



## Saint Mark's Episcopal Church

Dear Friends,

I often think about how I would answer the question, if asked, “What is a good pledge to the church?” As a Christian, the answer is a personal one which can only be answered after considerable thought and prayer. Returning to God from that which God has given to us is a tangible way to express our faith. As we learn in Matthew 6:21, *Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*

The Stewardship Committee has asked me to put together some information that may be helpful as we consider our pledges and how they fit into our life as a community at Saint Mark's.

What does it cost just to keep the lights on? Our energy costs in 2017 will exceed \$30,000. That doesn't include providing the “spiritual” light and support of a faith community. With the lights on, we need a clean facility – cleaning, maintenance and supplies for the year will be over \$32,000.

Our revenue has been about the same for the past ten years. As we lose our older members (who tend to pledge more) and they are replaced by younger members (who tend to pledge less), our income remains the same even though a great many of our members increase their pledge every year. As a result, we have been unable to increase salaries for two years while other expenses continue to rise.

One of the unpredictable challenges we face from time to time is when our rental property next door will become vacant – which it now is – and we are gathering estimates for much needed repairs before a new tenant arrives.

Some people have asked how pledge amounts compare. That is a sensitive topic to discuss because of the very diverse circumstances of our members, and of course we give thanks for the many volunteers who give so incredibly generously of their time to support our many ministries. Below is a chart that I offer for those who may find it interesting.

| <u>Pledge size</u> | <u>Number of Pledges</u> | <u>Percent of Budget</u> |
|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Over \$10,000      | 11                       | 37%                      |
| \$5,000 to \$9,999 | 13                       | 18%                      |
| \$2,500 to \$4,999 | 36                       | 27%                      |

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|--------------------|----|-----|
| \$1,000 to \$2,499 | 38 | 14% |
| Under \$1,000      | 31 | 4%  |

As Christians, we give to the church out of a sense of gratitude to return a portion of our blessings and out of a sense of generosity to keep the ministries of the church available for everyone. With an endowment of less than \$230,000, we are financially dependent on annual gifts from our members to support our strong and vibrant Christian community that is Saint Mark's.

The amount of each member's pledge **really does make a difference** – a difference to your clergy and other staff and a difference in the programs we can offer. Pledge cards for 2018 will be mailed in the next few days. I hope this information is helpful to you in answering the question, "What for **me** is a good pledge to St. Mark's?"

Faithfully,



Phil Glandon, Treasurer

*"Put simply, life is a God-given opportunity  
to become who we are, to affirm our own  
true spiritual nature, claim our truth, appropriate  
and integrate the reality of our being, but most of all,  
to say 'Yes' to the One who calls us the Beloved."*

Henri J.M. Nouwen