



All powerful, most holy,
Almighty and supreme God,
Holy and just Father,
Lord King of heaven and earth
We thank You for Yourself
for through Your holy will
and through Your only Son
with the Holy Spirit
You have created everything spiritual and corporal
and, after making us in Your own image and likeness,
You placed us in paradise.

Saint Francis of Assisi, *The Earlier Rule*,
(XXIII: Prayers and Thanksgivings), 81-82

Dear Friends in Christ

With these powerful words, St. Francis sought to remind us of all that we have to be thankful for. Again and again, gratitude is shown to not only be a grounding spiritual practice, but also a compelling health practice. People who are grateful live lives that are fuller, calmer and more joy-filled than those who overlook the gifts that God has provided for them.

We have much to be thankful for at St. Francis. Even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been blessed with new ministries, new community and new members. As we start to look out to 2021, we also have so much to look forward to. In particular, I look forward to the opportunity to all come together as one body and worship together.

The Stewardship Committee, the Vestry and I are planning our 2021 budget, and we are modeling a 6% decline in expenses and a 7% decline in revenue. Over 2020, we have seen a dramatic drop in plate collections, rental income, special offerings and other income, as a result of the pandemic. To offset these shortfalls, we are looking to increase pledges by \$30,000 for next year, which is a 10% increase in pledge income. These are extraordinary times, and I had hoped that we would not need to ask for larger pledges for 2021. We appeal to your generosity as you consider your pledge for 2021. Your increased pledges will provide St. Francis with a sustainable budget for years to come, and we should not need to ask for increases again in the future.

Please find a pledge card enclosed. You can return it to the church or fill out an online pledge card on our website, click More on the menu bar and select Give or go to: (<https://forms.gle/w86kRj8SrUoZbVRHA>). Thank you for all that you do for St. Francis. I look forward to a healthier time and continuing in the joyous work of the ministry of Jesus Christ with you.

Peace and blessings,

The Rev. Brendan J. Barnicle