



SAINT JOHN'S

EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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October 2, 2019

Dear fellow parishioners:

Our rector Susan Pinkerton's recent letter is a call to action, to live, love, and give – giving as a reflection of God's grace in our lives, expressed through acts of love. We give what we can because all we have comes from God, and we provide those resources to extend God's grace in the world around us. These are powerful thoughts as we begin to consider our plans for 2020 through our annual appeal, and the financial resources we will need to fulfill those plans.

At St. John's, we use parishioners' financial gifts to invest prudently in the advancement of our mission, grow our parish and perform good works, bringing our loving gifts to nurture our community and support people in need. The clergy, staff and lay leadership of the parish work together thoughtfully and responsibly to do God's work with the gifts given by current and past parishioners.

Last year, parishioner pledges totaled just more than \$400,000 – about half of our annual budget of approximately \$800,000. Non-pledge gifts and endowment funds cover the gap between our pledge income and our needs. In any given year, pledges are the largest single source of our funding for clergy, staff, worship, music, building maintenance, outreach and our annual program of good works. Please join us in answering Susan's call to action – to live, love and give – to support the important ministries that St. John's shares every day, week and month of the year, as we:

- Welcome an average of 180 people for Sunday worship each week, along with hundreds who come to Red Door music events throughout the year.
- Host at least seven addiction recovery groups every week, where many people's lives are helped, or even saved, through vital fellowship and support.
- Provide hundreds of meals through Loaves & Fishes, thanks to St. John's volunteers who cook, serve and interact with the hungry people who depend on these meals.
- Help dozens of people each week learn English and move toward U.S. citizenship through our partnership with the Town of West Hartford's adult education program.
- Teach children, young adults and adults about Jesus and the fundamentals of our Christian faith, providing a curriculum that supports a full program of Christian education appropriate for people throughout their lives.

These are examples of how we live and love, and what our giving supports. We thank you for considering a generous pledge to St John's as part of our annual campaign, as we share God's abundance with our community and the world around us.

Yours in Christ,

Wes Winterbottom
Warden

Virginia Van Dyk
Warden

Giving to St. John's: *How we make a difference in the world*

WHAT *stewardship means at St. John's:*

St. John's undertakes a dedicated stewardship campaign each fall to encourage members to make a promise to give financial support for the next year's operating expenses and investments. We think about stewardship more broadly however; stewardship is more than a season, and about more than financial giving. Stewardship is about *gratitude* for the abundant gifts God has given us, and how giving *generously* out of that abundance can change our outlook and nurture our relationship with God and others.

WHY *we give:*

"Through our worship, pastoral care and the many ministries at St. John's, we experience God's grace working in our lives in ways we could never imagine. God's abundant love transforms and shapes how we see ourselves and how we act in the world, as we become more aware of the many blessings that grace our lives. With this deepened awareness, we understand that all that we have and all that we are comes from God." – Susan Pinkerton

HOW *your participation makes an impact:*

We seek deep and meaningful engagement across the parish, while meeting people where they are in their lives and situations. From a financial appeal standpoint, we ask that you consider the following:

- The cost to run St. John's is more than \$3,000 annually per active member family.
 - We fund church operations and good works through our pledges, gifts, events, offerings and use of endowment resources. To use our resources effectively for many years to come, we need more annual gifts, so we become less reliant on our endowment for current operations.
- We receive pledges from roughly 50% of our total membership.
 - We need this percentage to be higher, both to raise more funds (to sustain as well as to grow our programs and expand our services), as well as to increase engagement across our community. Greater engagement brings benefits far beyond financial ones, as St. John's ministries are energized and expanded, to become even more of a positive presence in people's lives.
- The average current-year pledge is \$3,200.
 - We do not expect that all parishioners can pledge at this average level. We hope nonetheless that all of our active members can make a financial contribution at some level – whatever that level is.

We appreciate your consideration of financial support for St. John's, as well as your overall contributions to our worship and ministries, as we work together to share the word of God among us and across our community.