in the Easter Vigil flames, I felt the Holy Spirit moving among our congregation, inspiring us to new life and hope. That is the beloved community of St. Bede’s in my eyes – a place in which, even during our deepest disagreements, we make sure there is Plenty Good Room together.