



October 13, 2022

Dear Members and Friends of St. Mark's:

It is our hope that you have already received our first letter introducing our **Rising to the Challenge, Reconnecting with Joy, Reaching out in Love 2023 giving effort**. We hope that you are planning to participate in our October 30th Celebration Sunday: Pledge and Pancake Extravaganza! We know that it is several weeks away but we want every household in our faith community to have time to think about how they will commit to support the work of God at St. Mark's in the coming year. All our giving is a giving back to God in thanksgiving for all that we have received. As the Eucharistic Prayer we used throughout the summer expressed it:

It is truly right, and good and joyful, to give you thanks, all-holy God, source of life and fountain of mercy. You have filled us and all creation with your blessing and fed us with your constant love; you have redeemed us in Jesus Christ and knit us into one body. Through your Spirit, you replenish us and call us to fullness of life. ~ Eucharistic Prayer

One of the deep blessings this past year has been the opportunity to reconnect within our faith community. New households joining St. Mark's helped to make our Summer of Conversation a rich time of creating a robust fabric of relationships, sharing our stories, and allowing "God to knit us into one body." If you have not yet returned to in-person worship at St. Mark's, we hope that you will make St. Mark's a part of your weekly rhythm again in the coming year. You've been missed and we look forward to **Reconnecting with Joy**. We are also grateful for our online worshiping community as St. Mark's continues **Rising to the Challenge, Reconnecting with Joy and Reaching out with Love**.

In this letter, we have included a few tools for your prayerful consideration as you remember the many good gifts that God has given you. We invite you to begin to consider how you can grow in your walk with God in relationship to your finances as together we are **Reconnecting with Joy** in this faith community, with one another, and with Christ.

Biblical instruction about giving is deep and varied. Scripture calls each of us into intentional, regular, and percentage-based giving in response to all that God has given us. The Old Testament describes the annual ingathering of ten percent of the fruits of the harvest as something holy and set apart (Leviticus 27:30).

In 2 Corinthians, St. Paul writes, “Each one must give as they have decided in their heart, not under guilt or obligation, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

Please look at the enclosed resources with this letter as you pray about what your intentional, regular, and percentage-based giving will look like in 2023. Members of St. Mark’s Stewardship Team and your clergy are walking through this process alongside you. We believe the commitment to regular giving by each of us is what will sustain us as a church family and deepen our relationship with Christ while strengthening our trust in God. Please consider your pattern of giving in the past and pray about whether you can grow in your generosity towards God’s work in the world. No matter the amount of any one household’s gift, they will combine together to make God’s work in this place thrive.

The tithe of 10% is a goal based on the witness of Scripture. Tithing is a clear standard and an invitation to give back a portion of what you have received. It’s not meant as a reason for shame or guilt.

Next week you will receive another letter with a **Rising to the Challenge, Reconnecting with Joy and Reaching out in Love 2023** Pledge Card. This year, we invite you to estimate how much you are called to give, and then commit to intentionally and regularly making that percentage-based gift with joy. We at St. Mark’s will walk in partnership with you and look for a deepening of our communal spiritual faith. Thank you for your prayerful response this stewardship season, We look forward to worshipping with you on **Celebration Sunday on October 30th** when the whole congregation will be asked to make their financial commitment as an act of worship and thanksgiving together.

In God’s Generous Love,



Lucy Sinkular
Senior Warden



The Rev. Christopher McLaren
Rector