



September 26, 2022

Dear Members and Friends of Saint Mark's Episcopal Cathedral,

We're delighted to be writing this year's annual Stewardship letter to you as leaders of this incredible Cathedral community!

Great things are happening here at Saint Mark's because of you and your unwavering financial commitment to the mission and ministry we share. Even amidst the myriad challenges of the COVID pandemic, your support has enabled us to maintain a strong and vibrant liturgical life, to reach out through loving pastoral care, to refresh and assess the Cathedral campus, to reconfigure the Cathedral staff, to revamp the Cathedral program, and to add new members to the Cathedral congregation. The challenges of these past two years have, indeed, made us a stronger, more creative, and more resilient Cathedral. And for that, we're both deeply grateful and immeasurably proud.

The strategic investment in growth, begun in 2019, in cooperation with the Cathedral Foundation, has moved us to a critical phase in Saint Mark's redevelopment – the point at which we push through the predictable growing pains associated with moving from a pastoral-oriented parish to a program-oriented cathedral. The costs associated with this growth are not insignificant, and we find ourselves at a pivotal decision point about whether to shrink from this growth and return to a smaller vision for ourselves and our role in the community or whether to proceed through this growth with increased financial giving, including both annual pledge dollars for the operating budget AND multiple transformative gifts required to strengthen our Cathedral endowment. The two visions could not be more distinct: contract or expand?

We have done incredibly good work to build a leadership team of competent and capable staff, clergy, and lay ministers, all engaged in effective ministry supporting the health and vitality of this congregation. We are solid and stable at the core and we are risking, more and more, to reach out in loving partnership and service at our margins. But our current budget is unsustainable without both increased pledge commitments and endowment gifts*.

We believe with our whole hearts that who we are and what we do at Saint Mark's matters – that we make a positive difference in the life of this community – and we're convinced you share this belief with us. So, we're asking you to join with us and with each other in prayerfully assessing your financial commitment to Saint Mark's, ensuring the Cathedral is among the top two recipients of your valuable charitable dollars. If you can increase your pledge by 5-10% or more, please do so. If you can double it, please do so. If you can move toward a full tithe, please do so. Whatever you do, please ensure that your pledge properly represents the high value you place on the good and godly life we share here at Saint Mark's.

As with all faith communities these days, we are ever-shifting our focus away from mere survival and housekeeping toward God's greater goal for us, which is nothing short of the building up of God's Kingdom here in our own time and place. While that greater goal may seem daunting, we're blessed to have a framework within which to identify particular 'signs' of our faithfulness to God's mission. Known as the 'Five Marks of Mission,' they unify Anglicans

around the globe, translating faith into action, which is tangible and measureable and, therefore, capable of holding us accountable.

Here's what we're committed to as Episcopalians — a 'mission statement' of sorts:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom;
- To teach, baptize, and nurture new believers;
- To respond to human need by loving service;
- To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind, and to pursue peace and reconciliation; and
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and to sustain and renew the life of the earth.

While many faith communities around the country are focusing this time of year on balancing the budget, my hope for us here at Saint Mark's is that we would focus, instead, on funding the mission—ensuring by your increased financial commitment to the life we share here at the Cathedral that we have all the resources necessary to effectively share in God's work. Your financial commitment to God's mission ensures that we have safe and beautiful places in which to gather and to strengthen connections —it ensures that we have capable staff and clergy to network, to organize, and to align gifts and passions among us —it ensures that we have meaningful worship and learning opportunities that feed us for the journey and for the work of compassionate service— and it ensures that we have enough capacity, both material and spiritual, to more fully give ourselves away for the love of others, especially the most vulnerable among us.

If this sounds like a mission you'd like to be part of, I hope you'll make, renew, or even increase your financial commitment today, giving back to God a portion of what you have received so that, together, we can continue to pray and to learn and to serve in God's holy name for the sake of the world God loves so very much!

With gratitude for your ongoing generosity,

Rev. Paul J. Lebens-Englund
The Very Rev. Paul J. Lebens-Englund, Dean

Brian Childs
Mr. Brian Childs, Senior Warden

Ted Sherman
Mr. Ted Sherman, Treasurer

*Endowment gifts: In a healthy and sustainable Cathedral budget, the annual endowment draw (at 4.5%) would equal the annual pledge base. The Cathedral pledge base is currently ~\$1M/year. The Cathedral endowment draw (at 4.5%) is currently ~\$200k/year, generated by a \$4.2M investment corpus (though it should be noted we've been forced to draw beyond the base 4.5% for the past three years in order to invest in strategic growth initiatives). To generate \$1M/year, the endowment would need to be quintupled to \$22.5M. The only way to preserve the current endowment corpus is to either cut overall spending, and thereby shrink from our current trajectory, or grow the endowment to generate more revenue. The Cathedral Council is working closely with the Cathedral Foundation to initiate a major gifts campaign in the very near future. The Dean has identified four major gift categories, seeking \$5M each: Music Department, Dean's Office, Buildings & Grounds, and Next Generations. 'Endowing' these budget categories would enable us to close our long-standing structural budget deficit and properly fund both positions and programs to strengthen our mission and ministry, both internally and externally. If you'd like to know more, please contact Dean Paul.

Please return your pledge card as soon as possible. (No later than October 31)