



Established 1914

## St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

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The Reverend Andrew B. Jones  
Rector

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Associate Rector

September 30, 2021

### Gathering in the Name of Love

We gather all sorts of things, at all sorts of moments. We gather our thoughts and resources as we begin a new venture. We gather our family and friends to celebrate milestones, anniversaries, and special occasions. We gather our hopes and dreams as we look to the future. In the church we gather all of these things, in all of these moments and we do it with a specific intention and understanding.

When we gather our thoughts and resources, our family and friends, our hopes and dreams, we, in the church, gather them in the name of Love. When we gather on Zoom, Facebook, or YouTube; when we gather outside, inside with masks, in small groups, or as the gathered assembly on Sunday mornings, we gather in the name of Love. Maybe you've never thought of it in quite that way before, but listen to the words of our sacred scriptures:

*"God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them" (1 John 4:16).*

And listen to the words of hymn 379 in our hymnal:

*God is Love: let heaven adore him; God is Love: let earth rejoice;  
let creation sing before him, and exalt him with one voice.  
God who laid the earth's foundation, God who spread the heavens above,  
God who breathes through all creation, God is Love, eternal Love.*

God is Love, and when we gather, no matter what we are gathering, no matter what the occasion or moment, we are gathering in the name of Love. This, beloved ones, is an important moment of gathering for us, the Body of Christ, gathered in Love, at St. Andrew's. As we all work together to emerge from the grip of the Covid-19 pandemic, we are gathering our hopes and dreams for the future by; meeting in small groups to create a new mission statement for our community; a mission statement that is based on our gifts and resources, the needs of the community, and God's call to us in this moment. We are gathering as the Body of Christ, taking what we have learned over the past year to enrich our shared life together: in worship, for the deepening of our faith and understanding of the God who makes us one, and for the

mutual care, love, and outreach that is a hallmark of our community. We are gathering our thoughts and resources, planning for the coming year, trying to understand the impact that these last eighteen months have had on our parish, and our ability to meet the needs of our membership and the community at large; all while striving to be the people whom God calls us to be, in this place, and in this moment. We are gathering all of these “things” in love, in the name of God. Now, in this moment, we are reaching out, in love, to you.

Last night, at its September meeting, the Vestry adopted a draft budget for 2022 that includes a significant shortfall. 2021 revenues include a \$49,700 PPP Loan that will allow us to end the year with a slight surplus. That surplus is only possible because the loan was a one-time boost to our revenues, intended to lessen the financial impact the pandemic has had on our bottom line. Carrying that surplus into 2022 still leaves us with some work to do if we are to return to a balanced budget. We do have funds in our cash reserves, our “rainy day fund,” to help cover the predicted shortfall, but we are asking everyone, in the name of Love, to prayerfully consider an increase of 3 - 5% in their giving for 2022. An increase of 3 - 5% in pledged income won’t completely close the gap, but it will lessen the impact on our reserves, allowing us to maintain some security and flexibility going forward. It will also help to ensure our ongoing ability to serve our community and the community beyond our walls.

Gathering takes many forms, and happens on a wide variety of occasions. Some gathering is easy; it comes naturally to us. Other forms of gathering are more difficult, and require more effort, more deliberation, more prayer. The truth is, that when it comes to this latter category of gathering, even the call to gather, the asking, is more difficult. That’s why it is so important to hear, in this moment, that in all the ways we seek to gather this fall, we do so in the Name of Love. It is our prayer that you will hear the call, in the Name of Love; that you will recognize all that we do as a community, as being done in the name of Love; and that you will participate in the gathering that is happening right now at St. Andrew’s: the gathering of hopes and dreams, of family and friends, and of thoughts and resources, in the Name of Love.

The draft budget for 2022 will be presented at the Sunday Forum, 9:30 on October 17, in the Parish Hall, and again at the Annual Meeting on November 21st.

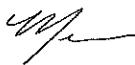
We will bless the pledges of financial support to the life, work and ministry of St. Andrew’s, at both services on Commitment Sunday, November 14th.

There is a pledge card and a return envelope included in this mailing, and there is an online pledge form on our website at: [www.standrews-madison.org](http://www.standrews-madison.org). Click on the “Give” tab on the navigation bar at the top of the page.

In the Name of Love,



Andy+



Melesa+