

ST. THOMAS'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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October 27, 2017

Dear Fellow Parishioners:

Stewardship season is a good time to remind ourselves of our mission. At St. Thomas's Church we value and encourage a diverse community that reflects the Kingdom of God. We strive to respect the dignity of every human being by welcoming, validating, and supporting all persons, whatever their race, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, health status, physical ability, marital status, or stage of spiritual journeying.

We are called in this mission to walk in Christ's love as missionaries, lay priests, and stewards in church, at home, at work, and in the communities where we live. This mission is carried out in the ministries of the church: Sacrament and Song, Justice and Service, Thanksgiving and Stewardship, Spiritual Development and Education, and Fellowship and Witness. This work requires each of us to prayerfully consider how best to utilize our time, talent, and treasure in fulfilling God's work in this parish and in the world – a call that is even more pressing in a time when the values we share are under attack.

Our pledges to St. Thomas's allow us to fulfill our mission, to God's purposes, and to pay for the staff and the buildings that make our mission possible. Yet giving merely out of duty or obligation does not enrich our relationship with God nor bring us closer to the divine. For it is in giving – in response to God's gift of abundant life – that we receive. **Indeed, stewardship is not about raising money; it is about organizing God's gifts that we hold in trust in our community of faith.** We write today not only to solicit pledges to offset St. Thomas's expenses and reduce the draw on its endowment, but also to encourage all of us to answer the call to grow in our relationship with God through intentional use of the resources God has entrusted to us.

Later this month, you will be asked to complete a pledge card, committing your time, talent and treasure to the work of St. Thomas's Church in 2018. If you are renewing your pledge, we thank you for your steadfast support and urge you to consider increasing it by 15%. A pledge increase at this level will make a material difference in our progress to a sustainable future.

Finally, we urge you to consider proportional giving, calculating your pledge as a specific percentage of your income. Tithing is the scriptural call, dating to Abraham, to offer at least 10% of our income to God as an expression of thanksgiving. Not all of us can meet that goal at the stage of life we're in. But proportional giving allows us to work over time towards a percentage that feels appropriate.

Every person is important to this effort, no matter the size of the pledge. And a pledge is just that, a pledge. It's not a contract and may be changed at any time by simply contacting the Church office. No explanation is necessary. **Any pledge (even a few dollars a month) will be valued as a vital part of our common life.**

Stewardship is about moving our money in the direction of our values. Each decision we make reflects who we are: *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.* (Luke 12:34)

Yours in gratitude,
St. Thomas's Stewardship Team