

ST. MICHAEL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH STEWARDSHIP Q & A

What is stewardship?

Stewardship is rooted in a belief that “the earth is the Lord’s and all it contains” (Psalm 24:1). All that we have belongs to God, and God asks us to manage what God entrusts to us faithfully. We believe this is true with respect to money, and we believe we honor God by giving back to God a portion of the financial resources that God has entrusted to us.

What is the annual giving campaign?

This is time we set aside to examine how we steward the money God has entrusted to us and to make a prayer-soaked decision about the financial support we will offer St. Michael’s in the coming year. Receiving each person’s 2024 commitment in early November gives the rector and vestry (our 12-person board) plenty of time to prayerfully plan and set the budget for next year. Thoughtful and prayerful budgeting is one of the ways we steward the ministry that God has entrusted to us.

It seems like we are always talking about money this time of the year. Why?

We believe that healthy families (including church families) talk about money. For Christians, money is not secret or taboo. It belongs to God. Jesus talked about money and we believe that setting aside four weeks a year to talk about money, faith, and generosity is important for us as disciples of Jesus.

What is a pledge?

A pledge is a solemn promise or agreement to do something. It is a word with deep theological overtones in the Christian tradition. For instance, in our Baptismal Covenant we pledge to “proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ.” With respect to stewardship, a pledge is a commitment of financial support to the church for the year.

What is the church asking of me?

We are asking you to be extravagantly generous, to make a financial commitment to the church (a pledge) as a measure of your faith, and to let us know your commitment by mid-November. Such giving should pinch a bit. It should feel like a holy stretch that we make in faith.

Are you asking me to give money in 2023 for 2024?

No, St. Michael’s is asking you to make a pledge (a commitment in faith) for 2024. That is, let the church know what you will give for the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2024, and ending December 31, 2024.

Why is it important to fill out a pledge card?

We build a budget and plan ministry initiatives largely based on income pledged to the church. Pledged income accounts for 83% of the church's operating budget. We also encourage pledging from a spiritual standpoint. We believe that you will not become poorer by giving but richer, spiritually speaking: "You will be enriched in every way by your great generosity" (*2 Corinthians 9:11*).

How can I submit my pledge?

You may fill out a commitment card online, send it via email, or return your pledge card by using the stamped return envelope you receive in the mail. The specific dollar amount of your pledge will only be known by a few people.

How much should I give?

St. Michael's encourages our members to work toward the tithe. A tithe means a "tenth," or 10% of annual income. If you feel you can't give at that level, we still encourage you to think about your giving in terms of percentage of income. If you're retired or on a fixed income, a tithe might mean something different at this stage of your life. The important thing is that you give as an expression of your faith.

Once 2024 arrives, how do I send in monies toward my pledge?

You may place a check in the offering plate on Sundays, set up a recurring gift using your bank's online bill pay, give securely online with a credit card and set up a monthly auto pay, or transfer stock or other securities. Contact our business manager (parishadmin@st-michaels.org) or the rector (jnewton@st-michaels.org) with questions on how to give.

Can I prepay my pledge?

Yes, it is possible to prepay. Last year, some members chose to give part or all of their 2023 pledge in 2022. If you choose to prepay, the church will deposit the monies now, but will keep these gifts in a separate account and apply them to the 2024 budget.

Does the rector pledge to the church?

Yes. Fr. John and his wife, Emily, will make a pledge and grow in their giving in the coming year. Fr. John is happy to share his own stewardship journey with you. To speak to him about this, you may set up an in-person or phone appointment by emailing him at jnewton@st-michaels.org.