

Frequently Asked Questions About Stewardship

This fall, parishioners are asked to pray about how they will support St. Peter's in the upcoming year, culminating in Stewardship Thanksgiving Sunday on October 18. What follows are some "frequently asked questions" and answers about supporting the life and work of St. Peter's through a stewardship pledge of giving.

Q: Why are parishioners asked to make an annual pledge to support the church?

A: The vast majority of income used the church's mission and ministries comes from Sunday offerings. Pledging helps the Vestry to determine the amount of income the church should expect to receive in a year in offerings when it prepares the parish's annual operating budget. What is not received in pledges is supplemented by a transfer of some funds from our endowment. The greater the total pledges, the less reliant the church is on endowment funds for operations.

Q: Doesn't St. Peter's receive help from places like the Diocese or the National Church?

A: No, in fact as members of the Diocese and the Episcopal Church, part of our pledge goes to support both the Diocese of Easton and the Episcopal Church. It is up to us to fund both our church and the larger church family through our regular giving.

Q: Is there an amount I am supposed to pledge?

A: That is a decision prayerfully made by you and those in your household. The Episcopal Church has determined that the standard of giving is 10% of your income – the tithe. That means that as Episcopalians we should be giving at least 10% of our income back to God. But what is meant by "income" and how much you can give is between you and God.

Q: I give of my time and talent to the Church. Isn't that enough?

We are called by Christ to give of our time, talent, *and* treasure. Giving of ourselves includes a portion of our money. Everyone can give something; Jesus marveled at the widow who gave her two coins to the temple treasury. If you are

unsure of your income status into next year, it may not be possible to make an annual pledge. But regular giving is what we are called upon to do as Christians.

Q: What is the difference between making a pledge and giving to the Property and Equipment Fund? Can my pledge include a contribution to that Fund?

A: Annual giving through your pledge and gifts to the Property and Equipment Fund for major repairs and maintenance of our historic structures are two different forms of giving, so your gift to the Property and Equipment Fund would be in addition to your pledge. A pledge comes from your *income*; gifts to the Property and Equipment Fund and major Capital Campaigns ideally come from your *assets*. A pledge is regular weekly giving for the operations of the parish; a Property & Equipment Fund gift is typically an annual gift from assets that you own that go to preserve and protect the assets of the church.

Q: Is my pledge legally binding?

A: No, it is a promise to God and the church, but if you run into financial difficulty (or if your income dramatically improves) you can adjust your pledge during the year. Pledging is a helpful way to keep one disciplined about regular giving and to give the Vestry a good idea about how much income to expect.

Q: Can I designate what my pledge can and cannot be used for in the operations of the church?

A: No, your pledge is for unconditional giving to the church, as a reminder of Christ's unconditional love for us. The appropriate way to affect decisions about how the church spends its money is to become involved with the Vestry and different parish committees; engage Vestry members in conversation or run for the Vestry yourself; or get involved in the many committees and boards and the convention of the Diocese and the national church.

Q: How do I make a pledge to St. Peter's?

A: Parishioners should all receive a letter in the mail in early October from the Stewardship Committee along with a Pledge Card. Additional Pledge Cards are available at church and in the Parish Office. Simply fill out your pledge card, sign

it and bring it with you on Stewardship Thanksgiving Sunday, October 18. At the appropriate time, you will be invited along with your fellow parishioners to place your pledge card in the offering plate on the altar.

Q: What if I am unable to be there on Stewardship Sunday?

A: You may deliver or mail your pledge card to the Stewardship Committee Chair via the Parish Office. Mark "Pledge Card Enclosed" on the envelope to ensure that it remains confidential. All Pledge Cards should be in by November 15.