



The Parish of Christ Church

62 Delaware Street
Woodbury, New Jersey 08096

Tel. 856.845.0190

Web: <http://christchurch.woodburynj.org>

E-mail: office@christchurch.woodburynj.org

October 13, 2022

Dear Fellow Parishioners:

Our annual stewardship Sunday is October 30th. As we enter our annual Stewardship Campaign we are in an exciting time in the long history of our Parish. The search for our next Rector is well underway. Many members of our Parish have spent countless hours during this time of transition. We also have had the benefit of continuing a full programmatic year with many liturgical and social offerings, while also completing some necessary and unexpected repairs to the outside of the Parish House. We are also most thankful to have been able to have Father Alexander as our Interim Priest. I and my family are truly blessed to call Christ Church our parish home.

With the excitement of looking forward to our next Rector also comes with a certain amount of anxiety and necessity. Not the least of which is the financial health and faithful commitment of our Parish now and moving forward to be able to call as our next Rector who God intends.

We must be prepared to welcome our next Rector not only with a full and faithful congregation but also financial stability. While we do not know who God intends to be our next Rector we need to be prepared to meet our present and future challenges collectively as a Parish family. For those that do not know, in order to call our next Rector we need to make our tithe to the Diocese next year which is 10% of our operating budget, not 10% of pledged funds.

I wrote much last year and centered the Stewardship Campaign as “together as family”. One of my personal regrets as Stewardship Chair and a member of Vestry was not properly recognizing the level of healing which needed to occur before the Parish could move forward and come together once again post pandemic. The Stewardship Campaign was purposely moved to late October this year to help us continue to reunite with one another and look forward together.

While reuniting and looking forward, it is of importance to see where we are now and where we have been both financially and in attendance during our period of transition.

I believe it is of upmost importance that every Parishioner has the benefit and understanding of where we stand financially while prayerfully considering their pledge for 2023.

Total dollars pledged 2022	\$197,681.
81 pledges received	
Average pledge	\$2,440.50
Median pledge	\$2,040
Highest pledge	\$11,900
Lowest pledge	\$100

*A Parish of the Episcopal Diocese of New Jersey
and the worldwide Anglican Communion*

Historically, pledging for 2022 was down significantly in terms of overall dollars and number of pledgers. Many churches and denominations were and continue to be likewise affected. Reasons may vary, but to lay our present financial challenges simply on the pandemic would be inaccurate. Most certainly our income and financial situation has been exacerbated, however as seen below, pledging and attendance have been declining since well prior to the pandemic.

Year	Total Pledges	Total Dollars Pledged	Average Sunday Attendance
2017	127	\$278,982	196
2018	118	\$266,369	187
2019	110	\$241,112	190
2020	107	\$247,466	70
2021	91	\$223,466	76
2022	81	197,681	Requesting we all make an effort to bring this number up as high as possible before the end of the year.

Certainly the challenges lay before us, but the good news is we have it within ourselves to overcome them if we decide to challenge ourselves. However, it is imperative we start now.

While the overall number of pledges and dollars are trending down significantly, the average pledge has in fact risen from \$2,191.93 in 2019 to \$2,440.50 in 2022. We need this positive trend to continue.

With this in mind we are striving for a goal of a 5% increase in pledged funds this year. I would ask everyone, if they can afford to do so, to prayerfully considering increasing their individual pledge by at least 5%.

We must recognize that one of the key attributes of our Parish that future Rector candidates will focus on is our pledging and how that is trending within our Parish.

Focusing strictly on dollars, however, is not the true measure of faithful stewardship. We still need to be about the “mission of the church”. We need to spend our time and energy making sure our pews are filled with parishioners both old and new, our outreach and mission are extensive, our children continue to have a loving, spiritual home and education, we continue to welcome the wider community to our Parish with loving hearts and open doors and we continue to love and serve God. With everything God has given us we have the opportunity NOW to be the church, to attend regularly, to make an impactful pledged financial commitment, to grow in attendance and grow our financial resources.

You will shortly be receiving the Stewardship brochure and financial and faith commitment card for 2023. Please join me in turning those in during the services on Stewardship Sunday, Oct 30th to be received and blessed before the altar. Prior to dismissal of both the 8am and 10am services we will announce where our collective commitment stands.

If we make THIS year the year we renew and embolden our commitment not only financially to our Parish, but also with renewed faith in attendance and participation, then and only then, will we be able to thrive and accomplish all that lies ahead. All to the Glory of God.

Faithfully,

Steve Lewis
Vestry Chair of Stewardship