

Living Stones Stewardship 2012

“I am the vine, you are the branches.
Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit.”

John 15: 4-5b

***Strengthening our worship, increasing our knowledge of Christ,
and growing in service through generosity.***

Please think and pray about your pledge to St. James’s general operating fund for 2012. Please also note the 2011 pledge report on the back of this sheet and its tremendous witness to the powerful work of the Holy Spirit in the generally invisible ministry of financial giving at St. James’s.

You will receive an invitation to pledge for 2012 by both snail- and email. The [2012 Pledge Form](#) will also be available on the website under About: Stewardship. If you choose to pledge by email, please address your pledge to thomastufts@comcast.net. Paper forms (yellow for 2012) will be available from the ushers and also in the Coffee Hours during the fall.

We invite you to ponder, pray, and make your pledge any time in coming weeks until our final Ingathering on November 20th, the last Sunday in Pentecost. Thanks. – Tom Tufts, Stewardship Committee.

Please consider the following points as you think and pray about your pledge.

1. We seek to cultivate two Christian qualities, among others, in our spiritual life at St. James’s: ***gratitude and generosity***. We seek these qualities through prayer, common worship, the study of Scripture, fellowship, ministry within the church and in our daily lives, nurture, outreach, social justice action, mission and financial stewardship, as well as stewardship of our sanctuary and other facilities. ***Discover and engage the extraordinary and limitless resources for transformation and spiritual growth available at St. James’s, through St. James’s ministries, and in your daily lives.***
2. ***Financial stewardship*** allows us to view our personal finances as an expression of our relationship with God and our neighbor, and our commitment to God’s mission of justice and wellbeing for the world. Promptly submitted pledges are extremely helpful to the Finance Committee and Vestry in the budgeting and planning process, as we must build our budget for 2012 by the end of December 2011. ***Our goal is to increase our budget enough to call an Assistant Rector in 2013, when the Rev. Edwin Johnson’s 3-year Urban Residency – funded by the Diocese at \$80,000 a year from June 2010 to June 2013 – comes to an end.***
3. Remember Jesus’ parable of how the tiny ***mustard seed***, usually the smallest in the garden, can grow into a ***mighty plant*** in which birds shelter themselves. Every pledge is important. Let God decide how to use your generosity, no matter the size of your pledge, to further the work of *shalom*. ***Consider your pledge to the St. James’s operating fund in terms of a percentage of your income and increase it gradually, year to year, toward the biblical standard of giving away the first fruits – 10% -- of your take-home pay.*** This method allows you to track your growth in stewardship proportionately over time. If you feel you cannot pledge, consider a regular gift, given at the Offertory in worship each week. ***Your participation level inspires some to start giving and encourages others to give more! That’s how the mustard seed grows!***
4. ***Challenge yourself*** to write down one or more ***other ways you would like to commit to a careful generosity and conscientious stewarding of your abundance*** in the next 12 months. These will be collected and distributed back to all of you anonymously as a way of encouraging and lifting each other up to the Lord.

Thanks – Tom Tufts