



ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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Dear St. Paul's,

November 2022

"Do Not Be Afraid!" We hear these words in scripture so often because we need to hear them frequently and especially when change is upon us. These words of encouragement remind us that God's love is greater than any fear we may ever feel, and that God's goodness is always with us through every experience.

Our new Stewardship theme, **"Do Not Be Afraid,"** describes how we can love and live in the days ahead. This phrase and other similar words of encouragement appear time after time in Scripture. All the Gospels tell the story when Jesus calmed the storm and then calmed the fears of his disciples. These are his words in Matthew 14:27,

"Take courage! It is I. Do not be afraid."

In addition, these comforting words of Jesus are in John 14:27,

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

We all face storms and unsettling experiences. As we approach Advent and prepare to celebrate Christmas, these words in Luke 1:30 can help us focus on God's love for us,

"The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus.'"

Whether you have worshipped with us for years or recently found us online, this congregation shows its love of Jesus through the ministries you make possible.

Together, we have seen significant changes to our daily lives which have impacted our church community too, from regathering guidelines and outdoor services to returning to indoor services that are livestreamed. We have caught up on postponed events: baptisms, weddings, funerals, etc. We continue to welcome new members to our church community. We have accomplished new efforts through the Wishing Well Program. Through prudent endurance, we have made practical decisions and safely moved forward with confidence. Our ministry has had to adapt, improvise, and overcome. Your faithful presence and prayers are what have sustained and strengthened our ministries along the way. Thank you for your generosity.

In **2023** at **St. Paul's**, we are the voice of love for one another in a world so in need of love. We can live more deeply into being generous disciples through our faithful stewardship of our **Time & Talent & Treasure**. Your generosity is essential to our faith community. God gives us all we need. It is our joy to give back. Thank you for the prayerful reflection you give this matter and the commitments you will make. Your commitments always make a difference. Thank you for your prayers.

Prayerfully yours,

The Rev. Sean K. Rousseau +
Rector

Time & Talent & Treasure at St. Paul's in 2023

This November, we encourage your commitment of **Time & Talent & Treasure** in 2023. During Sunday services, the Vestry and I will talk about stewardship and invite you to fill out the **Time & Talent & Treasure** commitment form. We will also mail and email all the information about our stewardship program, **“Do Not Be Afraid.”**

Please fill out and return your commitment form by placing it in the collection plate at a Sunday service, or mailing/emailing it to the church office. Please complete the **Time & Talent** portion of the commitment form, by checking the box, **“Yes! I pledge my Time & Talent to support St. Paul’s,”** and check the ministry or ministries in which you desire to serve. Please make your commitments, each person on the **Time & Talent** portion of the commitment form, and one person from your household on the **Treasure** portion of the commitment form. There is information below regarding **Treasure**, and another page lists the ministries for **Time & Talent**. Please carefully consider God’s generosity to you and contribute generously to help the work of **St. Paul’s**.

HOW MUCH TREASURE SHOULD I GIVE?

Many people ask if there is a guideline for giving: **“In order to be spiritually healthy, how much of what has been given to me do I need to give in return?”** Everyone must arrive at that conclusion independently. Good stewardship is a constant theme in Scripture. **St. Paul** provides direction with these inspiring and timeless words:

*“The one who sows sparingly will reap sparingly,
and the one who sows bountifully will reap bountifully.
Everyone must give according to what they have inwardly decided;
not sadly, not grudgingly, for God loves a cheerful giver.” (2 Corinthians 9:6-7)*

Stewardship is a way of life that expresses our love through our **“need to give.”** **Christian discipleship that gives through good stewardship is spiritual, generous, and proportionate.** Consider God’s generosity to you, and the amount you return in gratitude. Reflect on your spending on technology, entertainment, and food. Think about the ratio of expenditures to your support of **St. Paul’s** and other charitable efforts. Ask yourself if the portion of your income you give is enough, too much, or not enough.

Once you decide the amount you will give for **2023**, please complete the **Treasure** portion of the commitment form by checking the box, **“Yes! I pledge my Treasure to support St. Paul’s,”** and write the amount of your pledge on the line provided. Pledges often begin in January. However, a suitable time to make a new commitment of generosity in gratitude to God for our many blessings is the First Sunday of Advent, the beginning of our liturgical year, November 27, 2022.

By receiving your commitment, we can better predict annual income. Through sound planning, we can ensure financial stability and budget wisely. The economy, a pandemic, or other events can make it difficult to plan for a household or a church congregation. Without sufficient financing, little else can happen. This is as true for our congregation as it is for a household. Our congregation must meet our operating costs and assure our future ministries. In this way, **St. Paul’s** will be ready to provide service.

Thank you for your prayerful consideration as **St. Paul’s** grows into the faith community God wants us to be through the good stewardship of our **Time & Talent & Treasure!**