

Why We Pledge - Kim and Tomás

Kim: When I was asked to speak today about “Why I Pledge,” I started to think about how we nurture the things we care about most in life. First, we make the decision that we care about something, deeply enough to give it our time and attention. Then, we must act on that decision of caring. If we decide that we care about justice, we make time to fight. Right now many of us are making a plan for how we will *vote* because we have decided that we care about the outcome of the upcoming election. I know that nurturing relationships with my friends and family involves keeping in touch, remembering special occasions, checking in during good times and bad. For a gardener, which I am currently **not** but one day hope to be, I imagine this means providing the light, soil, and water needed for plants to thrive. As a parent, my children require my love, time, attention, guidance, patience, and FOOD (among other things) in order to have a strong bond with their parents and to grow into happy, healthy adults. Hobbies or talents require time, whether your goal is to improve or just to find time to actually participate in the hobby. By joining Wildflower this spring, we made the decision as a family that this community is something we care about. We see Wildflower as a place where our kids can grow through the amazing children’s and youth religious education groups as well as meet new friends outside of school. We see Wildflower as a community where we can *live out our values* instead of just talking about them around the dining table. I think there are two ways we can

nurture Wildflower - this community, this place we have made the choice to care about. One is to **show up** - a spiritual practice Reverend Erin Walter named for me and really resonates with me. We pledge our time to Wildflower. To make the community vibrant, I feel we need to show up . . . online for now, but in person as soon as it's safe for all of us. But Wildflower is also a physical place with practical needs: rent, maintenance, salaries. So the second way we can nurture Wildflower is to pledge financially. We pledge money to Wildflower to support all of the very real financial needs of the church. As a family, we choose to nurture Wildflower with a pledge of both our time and our monetary contribution.

Tomás

I have two reasons that I pledge. First, purely from a functional perspective, I enjoy being a part of the community, I see that my wife and kids do also, and I would like the community to continue to exist. Having teachers work with the kids isn't free. Having a space to worship and come together in isn't free. I understand that it takes pledges to keep the lights on, so I figure if I can pledge, then I ought to. There have been times in my life when it would have been difficult to pledge money to a church community like this, but now that I have the ability, I'm happy to contribute.

The second reason is, ironically, kind of a selfish reason. By putting forth time, effort, and in this case, money to take care of something,

I've found that I grow more attached to it, as anyone who's ever done that middle school assignment where you take care of an egg can attest--how attached did you feel to that egg after having taken care of it for a week? A great example in fiction of this, by the way, is Tom Hank's relationship with "Wilson" in *Cast Away*. Anyway, anyone who's ever put in their time and money and built something or taken care of something or painted something or cooked something or written something knows this feeling as well--that spending effort on something increases your value and enjoyment of that something. By pledging, then, I'm not just helping out in a practical sense, but I'm increasing the value that Wildflower holds for me; in other words, by putting something in, I'm getting even more out of it. It feels more like a community I can call my own. In these times of curbside pickup and masks and remote church and school and work and, well, remote almost everything, any little bit I can do to help increase my own sense of belonging to a community is worth more than ever before. Thank you for listening.