Why I Pledge - Toni Marie Sutliff, *All Saints Member, Stewardship, Pledge Drive Committee Member*

It was in June that Sunday morning when I first stepped into All Saints. I was 28 with a 9-month-old baby on my hip and I was looking for a church family. I was raised in the Episcopal Church but had not attended while in college and my husband was not a churched person. The sanctuary was what is now the parish hall, the altar was in the current kitchen, and St. John's Hall was a series of offices and Sunday School rooms. The nursery had a beautiful mural of Noah's Ark.

I spent the summer trying several churches in the Salt Lake area and kept coming back to All Saints. By fall, I decided to join All Saints and did two things that have changed my life: I joined the choir (the most fun group at church!) and I made my first adult pledge of my financial resources.

Why did I pledge that year and why have I pledged every year since then? Two reasons. The first is perhaps the most obvious. Just as I need to know how much income I have so that I know how much I can spend, All Saints needs to know what money it will have so it can prepare a budget for the year. As a member of this All Saints family, I pledge so that we can Keep the Light Shining.

The second reason I pledge is more important, more personal. I need to give. I need to show my gratitude to God who has been with me and comforted me in all the bad times and has rejoiced with me in the many good times. Money is how we measure things - how much does that cost, how much is this worth? I also give of my time and my talents, but I am talking about pledging my financial support, and not just by putting money in the plate each Sunday. By pledging, I show my commitment to All Saints and to God.

The amount of my pledge is not the most important. What matters is that I give first, before anything else. I don't wait to see what is left at the end of the month. I choose to put God first, before any of my other expenses. If that means I must sacrifice something, my small sacrifice is little next to God's great sacrifice for me.

You know that we are in our annual pledge campaign, and you will see information in letters from the Vestry, in this newsletter, in the Sunday worship bulletin, and in personal reflections from the pulpit each Sunday in November. I ask you to prayerfully consider your pledge to our All Saints family, to make a sacrificial pledge that acknowledges your relationship with God.

That 9-month-old baby is now 41 years old! Much has changed since I first came to All Saints. What has not changed is my need to give. I will be increasing my pledge this year and I hope you will join me.