



St. James's Episcopal Church
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October 20, 2011

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Thanks to everyone who has been worshipping with us in 2011 for your generous gifts of worship, nurture, stewardship and outreach to those both inside and outside our community at St. James's, and a warm welcome to newcomers who have only just joined us. You have truly been participating in the *missio Dei*, God's mission of well-being for the world God loves. Now, with our Stewardship Kick-off on Sunday, October 16, you are all invited to participate in God's mission via a financial pledge for 2012.

What is different about this Living Stones pledge season?

Eighteen months ago a foundation stone for growth was laid here at St. James's, in the form of the Rev. Edwin Johnson's Urban Residency, *fully funded by the Diocese*, for a 36-month stay. His presence has allowed us to jump-start a host of activities that would otherwise be "left undone," activities that contribute directly to our growth as a congregation.

In another eighteen months, Edwin will move on, but the reasons we need an Assistant remain. The Diocese saw our potential and got us started, but *we* need to prepare now to ramp up the funding so we can responsibly call a new Assistant Rector in Edwin's place. In practical terms, that means an increase in regular pledged income of at least \$80,000 within the next two years. It's an ambitious goal, but with your help, we *can* achieve it.

Here at the halfway point in Edwin's time with us, we now know what is possible with the energies of an Assistant Rector in our lives. Looking ahead, the question for this pledge season is: Will we lay up the next stones to raise the wall we need to support our ministry? Will we add \$20, \$30, \$50 a month to our pledge? Will we as a congregation achieve our full promise in size, outreach, service, and mission?

Living Stones being built together:

Our stewardship theme this year is "Living Stones," taken from the congregation's 2010 Strategic Plan: "...Like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2:5) Even though redevelopment construction hasn't yet started, our far-sighted Vestry is contemplating its completion and inviting us to imagine ourselves already in that space and time. Our Strategic Plan goals are to:

- Connect and reconnect to maintain and strengthen congregational hospitality, fellowship and formation
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- Discern afresh the vital relationship between our mission inward and our mission outward
- Sustain our stewardship of people & programs, encouraging, developing and supporting servant leaders
- Sustain our stewardship of finances & buildings

Our pledges and ministry tell a story of journey and encounter with the sacred, a story of God's call to each of us to serve each other, a story of gratitude. They witness to our faith in God and in each other. Each offering is equally precious in God's eyes. A \$100 pledge from someone who struggles financially may mean more spiritually than a pledge of \$10,000 from someone who doesn't. That is why we urge you to make a pledge, however small or large, as you sense God's call to you to do so. A pledge of any size helps us plan strategically to deepen our program and our capacity to pursue transformational ministry in our community and the world. As you contemplate pledging your support for God's mission through the people of St. James's, we ask you to consider making a commitment proportional to your income, working toward the biblical standard of giving away at least 10% -- the "first fruits" -- of your take-home pay.

Enclosed is a pledge form and information sheet on stewardship, both of which are also available online at our website www.stjames-cambridge.org under "About: Stewardship." We will also send the same materials via email, in case you prefer to make your pledge electronically. (No form is needed if you use email, but please make sure you include an answer to the last question on the pledge form!) Our final Pledge In-Gathering will be on the last Sunday of Pentecost, November 20th.

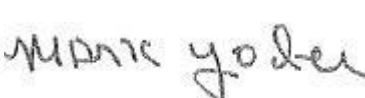
Let us commit ourselves to be built into a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, ready to reach out, expand our congregation, renew our ministries and engage in new mission!

May God bless you for your faith and generosity!

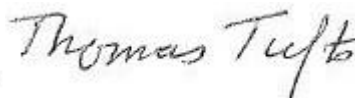
In Christ, The Vestry of St. James's and



Holly Antolini
Rector



Mark Yoder
Senior Warden



Thomas Tufts
Stewardship Chair