

A Stewardship Annual Giving Message from Ted Stipa

January 18, 2017

Brothers and sisters of Saint John's:



"Stewardship" is a church name for our annual giving to the general budget of the church. Every year, in each church I have belonged to since my youth, the parish holds a Stewardship Campaign to appeal to the stewards of the parish . . . you and me . . . to support the operating budget of the parish. That operating budget is planned by the vestry, based on past experience and on the ministry and mission needs of the parish and those we serve.

Last week we met as a vestry and approved a 2017 budget that anticipates \$260,000 in giving during this year by you and me as Stewards of our parish. Since we started our Stewardship campaign at Thanksgiving, 73 of us have pledged a total of \$164,188.00, so we're now 63% towards our goal! I know that some of us just keep giving regularly and forget to fill out a pledge form, but it is very helpful for our planning to have a note from each Pledging family telling us how much you expect to give to your parish in 2017. You can do that by completing the pledge brochure attached or at www.saintjohnsconcord.com, or available at church, or even send our pledge accountant an email directly telling us what you hope to give in 2017 dottianne@aol.com.

Over the years, I've heard lots of ways of talking about giving. One word used is "tithing", a Bible word that means "tenth" or 10%. Some say we should give away 10% of our net income, some try for 10% of gross income, and some find that concept too much of a burden to talk about. Some see 10% as an ideal to strive for. Certainly, each of our families is different financially. Each of us has some bills to pay: house payment or rent, electricity, phone, cable, insurance, don't forget food and clothes, car loans, childcare or college tuition and somehow save for a vacation. In practice, we have parish household pledges ranging from a few hundred dollars to over \$6,000.

Last year, the average pledge to Saint John's was \$2,288. Each Saint John's family or individual prayerfully asks what God would have them do, and what they can afford. I personally do this with a grateful heart, understanding that God has blessed me and my family in many ways, and I give these blessings back to God by giving to my church. I cannot tell you what you should do, but I can tell you that our parish, St. John's runs on our gifts of money and time and that each of us can make a valued contribution to our Parish. You and I pay for our wonderful staff, heat, electricity, keeping building and grounds in good repair. The list goes on and on. Will you join the seventy-three of us who have already pledged to the 2017 Saint John's Stewardship program?

Thank you for listening.
Ted Stipa (302-738-7446)