

FOR US; FOR OTHERS
STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN 2010
ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
— CAPITOL HILL —

September 2009

Dear St. Mark's Parishioner,

Every September, members of St. Mark's are asked to make a financial pledge for the coming year. This year we are focusing on the broader concept of "stewardship" – how we fulfill our responsibility to our parish community through the commitment of our volunteer time, our talents, our leadership and our money.

Our theme – *"For Us; For Others"* – reflects the reality that at St. Mark's, as in any voluntary community, each of us benefits in ways known only to us while at the same time, we go into the world "to do the work we have been given to do", supported by our shared values, our shared experiences and our shared caring for one another.

While a fundamental tenet of St. Mark's is open and vigorous inquiry, too often we tend to shy away from talk about money and our shared responsibility for St. Mark's financial health in particular. Yet, our reality is that we are a non-profit organization that is fully self-financed. There is simply no way – especially in difficult economic times – that we can minimize the importance of what, together, we contribute to make what we experience at St. Mark's possible.

Thus, throughout this "season of stewardship," we are asking you to make your commitment of time, talent and money to our community. All of these are critical to keeping St. Mark's the place we want it to be.

We ask you to read and reflect on the letter you've already received from Paul as well as what you will find in this packet – this letter, the information about our financial needs, the pledge form and information on ways to pay your pledge throughout the coming year.

Committing Our Time, Talent and Energy

Can you imagine the size of our budget if we actually tried to account for the thousands of volunteer hours parishioners spend on St. Mark's activities? It would surely run into the millions of dollars. The vibrancy of our community is reflected in that personal involvement – from the people who participate in worship as readers, beadles, acolytes, lay servers, contributors of bread and wine and members of the choir and altar guild – to the teachers, supervisors and resource specialists that support Christian Education – to the volunteers for Grate Patrol, the organizers for the Honduras trip, the people who bring casseroles for the soup kitchen and bring food to the altar very week – to those who manage our myriad of Parish Life activities and organize our broad array of Arts programs – to those who serve in leadership roles. Without that commitment of time, talent and energy, St. Mark's would not exist.

Our Financial Reality

All of us know what it is like to go through changes that complicate our financial situation. That is what is now happening at St. Mark's. Consider these realities:

- Our income has gone down nearly 8% in the last two years while many of our expenses have continued to increase, particularly in areas outside our direct control – our utilities, health insurance and needed repairs to our buildings.
- Our demographics are shifting. More people are transitioning into or preparing for retirement. The “baby boom” is giving way to the “baby bust” era, meaning fewer people in their 40s and 50s. We have had significant growth of young adults and families.
- For 2009, we cut our expense budget by \$78,000 – support for our parish programs and for outreach activities was reduced; cost of living adjustments were eliminated for our clergy and staff; we reduced our pledge to the Diocese by 50% and cut by two-thirds our contribution toward the “building reserve” fund.
- For the first years of this decade, we were able to build and maintain an ongoing financial surplus. Over the last two years, we have had to draw almost \$50,000 per year from that to maintain our core budget. We cannot do that again in 2010 and still manage our own cash flow throughout the year.

Our Goal

Our campaign goal for this year is **\$894,000**, an **8% increase** over last year. Although, this potentially will restore \$65,000 to our operating budget, it will still leave tough choices for the Finance Committee and Vestry as they plan for next year.

We know that as the country continues to recover from the financial crisis, St. Mark's will have to continue to put off expenditures it would otherwise like to make to maintain our building and increase efficiencies in our operations – for example, better ability to manage the temperature throughout the church and save money.

Asking For Your Commitment

We recognize that this has been a difficult economic year for all of us. The financial crisis and recession have meant unemployment for some and reduced wealth and greater financial insecurity for many. Perhaps this is the year when you need to commit more time and talent to St. Mark's while sustaining your financial pledge level. Or maybe this is the year when you will take a fresh look at what St. Mark's means to you and realize that you are a stalwart of this community – and reflect that in a greater financial commitment.

Over the next two months, there will be several opportunities to learn more – in planned discussions about the finances of our vibrant faith community and in small group dinner conversations about the importance of St. Mark's in our lives and in the world. You will be hearing more from the entire Stewardship Team by mail, e-mail, in the St. Mark's Gospel and through sermons. Please save these important dates:

Please Save these Dates for Important Parish Events this Fall:	
Sunday, October 4, 2009 Town Meeting on Finances Post Sermon Discussion after both services	Brought to you by: Kathryn Powers, Treasurer Kenn Allen, Senior Warden
October 16-18, 2009 and October 23-25, 2009 Small Group Dinners	Josie Jordan Cecilia Monahan Marilyn Sherer

Enclosed are all the formal materials and instructions you need to make your pledge. We hope you will help us reach our goal and increase your pledge by **8%** or by whatever you can at this time. We are asking everyone to make their pledge no later than **December 1, 2009**, but please know you will help your Stewardship Team immensely by sending in your pledge as early as possible.

We thank you in advance, for your timely and generous response to our annual pledge drive. The vibrant faith community that is St. Mark's could not exist without the many contributions from each of us and all of us.

Faithfully,

Kenn Allen
Senior Warden

Katherine Loevinger
2010 Stewardship Campaign Coordinator

On behalf of the 2010 Stewardship Team – The Rev. Paul Abernathy, The Rev. Susan Pinkerton, Junior Warden John Sedgewick, Treasurer Kathryn Powers, Josie Jordan, George Meng, Cecilia Monahan, and Peter Sherer.