



ST PAUL'S
EPISCOPAL
CHURCH

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Answering the call to serve

Dear St. Paul's family,

We're kicking off our 2022 annual commitment campaign with a new incentive for pledging at St. Paul's. This year, we're asking for every parishioner to return their pledge cards by Homecoming Sunday, October 23. Then, at the offertory during the service, we will host a drawing where one pledge card will be selected at random and the name on that card will be given a check for double the amount they have pledged! So pledge early, pledge often, and go big and you could be the big winner in this year's commitment campaign!

No, we're not really doing that- sorry if you were otherwise looking forward to the opportunity. In the church, we don't give expecting to get something out of it *because that's not how God gives to any of us in our lives*. God gives freely to us so that we might participate in God's generosity freely and inspire other people to do the same. Everything meaningful that we have in our lives is a gift. We believe that giving meaningfully with the gifts of our lives shows us, all the more, what our lives are really for. Our patron saint, Paul, offers this wisdom to his friend Timothy with this thought on encouraging others to give:

"They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of a life that really is life." -1 Timothy 6:18-19

If you're giving with St. Paul's then I imagine you're giving in many other places in your lives, and I want to encourage you to continue to do so even more in the coming year. I realize that may be a counter-intuitive thought in a world where even charitable organizations compete for resources, but I am utterly convinced that our call as the church is to engender God's brand of generosity in the world- a generosity that is not competitive because God's generosity is not a limited resource. Your life is a testimony to that!

In an economic environment that is constantly concerned with increasingly limited resources, I'm asking you to consider taking stock in your own generosity, with the recognition that God has not, nor will not stop giving to you. I want you to consider how much you freely give away and divide that number by how much you're given. If that result does not approach 10%, then I want you to consider taking a meaningful step toward giving more to the places you feel God calling you serve. Then call those places, and make a commitment, so that in the uncertainty of the coming year, you may be another sign of God's abundant generosity on which they may depend. Of course, I hope St. Paul's is among those places you feel called to meaningfully offer yourself. I certainly have a concern for the mission and resources we share and the staff we call on to support them. Still, pastorally, my primary concern in calling on your generosity is that you are giving meaningfully with the life you have so that you may have a meaningful life. God knows, I hope you find some portion of that with us at St. Paul's, but I also sincerely hope that what you find within our parish community encourages you to offer your gifts with our broader community, otherwise we're not living up to the community that God calls us to be: one that is called to serve.

For my part, I remain ever grateful for being called to serve with you, and I look forward to the gifts that we will continue share among and beyond us as they were shared with us: freely and abundantly.

Gratefully,