

Answers To Questions About Pledging

What is a pledge?

A pledge is a good-faith statement of what you plan to give to St. Chrysostom's Church in the coming year to fund the mission and ministries of the church.

The mission of St. Chrysostom's Church—and the wider mission/outreach circle of our Episcopal Charities—requires the time and talent of the members of our community. Prayerfully consider giving your time and talent, as well as your pledge of money.

Who benefits from my pledge to St. Chrysostom's?

Annual contributions provide the vast majority of the funding for the benefits that we provide to parishioners and our surrounding community:

- Beautiful worship services each Wednesday and four times on Sunday;
- Engaging sermons, bible study and reflections in weekly emails and blogs;
- Inspiring, concert-quality music during worship and special performances;
- Pastoral care by clergy who baptize and marry our children and other new parishioners; preside over funeral services, visit and provide Eucharist to sick and shut-in members, and pray and counsel parishioners in distress and hardship;
- Church School that educates and builds community among more than 70 children;
- Spiritually enriching and intellectually stimulating adult education;
- Fellowship at coffee hours and events sponsored by the Women's of St. Chrysostom's, Parents with Young Children, and our men's groups;
- Outreach programs like the Cathedral Shelter Christmas Basket Program; meals for Neighbors in Need and Deborah's Place, Employment Council and 12-step support groups who use our facilities;
- Preserving our lovely 19th-century property that has been battered by recent flooding and the needs of its distinguished age.

We ask you to make St. Chrysostom's a priority among the other organizations that you support because we profoundly touch so many lives in so many ways. The vestry plans the level of these benefits each year based on what the congregation plans to give over the coming year, as indicated by pledges.

Why is St. Chrysostom's 2012 Need a Special One?

This Fall, our church's annual giving campaign takes on new importance as we build our ministries in preparation for the search for a new Rector to join St. Chrysostom's next year when the Rev. Ray Webster retires. During this Stewardship Season we have a unique opportunity to demonstrate our support by giving generously to support the continued ministry of our Associate Rector, the Rev. Danielle Thompson and to shape and strengthen the ministries of our church. This is the perfect time to reflect on the blessings of our lives, and on the benefits of the worship, music, fellowship, outreach and programs that make St. Chrysostom's a vibrant and joyful place for parishioners and friends.

If you pledged last year, please consider increasing the amount of your pledge this year as the cost of providing these benefits has increased while other sources of funding, such as the Lilly Grant that supports Danielle's salary, are waning. Do you remember how great it feels every year to give a generous Christmas gift to your family? Our worship, education, and outreach programs benefit many who will be just as grateful to you each week. We ask you to make St. Chrysostom's a priority among the other organizations that you support because we profoundly touch so many lives in so many ways. We need to be financially strong to continue to provide these benefits, attract new members, and obtain the best clergy during our search. We do not have a big endowment but depend on the generosity of our members to support the benefits that we provide.

Who will know what I pledge, and why?

Pledge amounts are kept confidential. The only people who will know the amount of your pledge are: the Rector, the Stewardship Chair, the Senior Warden, the Junior Warden and the parish administrator who records pledges in the church's system. This allows us to maintain confidentiality while working with the parish office to ensure that we have recorded pledges and contributions correctly.

What happens if I can't pay my pledge?

A pledge is NOT a legally binding contract. If your circumstances change during the year, simply notify the parish administrator.

What is a generous pledge for me to give?

First, pray about it: ask God to guide you in making your decision. You should give until you feel good about it. By generously committing yourself to our parish deeply, you can transform other's lives. You can also transform yourself with the rewarding feeling of personally supporting the outstanding benefits we provide to our parish and the surrounding community.

Second, ask yourself what your income is.

Third, ask yourself what percentage of that income you want to give to God's purposes—to your parish and other charitable giving. Make a list of those: St. Chrysostom's Church, Episcopal charity(ies), United Thank Offering, school(s), and hospital(s). If it turns out your giving is one percent, that may be a call to grow it! The General Conventions of our Episcopal Church for some years have voted to hold up 10% (the Biblical tithe) as the standard—goal and challenge—of giving: in other words, when you make your personal list of the charities you support, it would add up to 10% of your income.

Fourth, what percentage do you want to aim for? The average contribution to Episcopal churches nationally is approximately 2.5% of income. Please pray on giving this amount or, if your circumstances permit, even more to make up for those whose circumstances do not permit. The average pledge at St. Chrysostom's was \$2,347 in 2011. Many can give more, but if, on the average, we can give \$60 per week or \$3,120 per year, we will be able to enhance our programming and the benefits our church provides. Therefore, we respectfully request that you pledge as much as you can afford, not just "what you gave last year."

Fifth, decide to aim to give that in the coming year and offer your gift to God at the altar.

How do I pledge?

A link to the pledge card is provided on the web page above the link to this file (use your browser to go back to the previous page). The pledge card can be dropped in the collection plate at weekly services, or mailed or faxed to the parish office. Please note that all fields of the card need to be completed.

Different people receive their income in different ways. For many people, giving weekly (or monthly) allows them to give more than could easily be done at one time. For others, however, it is more convenient to give 100 percent of their pledge at one time. Envelopes for your contributions will be provided if you find them to be helpful.

How can I get a report to let me what portion of my pledge amount I have given and what remains outstanding?

Please contact the parish office, and a report can be prepared for you.