



"Sing to God a new song, for God has done marvelous things.
Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills sing together for joy."
+ Psalm 98

STEWARDSHIP 2021

September 30, 2020

Dear St. John's Family and Friends,

Who in the world could have ever guessed we would have a year like the one we're going through? Although there have been challenges, we never doubted for a moment that St. John's would come through it so beautifully and with such grace! Together, we continue to be faithful, adaptable, and creative, so that the church is not only alive, but ***St. John's is positioned to thrive with your continued support.***

Because of your generosity, courage, and faithfulness, we have such hope for this year's stewardship campaign, "***Together for Joy***," happening in October. Psalm 98 says, "O sing to God a new song, for God has done marvelous things!" Throughout 2020, we have found new ways of singing, new forms of praise, and new ways of living out our vision to feed people spiritually and physically.

Psalm 98 concludes with the invitation to join in singing with the hills "together for joy." It seems fitting that we will resume in-person worship on the same day that we kickoff "Together for Joy," for it will truly be a joy-filled time of worship and praise ***together!*** Whether it is in-person or online, ***we invite you to worship with us on Sunday, October 4, 2020 at 10 a.m.*** and throughout October as we celebrate with joy our togetherness in the body of Christ!

Just like other organizations you are part of, your financial support means more now than ever. ***We think it is important for you to know that the ongoing pandemic has impacted our budget and we anticipate it continuing to have an impact as we prepare the 2021 budget.*** At a time when we are no longer benefiting from passing the offering plates on Sunday mornings, pledged giving is our primary source of revenue.

Did you know that 73% of our 2020 budget is funded by pledged gifts? This means that the work of the church is primarily sustained by those who turned in a pledge card or estimate of giving for this year. That does not discount our non-pledged members and friends, who have been generous financially. We name

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this because we have experienced a decline in giving outside of pledged gifts. Due to the volatile nature the pandemic, we expect that to be the case next year, as well. We anticipate that we will need to create a budget for 2021 based almost entirely on the pledges we receive during our upcoming stewardship campaign.

If it were not for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) from the Small Business Administration (SBA), which we anticipate will be forgiven, we would have a shortage of funds to close out the year. By the grace of God, we are not running a deficit at this point! We have achieved this, in part, because the church leadership took strategic steps to reduce expenses at the start of the pandemic, while also engaging in new and creative ways of doing ministry and outreach. Though we may not make up the full 27% of other non-pledged revenue in our budget this year, we still have much to celebrate. Just as Psalm 98 says, "Sing to God a new song, for God has done marvelous things," we have learned to sing new songs this year. We have learned new ways of being the Church. And we continue to be amazed at how God has blessed us and surprised us along the way.

In these uncertain times, your pledged support is essential to our Church's operations and ministry. On Commitment Sunday, October 25, we will seek to meet the challenges before us. We invite you to join us in this endeavor, so that our work of feeding people spiritually and physically can continue. Pledge cards will be mailed in a couple of weeks and there will also be a way for you to make your estimate of giving for 2021 on our website. St. John's is counting on you, and your generosity is more important than ever. Would you prayerfully consider making a pledge for 2021 or increasing your pledge if you are able?

For all that we've already accomplished together during this challenging season, for all that we will accomplish together in the future, we thank God and thank YOU. See you soon - and until then, let us be together for joy!

In faith,

Lane Cotton Winn

Rev. Lane Cotton Winn,
Lead Pastor

Rhonda Tucker

Rhonda Tucker,
Lay Leader

Gray Sexton

Gray Sexton,
Finance Committee, Chairperson

P.S. - We invite you to join us in praying together throughout the month of October using the enclosed prayer card. Whenever you see it, ask God to help you discern your pledge for 2021.

