

Frequently Asked Questions about **PLEDGING AT ST. ANDREW'S**

What is a pledge? As a form of Christian stewardship, a pledge will support St. Andrew's parish and its ministries for the coming year. Your pledge can be fulfilled in weekly, monthly, quarterly or annual payments. Pledges can be paid by check for accurate recording, and you can use the weekly pledge envelopes provided to each pledger at the beginning of the year. Pledge contributions can be placed in the collection plate on Sundays or mailed to the parish office. Although all contributions to St. Andrew's are welcome, making a pledge implies a commitment to the ongoing life of the parish.

How much should I pledge? That is a matter between you and God. Theologically, we believe that everything we have is a gift from God, and that our task as baptized people is to "keep the gift moving" – to share what we have so that more can be given. "All things come of thee, O Lord, and of Thine own have we given thee."

Is there a standard for pledging? The Biblical standard for giving is a tithe which is 10% of any gift received. It directs us toward thinking in terms of the proportion of our income that we give, rather than some arbitrary amount. One can begin with a contribution of 1 or 2% and gradually move toward a tithe. The amount of your pledge in relation to a tithe is a prayerful decision that only you can make. As you pray and plan for your pledge, please remember the concept of first fruits: a tithe – or a percentage working toward a tithe – becomes the first item in one's budget. Rather than choose a fixed sum to pledge every year, one prayerfully and realistically determines what proportion of income to set aside for ministry, and then pledges accordingly. The proportion will vary from person to person, and over time. We give back in gratitude to God a fair share of the gifts we have been given. Parishioners should keep in mind that should a pledger's circumstances change, the pledge figure can be revised – up or down.

Isn't so much focus on money unchristian? That depends on how you define focus. If focus means a preoccupation with money for its own sake, then it is indeed unchristian. As Jesus said, you cannot worship both God and money. But it is striking how often Jesus used stories about money in a positive way to talk about the nature of Christian love. In the New Testament writings, money is sacramental. The way we use our money – whether we hoard it or take risks with it; whether we focus on it for its own sake or see it as a means to further God's love in the world – speaks volumes about how we regard our lives, and our relationship to the God who is the source of all we have, not just our money.

How much does the average pledger at St. Andrew's contribute each year? The average pledge for 2009 was \$1500.

Do I have to pledge to be a member of St. Andrew's? No, anyone who walks through our doors and worships with us regularly is considered a member. We hope all who consider themselves members will make a pledge.

Does the Rector pledge? Clergy households pledge just like every other household in a parish.