

Stewardship at Grace-St. Luke's

Frequently Asked Questions – October 2019

Stewardship is the ministry of responding to God's love by the offering of gifts of time, talent, and treasure, caring for parish facilities, and sustaining our natural environment. Given that the well-being of the parish is directly related to Christian discipleship and a commitment from all parishioners, stewardship ministry realizes worship, formation, in-reach, and outreach as key sources for discovering what it means to be faithful stewards of God's abundance. All individuals and households are expected to participate in the threefold stewardship ministry of offering time, talent, and treasure, as they are physically able. The combination of each person's investment will support worship, in-reach and outreach initiatives, formation (learning) programs for all ages, music, staff and clergy, operations and administration, and the care of our sacred facilities in midtown Memphis.

Investing Time, Talent, and Treasure

Throughout the ages, God's Church has served as a community of inspiration, hope, and healing, and thrived by the intentional **time** its members spend together in worship, formation, fellowship, and service. The collective offering and volunteering of **talent** by each able-bodied member of the body of Christ shares the baptismal work to which we are called and furthers the mission of the Church. At Grace-St. Luke's, in addition to financial giving, the wardens, vestry, and clergy invite all to invest their valuable time and talent through parish ministry areas, such as outreach and justice, pastoral care, worship and liturgy, music, formation (learning) for all ages, congregational development, and fellowship. To learn more and get connected with a certain ministry area team leader or lay staff member, contact Development Officer, Chapman Morrow (901.252.6328, chapman@gracestlukes.org).

Every year, all who call GSL their spiritual home are asked to invest their **treasure** by making a financial pledge (estimate of giving) to support the daily, weekly, and monthly ministry of the parish. Currently, pledges provide about 80% of our annual operating budget; 20% comes from alms (loose offerings during worship services), designated and restricted funds, and small proceeds from the GSL Endowment. Ideally, pledges would constitute 100% of the budget. Simply put, GSL would cease to exist without pledges. Imagine where we would be if every household returned thanks to God by investing in GSL with the same if not greater generosity given to the other passions, places, and people we love.

Every pledge matters. Some folks think that Grace-St. Luke's is funded primarily by a few very generous members. This is not the case, and for that we are blessed and grateful. It takes a combination of pledges of all sizes to fund our various ministries, keep the lights on, maintain buildings and grounds, compensate and provide benefits for dedicated full and part-time staff and clergy, and serve beyond our doors.

Pledge History for Recent Years	2018	2017	2016
Total Households Pledging	279	329	321
Total Pledge Dollars	\$1,272,847	\$1,474,621	\$1,450,879

In this new season in the life of Grace-St. Luke's, there are many opportunities for growth both internally and outwardly as a parish that seeks to help all with "finding God in the heart of Midtown." For 2019, the operating budget will require an additional minimum of \$150,000.00 in pledges to maintain and enhance programs, respond to property maintenance and improvements, ensure sufficient lay staff positions to meet the everchanging needs of current and prospective members, fund three full-time clergy (rector, associate rector, curate), and engage Memphis in important and rewarding ways.

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Imagine where we would be and what we could do if each of our more than 550 households offered a pledge.

What is a pledge? A pledge is a thoughtful and considered estimate of what one hopes to give to the parish annual fund (treasure) and in the way of time and talent to support the life of the parish.

Why not simply give as I can through the collection plate or in other ways? While all giving is greatly appreciated, a monetary pledge acknowledges the priority of God and GSL and provides the parish treasurer, finance committee, and vestry with a noteworthy estimate of expected income, which is essential to maintaining operations and setting the annual operating budget. Like our households, GSL and its ministry could not operate and thrive without a reasonable estimate of its financial resources.

Doesn't Grace-St. Luke's receive support from the diocese and the GSL Endowment? The parish receives no financial support from the diocese. In fact, we are obligated to support the diocese's expenses in keeping with the ministry structure of the Episcopal Church. The Grace-St. Luke's Endowment provides some capital and program funding, but this funding represents only a small portion of our annual budget and should not be where we turn for operational support. While the Endowment is a vital resource, our annual operations depend almost entirely upon the investment and payment of pledges.

How much should I pledge? The actual amount of your pledge is, of course, entirely a personal decision. But, it should be grounded in your faith, love, and commitment to God's work through Grace-St. Luke's. Pledging invites reflection, prayer, and priority. While everyone may not be able to tithe (ten percent of income), we urge everyone to aspire to reach that goal and to make Grace-St. Luke's their primary philanthropic priority. Unlike other charities, which receive contributions from around the city or nationwide, Grace-St. Luke's is supported only by our parishioners. Recently, the average pledge amount for individuals and households has been around \$3200 per year.

10% Tithe = Goal based on yearly income

Gross Income	3%	5%	7%	10%
\$20,000	\$600	\$1,000	\$1,400	\$2,000
\$40,000	\$1,200	\$2,000	\$2,800	\$4,000
\$60,000	\$1,800	\$3,000	\$4,200	\$6,000
\$80,000	\$2,400	\$4,000	\$5,600	\$8,000
\$100,000	\$3,000	\$5,000	\$7,000	\$10,000

Everyone is asked to consider the 10% tithe as a goal or to make an incremental increase to their last pledge – to stretch in faith. Each pledge is an outward expression of gratitude for the blessings we receive from God and is a meaningful component of the threefold ministry of giving time, talent, and treasure.

How can I pay my pledge? There are several convenient ways: (a) make regular payments by check; pledge envelopes are provided to all who request them; (b) use the secure electronic payment option under the GIVING tab at www.gracestlukes.org to set up recurring payments or make one time payments at your convenience; (c) use appreciated stocks or IRA payouts to pay your pledge and alert Parish Administrator, Linda Stine (linda@gracestlukes.org) to ensure your payment is properly credited.

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What if my situation changes and I cannot fulfill my pledge? When life circumstances change, contact Parish Administrator, Linda Stine, so that Parish Treasurer records can be amended as needed.

How can I learn more about the threefold stewardship ministry of time, talent, and treasure at GSL? Contact Development Officer, Chapman Morrow (901.252.6328, chapman@gracestlukes.org).

Grace-St. Luke's Episcopal Church: Finding God in the heart of Midtown
www.gracestlukes.org | 901.272.7425