



Saint Andrew's Episcopal Church

The 2022 Stewardship Campaign:
Gathering, Growing, Giving Together

Dear ones,

Every year at this time we ask one another to take some time reflecting on what the life work and ministry of St. Andrew's means to each of us. How has this community reflected God's love and grace into our lives? How has this community reflected that same love and grace into the world around us? How have we, as we gather here, been fed and nourished? What gifts have we been given, enabling us to live lives of integrity, authenticity, and faith? How have we been strengthened, empowered by the Holy Spirit to carry those gifts into a broken and hurting world, offering them to others so that they too might flourish in the life which God intends for each of us? And finally, how will we respond to all that God has given us, all that God has made possible in our lives? How will we support the life work and ministry of our community in the year ahead? Those questions, that call to discern a faithful response to God's gifts to us, isn't any different from the call that we hear every year at this time, but the story we tell, and the context in which we hear it, now, in the fall of 2022, are very different indeed.

The new banner on the front wall of St. Andrew's tells some of that new story. "Longing for home? Searching for Community? We may be the church you are looking for!" We gather this fall in a world badly shaken by two years of pandemic, by increasing polarization in our discourse, both civic and private. We gather in a world at war in ways that we could not have foreseen just one year ago. This is a world where rights we thought were secure; hard won freedoms we thought well established; and the institutions and structures we thought would protect us; are all being challenged, and in some cases overthrown. It seems that everything we thought we knew needs to be reassessed. We need to recalibrate; to reinvent and find new ways of doing things. These past few years have been nothing short of exhausting! That new banner on the front of the church recognizes that exhaustion and the isolation that we feel. And the invitation it extends; the recognition that in the midst of this turmoil people are longing for home and searching for community, is borne out by the numbers of new people who sit in our pews every Sunday. We all long. We all are searching. And in this moment, right here, right now, people are turning their eyes and their hearts to us, asking if we have, and are willing to share, the home, the community for which they long.

St. Andrew's has always sought to be that home, that community. We have always been a place where people feel God's love and embrace through the warmth and welcome, the radical hospitality of the people gathered here. That welcome, that affirmation, that acceptance, is a hallmark of who we are, and even in the midst of this broken and hurting world, of the turmoil in which we find ourselves, that will not change. But like everyone else, every other community,

every other church, we are reassessing and recalibrating. We are reinventing and finding new ways of doing things, new ways of being church in this place, in this moment in time. It is in the midst of this upheaval, this process of reinvention, that we are asking you to reaffirm your financial support of the life, work and ministry of this community.

In 2020 St. Andrew's applied for a PPP Loan from the Federal Government. When that loan was forgiven in 2021, we applied those funds to our income and ended the year with a surplus. Mother Melesa left in December of 2021, and we made the difficult decision to forego hiring another full time Priest to serve with us here at St. Andrew's. We have used some of the savings we realized through that decision to increase our level of administrative support, hiring someone to carry the load that Fr. Andy and our Associates have shouldered because we were prioritizing clergy over administrative staff. With this shift in staffing structure, we are projecting finishing 2022 with another surplus. We are fiscally sound, and all things being equal, with pledging holding constant, and with no change in our programming, ministry and work, we would likely end 2023 with another, if significantly smaller, surplus. I hope that you are feeling a wry smile cross your faces right now. Because if these past few years have shown us anything, it is that nothing, save for God's love for us, can be depended on to be constant and unchanging. And given what we have seen; the level of longing for home, and the search for community that has brought all of these new members to our doors; a future without an increase in ministry and programming; ministry and programming designed to nurture and support those of us who are already here; ministry and programming designed to welcome and meet the needs of the people who have been drawn to a community formed and shaped by God's loving embrace; would be a shirking of God's call to us, of our vocation, and a squandering of the opportunity to help address the turmoil and chaos in this hurting and broken world, one person, one family at a time.

We are recalibrating, coming to understand who we are and what we can do. It feels like a tall task, but if we remember what God did with five loaves of bread and two small fish, feeding a multitude with twelve baskets of leftovers to feed those who weren't at the party, we come to realize that anything we offer, can be multiplied and used to help bring about the world God dreams of for all of us. Please, take some time over the next several weeks to consider your response to all that God has given you; to the gifts you have received in this community; and to the work that we have done, are doing, and will do, as the Body of Christ here at 1833 Regent Street.

We will be collecting our pledges of financial support to the life work and ministry of St. Andrew's, and blessing them on the Altar on All Saints Sunday, November 6. Please return your pledge card by placing it in the offering plate, by mailing it to the church, or by filling out the online pledge card on the Give page of our website so that we can include it as we celebrate the ways that we are ***Gathering, Growing, Giving Together*** to do God's work in the world.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andy", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Andy