

## Whom should I speak with if I have other questions or concerns about pledging?

Speak with any one of the following to start:

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Your Stewardship Committee is always available to discuss your questions or concerns:

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We cherish St. Stephen's...

# Time Talent Treasure

*God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.*

— 2 CORINTHIANS 9:8

### Why are our time, talent, and treasure needed?

Time (our participation), talent (our special skills), and treasure (our financial contributions) represent the primary ways each of us contributes to our St. Stephen's family. Every contribution is vital to the life of our church, and each is gratefully received. We each need to consider prayerfully what measure of time, talent, and treasure we are capable of offering, and if possible commit to all three.

### What is our vision of stewardship?

As the church we are God's presence in the world. St. Stephen's is a vibrant community, in which we worship together and share in a variety of ministries in Christ's name. We cherish these ministries. We are nourished by the support and loving encouragement that this community provides. In turn, we are challenged to sustain our wonderful parish and our programs, while being good stewards of our resources.

### Why does it seem stewardship focuses only on "treasure"?

Episcopal churches receive no financial support from the national church, unlike some other Christian denominations. In fact, our parish contributes a portion of your pledge to support our diocese.

Comparatively, Episcopal churches are known for talking too little about money, even though Jesus spent much of his ministry talking about it. At St. Stephen's we enjoy active parishioner participation through a myriad of ministries and programs, but we also have our collective financial responsibilities to meet. Our

hope and our Rector's vision are for everyone to make a financial commitment to the parish.

### Why make a financial pledge?

We make a financial pledge for both spiritual and practical reasons. The Old and New Testaments both encourage us to give generously of what we have. The early church would never have survived without the generosity of her members. The only way our Vestry can develop a responsible budget each year is by knowing how much financial income we can expect from each of our member households. Pledging provides an opportunity to demonstrate gratitude and commitment to our parish and its mission. It connects us personally, through the sharing of time, talent, and treasure, to our St. Stephen's community and to the larger Episcopal Church. For our ministries and programs to exist and thrive, St. Stephen's needs each of us to commit ourselves generously. For this reason, we created the "Cherish" theme for our stewardship campaign. So we ask you, what do you cherish about St. Stephen's?

### How is financial pledge income used?

Each year our Vestry establishes and then approves a responsible budget plan based upon our financial pledges. Pledged income is used to support ALL of the things that you and your family cherish most about St. Stephen's: its ministries, programs, maintenance of the church, and music, to name a few. Operating expenses include staff compensation, utilities, insurance, and maintenance on the church and rectory as illustrated generally for 2016. (See chart, Summary 2016 Operating Budget, on next page.)

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*St. Stephen's Episcopal Church is an inclusive Christ-centered community committed to exploring the intersection of our faith and our lives.*

<b>Summary 2016 Operating Budget</b>	<b>Annual Amount</b>	<b>Weekly Amount</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
<b>INCOME</b>			
Pledges	\$329,640	\$6,339	71%
Non-pledge Gifts	23,000	385	4%
Other Funding	17,000	323	4%
Endowment Draw	72,260	1,356	15%
Funds from Savings	23,400	450	5%
<b>Subtotal Operating Income</b>	<b>465,300</b>	<b>9,132</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Personnel	\$243,683	\$4,792	52%
Property	59,120	1,237	13%
Diocesan Assessment	51,021	925	10%
Capital Improvements	30,000	615	7%
Outreach	19,775	317	3%
Office Expenses	13,100	308	3%
Personnel Expenses	21,000	404	4%
Mortgage	13,130	253	3%
Spiritual Formation	4,100	79	1%
Ministry	4,575	88	1%
Music	4,860	193	1%
Worship, General	700	13	1%
Communications	0	0	0%
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>465,274</b>	<b>8,948</b>	<b>100%</b>

*As illustrated by this table, 2016 pledged income provides for only 71% of the total income required to balance the budget.*

you might consider the blessings you received this past year and what your life might be like if you were to take another step forward in your commitment. Maybe consider increasing your pledge by a specific amount. A simple approach is just to pick a percentage of your income, and start there. You may find it helpful just to think in terms of a specific amount each week, and then see how that translates into an annual pledge. The tables below illustrate these principles. We celebrate the 22 households that increased their pledges for 2016.

### How do I make and pay my pledge?

To **make** your pledge, complete the enclosed pledge card and return it to St Stephens either by mail or at service via the offering plate.

There are **several** ways to **pay** your pledge.

1. Visit the St Stephen's website at [www.ststephens.org](http://www.ststephens.org). Here you can make your pledge conveniently using our secure online tool. Our web portal will allow you to make weekly, monthly or one-time contributions on a schedule that works for you. The web portal allows you to establish your giving plan using an electronic banking draw or even by credit card.
2. Many find weekly envelopes a helpful way to give a portion of their pledge at each Sunday service they attend. When you complete the pledge card, request the envelopes and they will be provided for you at the beginning of the church year.
3. Others prefer to pay monthly, or even as a single lump sum, by check. Both can be paid by mailing the check to the church or via the offering plate. You may also arrange for monthly checks to be sent automatically from your bank account by coordinating with the church office.

### How else can I make a contribution to St Stephen's? Planned giving.

Gifts of all kinds are welcome. In the past, some parishioners have gifted/transferred investments directly to St Stephen's, such as stocks or securities. Also, St Stephen's has touched many lives and in doing so has been blessed by gifts given by parishioners via their estate. If you would like more information on how to include St Stephen's in your estate plan, please note that on the pledge card and the Stewardship Committee can confidentially send you information to learn more.

### If I give regularly using the offering plate, should I consider pledging instead?

Yes. Again, the only way our Vestry can develop a

responsible budget each year is by knowing how much financial income we can expect from our member households. Contributions through Sunday open offerings are of course always welcome. However, committing to a formal, annual pledge helps St. Stephen's plan and budget for the whole year, while increasing your sense of connection and community.

### Don't our endowments make pledge income and my pledge less necessary?

No. Consistent with the establishment of an investment policy in 1992, Vestry practice has been to supplement pledge and non-pledge contributions with funds from the endowment (Fund A) from which we are allowed to draw operating income equal to 4% of the endowment's average market value (as measured on September 30th of the most recent three years). For 2016, \$72,260 was allocated to fund operating expenses. Combined, endowment funds provided for only 15.5% of the total budgeted income.

### Is a financial pledge tax deductible?

Yes, fully, but only for the calendar year in which you actually pay it. You could, for example, pay your pledge for 2017 before December 31, 2016, and then claim the deduction on your 2016 Federal Tax Return. St. Stephen's provides a receipt at year-end for your tax-deductible contributions for that calendar year, including pledges and any other offerings.

### How does my own financial pledge compare with others at St. Stephen's?

Because the confidentiality of each financial pledge is strictly protected, we can only discuss pledge contributions in terms of ranges and quantity of pledges.

For 2016, 96 individuals or households offered financial pledges equal to \$329,640. The average pledge was \$3,433. Segmented into quartiles, the financial pledges were distributed as follows:

<b>Quantity of Pledges</b>	<b>Range of Pledge Amount</b>
18 pledges	\$999 or less
26 pledges	\$1,000 to \$1,800
29 pledges	\$1,801 to \$3,300
23 pledges	\$3,301 or more

### When can I pledge?

Pledge cards for 2017 will be mailed in October. Pledge cards can also be picked up at the church office anytime. Ingathering of pledge cards will take place on Commitment Sunday, November 20th. For your convenience, you can also mail in or drop off your pledge cards at the church office before or after that date. Note: You will also find a digital pledge card on St. Stephen's website: [www.ststephenscohasset.org](http://www.ststephenscohasset.org).

### Are pledges kept confidential?

Yes, only a limited number of individuals have access to pledge information, each of whom signs a strict confidentiality agreement. This includes the Treasurer, the Stewardship Chairperson(s), the Financial Administrator and the Rector.

### What if my personal financial situation changes?

Many of us experience changes in our personal circumstances unexpectedly, and if it becomes necessary during the year to modify your pledge, a simple call or note to the church office is all that is asked.

### Where do I start when considering how much to pledge?

Reflecting the standard set forth in both the Old and New Testaments, the Episcopal Church asks us to recognize the tithe, 10% of our income, as a standard to aspire to and achieve for helping God's work in the world. Yet, choosing a financial pledge amount is a personal endeavor that should be thoughtfully considered each and every year.

If you are not currently pledging, then perhaps consider taking that first step, maybe choosing the cost of two cups of coffee per week as a starting point. Like all first steps, find a place in your comfort zone. We congratulate the 10 households that made new pledges for 2016.

If you have committed to a pledge in the past, then

<b>Annual Giving : Percentage of Approximate Gross Income</b>									
<b>Percent</b>	<b>\$25k</b>	<b>\$35k</b>	<b>\$50k</b>	<b>\$75k</b>	<b>\$100k</b>	<b>\$125k</b>	<b>\$150k</b>	<b>\$175k</b>	<b>\$200k</b>
1%	\$250	\$350	\$500	\$750	\$1,000	\$1,250	\$1,500	\$1,750	\$2,000
2%	\$500	\$700	\$1,000	\$1,500	\$2,000	\$2,500	\$3,000	\$3,500	\$4,000
3%	\$750	\$1,050	\$1,500	\$2,250	\$3,000	\$3,750	\$4,500	\$5,250	\$6,000
4%	\$1,000	\$1,400	\$2,000	\$3,000	\$4,000	\$5,000	\$6,000	\$7,000	\$8,000
5%	\$1,250	\$1,750	\$2,500	\$3,750	\$5,000	\$6,250	\$7,500	\$8,750	\$10,000
6%	\$1,500	\$2,100	\$3,000	\$4,500	\$6,000	\$7,500	\$9,000	\$10,500	\$12,000
7%	\$1,750	\$2,450	\$3,500	\$5,250	\$7,000	\$8,750	\$10,500	\$12,250	\$14,000
8%	\$2,000	\$2,800	\$4,000	\$6,000	\$8,000	\$10,000	\$12,000	\$14,000	\$16,000
9%	\$2,250	\$3,150	\$4,500	\$6,750	\$9,000	\$11,250	\$13,500	\$15,750	\$18,000
10%	\$2,500	\$3,500	\$5,000	\$7,500	\$10,000	\$12,500	\$15,000	\$17,500	\$20,000

<b>Weekly Giving</b>
\$10 per week = \$520 annually
\$20 per week = \$1,040 annually
\$30 per week = \$1,560 annually
\$40 per week = \$2,080 annually
\$50 per week = \$2,600 annually
\$60 per week = \$3,120 annually
\$70 per week = \$3,640 annually
\$80 per week = \$4,160 annually
\$90 per week = \$4,680 annually
\$100 per week = \$5,200 annually