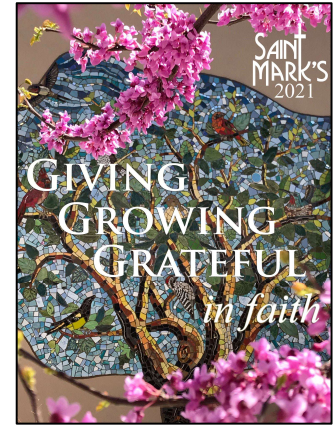


November 2, 2020

Dear Members and Friends of St. Mark's:

By now you should have received the letter introducing our Celebration Sunday program, and we hope you are planning on participating with us on Sunday November 15. In this letter, we are providing a series of tools for your prayerful consideration as you think through the 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. Despite, or even perhaps because of, Pandemic 2020, we at St. Mark's are still Giving, Growing and Grateful in faith.



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 (Lev. 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."

Scripture calls us to prayerfully consider all that we have been given, and then to "decide in our hearts" what the Spirit is calling us to give. Through the discipline and habit of giving we can grow in faith and learn to trust in the Lord to be our strength and our security. This means that we must make a decision. Like all parts of our spiritual lives, the practice of giving financially is meant to be intentional, joyful and life-giving.

Please look at the chart enclosed with this letter as you pray about what your intentional, regular, and percentage-based giving will look like in 2021. We know, and more importantly, God knows, that 2020 has been the year of pandemic and that no one knows what 2021 holds. Members of the Stewardship Celebration 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 giving for 2020, and see if you are able to grow by one step in 2021. No matter the amount of any one person's individual gift, they will combine together to do God's work in this place.

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. This year, in the midst of so much uncertainty, our call is to continue to celebrate our blessings as we are still Giving, Growing and Grateful in faith.

Next week you will receive another letter with an Estimate of Committed Giving Card. This is not the “pledge card” from our traditional approach. 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 to the Celebration Sunday program. We look forward to worshipping with you on November 15 when the whole congregation will be asked to make their financial commitment together as an act of Worship and Thanksgiving.

Blessings,



Meredithe Sweeney
Senior Warden



Christopher McLaren
Rector