

Gratitude Talk by Norm Newbery (Feb 22, 2026)

Andrew spoke this morning about how shame and guilt limit our experience of both God and belonging in community. This spoke deeply to me. I have struggled with shame and guilt that I have internalized for most of my life. This was reinforced by the belief that I had to excel at everything that I did...I had to be exceptional...I had impossible expectations for myself.

The community of our parish at SJE has helped me dramatically over the years to learn to accept myself for who I am. This has made it easier for me to accept myself and love myself. In the past I struggled to have a realistic self concept. I vacillated between thinking that I was wonderful or thinking that I was worthless and had nothing to offer. This resulted in me feeling isolated, alone and unhappy.

In acknowledging this dynamic, I find that I am able to discover how to be more honest and truthful and able to accept myself. This has meant that I am more able to offer my time, talent and treasure within the church and the community more freely.

I am also more able to give my money or time more freely, without regret.