

St Andrew's Episcopal Church in a Snapshot: October 1, 2021

TRANSPARENCY + PURPOSE + CONVICTION

I. **Transparency: Where are we financially?**

The short answer: even given the virus situation, we're doing OK (for now)!

But...here's what everyone should know (and what our Finance / Stewardship Team asks everyone to think about):

- (a) Our budgeted operating costs for 2020 are roughly \$480,000.00. And our anticipated income (from pledges and plate) only covers about \$210,000.00 of that. So, you might ask, where do we get the funds to cover that big difference?
- (b) Income from our investments have been a huge help, but we find we are relying on them, it seems, more and more each year, which can be VERY unwise-especially when changes in the financial markets could severely restrict our income, and the draws we can take in the future. So, you might ask yourself, what should we do?
- (c) **Our Finance / Stewardship Team STRONGLY recommends that we do our level best to INCREASE OUR PLEDGE INCOME BY \$40,000.00, or roughly TWENTY PERCENT. That is to say: please consider increasing your annual pledge by 20%--and if you are not pledging today, please consider making a pledge, and be counted.**

Now, of course, we know that that might be harder for some to do than others, and this year is no different than others: please—give from your heart. Here are some examples of how this might look:

Someone giving \$1,000.00 per year would give \$1,200.00.
(Likewise: \$500.00 would be \$600.00, \$1,500.00 would be \$1,800.00. (You get the picture).)

Now, here's another interesting and useful way to look at it: Of our 92 pledging units, the top ten givers give 44% (\$81,000.00) of our total (and almost a full third of that from one pledger!).

A full 46 pledgers donate anywhere between \$2,000.00 and 4,000.00 (23 units) and \$1,000.00 and 2,000.00 (23 units).

SO: IF WE COULD GET EVERY GIVER IN THE \$1,000 TO \$4,000.00 range to increase their pledges by 20%, we'd be *at least* halfway to our goal of increasing our pledge income by \$40,000—and, one might guess, leave us in good position to meet our goal.

NOW, we are asking everyone seriously to consider increasing your annual pledges by 20%, but especially counting on those who pledge between \$1,000 and \$4,000 to do so.

HOW ABOUT IT? Are you with us? Please pray about this before you respond. It means so much!

Your prayerful decision will impact the way our congregation grows for years to come...

II. **Purpose: Where are we spiritually?**

The short answer: our fire has been rekindled and we are beginning to roar!

Why do I think this? To me, the single biggest thing that has happened at St Andrew's in the last number of years, that has contributed so much to our community, has been our concerted work in reVision. We are now (even during this virus time) seeing new leaders step forth in ministry to offer new initiatives (such as our Sunday School and Family ministries), and an excitement that will sustain us, and help us to grow, for years to come. (Another example is our new Finance / Stewardship Team, now being led by Michael Balay and Carl Malmquist; that Team will be focusing on this Stewardship Campaign and doing some forward-thinking that likewise will benefit all of us years into the future!) There's no question that so many new leaders now stepping forward are already bringing a fresh spirit and direction to St Andrew's Church---God continues to send us capable and wonderful instruments of God's work!

And that's just the tip of the iceberg. Most of us already know about Houses of Grace, the overnight winter shelter program brought about five years ago, largely as the result of St Andrew's leadership (and our finishing the basement in the Parish House, providing excellent sleep, shower and laundry facilities to those in dire need). But do many know of what all that has spawned? Even as we "speak," efforts across the island are being made to find emergency housing for the unhoused during this virus crisis, by many community leaders, including MV Hospital and others—drawing on the wisdom and experience of our House of Grace program. Another "spinoff" program, now up and running for four years, has been the Warming Center In Oak Bluffs, providing warm space during a few hours of each winter day to those in need.

And how about Harbor Homes MV? After working for four years with a small group and with Karen Tewhey, who has become the Executive Director, Father Chip (now President) and the Board of our new NonProfit were delighted to be able to open our first single-residence group facility in Vineyard Haven in the spring of 2020, providing housing for up to six men who do not have the means to find housing on the island, and are willing to participate in a program to help them get "up and out." Talk about a church transforming lives!

And perhaps most recently, St Andrew's Church has been instrumental in establishing the use, by more than 115 persons on the island, of The Episcopal Church's excellent "Sacred Ground" program, which is a ten-session, intensive, film-based dialogue series on race and faith—and which includes participants from many Christian denominations, and even some of our Unitarian, Buddhist, and Jewish brothers and sisters! What is noteworthy is that St Andrew's parishioners make up more than ten percent of the number—and that four of the twenty group facilitators are St Andrew's parishioners!

These are just a few of the incredible things our parishioners are actively bringing about on behalf of our fellow islanders. And, of course, we continue to stand firmly in the middle of our beloved Episcopal tradition of offering worship—whichever ways we can—and our beloved Episcopal music—to our culture that too frequently forgets the unseen and lasting benefits that our exquisite and beautiful form of Anglican traditional, broad worship offers.

We are here, and we aren't going anywhere! And we can be thankful to our loving God for that—and for each other!

III. **Conviction: How can YOU help us all, NOW?**

I remember a lawyer friend of mine once told me, “when you get your paycheck, pay yourself first.” That is: make sure you begin to put some money aside, no matter how little, each week, to go toward retirement, and other exigencies. That’s good advice, although I’m painfully aware many of us don’t (or can’t) do it!

Now here’s what I’d add as a corollary to that: “pay God second.” (I know, coming from me, you might think I should be saying we should all be paying God first—but I’ll be tickled if we ALL decide to pay God at least second!)

Take a moment and think about it: of all the “institutions” that are, in these days, being re-examined for their value to all of us in society, wouldn’t you agree with me that our beloved church, our faith community, needs to not only survive, but THRIVE? To help us navigate the stormy seas of change and challenge? To help us confront the issues of our day from a Christian perspective—which calls for us to pray and to engage our understanding that the model of the Christ provides the best means to counteract hatred, violence, and greed? To provide the corrective to the mentality that we can solve all our problems on our own—without each other, without God? That our beloved children should be able to grow up with at least some sense that they are loved by God, and that they are NOT the center of the universe? A place that gives every one of a place to enjoy ways to grow in life, and learn the wisdom of the ages, and to find peace?

And so I ask: PLEASE consider increasing your pledge twenty percent, to help our parish get back on track with our giving—a track that will lead to untold and surprising riches and graces for all of us, and for generations to come?

I know I’m pretty biased about it (“convicted,” actually!)—but I cannot think of anything, anything in this world—more deserving of the sort of love I can give back to God, by helping our amazing, small, yet mighty, congregation. It is well worth making a bearable sacrifice to support the work of God’s people on the Vineyard and around the world—which is exactly what your caring contributions do!

And God *will* do amazing things with our treasures, given to God, from our God-given blessings, in ways we could never, ever envision.

So please: say YES and fill out your pledge card accordingly, TODAY.

And thank you from the bottom of all our hearts:

THE ST ANDREW’S FINANCE / STEWARDSHIP TEAM

Father Chip Seadale, Rector
Michael Balay, Co-Facilitator
Carl Malmquist, Co-Facilitator and Warden
Mardi Moran, Treasurer
Barbara Rush, Warden
Pamela Monterosso, Altar Guild Director

A NOTE FROM OUR TREASURER, MARDI MORAN:
Requesting that Parishioners schedule their pledges

Please know that your contributions are always very gratefully received. We appreciate all that you bring to St. Andrew's and we miss seeing you in person. It was a delight to see so many of you at the Tabernacle this past Sunday, September 27! We are so blessed to have each other.

The first time I worked with Wesley Brown (our wonderful Treasurer of ten years who recently resigned his role and who has been so incredibly helpful) to make a deposit and pay bills, the bills were about fifteen times larger than the what we deposited. I assumed that the role included a lot of sleepless nights. Yet as the time went on, I saw that you do send in your pledges and I must tell you that we all appreciate your response and attentiveness.

Because I am the new Treasurer at St Andrew's, I ask for your help.

I hope that you will take the time to make your pledge by November 1, 2020. We must have a budget to present to our congregation by our January Annual Meeting and since it is my first time doing it, I will need more time than Wesley Brown, who presented things so competently for so many years. Although we have been closed for services for many months, we continue to have most of the bills coming in, like Utilities, Payroll, Facility Maintenance, Insurance, on and on.

When you let us know the amount of your Pledge, if you are able, it would be so helpful if you would inform us if it will be weekly, monthly or whatever is easiest for you. This would make the Budget projection so much easier.

One of the methods that I have found to be easiest for me is to schedule my Pledge by my Bank's Bill Pay. Many people are using this method to pay their bills. I decide on what amount I can donate and when I want those payments sent. I ask my bank to send my payments monthly, so I divide the total by 12. This is the amount that I ask the Bank to schedule and send out. If it is easier to send it weekly, you would divide that amount by 52; if quarterly, by 4. The only thing one must remember is to list the payment in your register.

If it is easier, we accept PayPal and, if we have enough interest, we can set up ApplePay and/or Venmo. If that would be helpful to you, please let me know.

Thank you so much, in advance, for considering this.

Mardi Moran



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