

Giving is a Spiritual Act

Luke 1:46-47: *"And Mary said, 'my soul magnifies, the Lord, and my spirit rejoice in God, my savior...'"*

We talk about giving at St. John's year round but in a special way in October and November.

From October 12 -November 16, we talk about the spiritual importance of pledging and invite parishioners to make a **pledge** for the following calendar year. You will receive materials to help you understand how to make a pledge and what your pledge dollars support. Consistent with Biblical teachings, **we ask ALL active parishioners to pledge.**

A pledge to St. John's is your stated intention to fulfill a defined, annual monetary gift that supports the operational budget of the Church. Filling out the pledge form, whether in paper or electronically, is not actually a gift. Rather, the pledge is a statement of what you plan to give.

The church appreciates and relies on the time and effort parishioners put into volunteering and participating in our many ministries. We could not do what we do without each of you! However, the pledge campaign supports a broad spectrum of operating expenses and ministry work, and we rely on your financial support in addition to your active participation in our community.

Each year, the vestry approves the annual budget. Typically, about 40% of our church's annual budget is supported by pledges. The remainder is supported by the endowment, weekly offerings, and parking lot and facility rentals. For more information on the church budget, please attend the annual business meeting at the end of January. To learn more about St. John's budget for the upcoming fiscal year, please refer to our enclosed Treasurer's summary page for more information.

Giving is a spiritual act, one commended throughout scripture. Often, we think about giving in round numbers—\$25 a week or \$3,000 a year—but the Bible recommends the tithe, understood as 10% of one's income. That is a great goal to work towards as we recognize that everything comes from God and we are thankful, generous, and joyful with the gifts given to us. **All gifts faithfully given nourish your relationship to God, our community, and all those to whom you give!** We are so grateful for all gifts given to St. John's. Your financial gifts support the salaries and health insurance of church staff and clergy, expenses related to ministry and programs, including music, worship, outreach, formation, fellowship and communication; plus other expenses, such as facility and utility costs.

There are different sources and ways to pledge!

A gift of appreciated stocks you've held for more than a year can be a tax-efficient way of making gifts to St. John's. Let's say you paid \$500 for 10 shares of XYZ Corporation more than a year ago, and it is now worth \$1,000. You can give that \$1,000 in XYZ Corporation to St. John's and take a charitable deduction for the stock's fair market value on the day you give it away. You'll avoid capital gains taxes on the increase in value over time, which you would have had to pay if you sold the stock then gave the charity the cash. And St. John's can sell the stock free of tax. In short, by making a gift of appreciated securities, you get the same tax benefit you receive for paying cash, plus you avoid potential capital gains taxes. We caution that everyone's tax situation is unique, and your tax adviser should be consulted before making any gift of appreciated securities.

For parishioners aged 70 ½ or older, the **charitable IRA rollover** is another way to give. The IRA charitable rollover allows individuals to make certain charitable contributions directly from your Individual Retirement Account. The transferred assets will not be recognized as income for tax purposes. Making a donation under this provision is simple and straightforward. If you would like to make a contribution to St. John's from your IRA, please speak with your IRA administrator.

A donor-advised fund is like a personal charitable savings account. A donor creates an account and makes a contribution of cash, stock, or other assets like real estate or artwork and can take an immediate tax deduction for the gift. Donor advised gifts can be made in order to fulfill a pledge. We recommend including specific language with your pledge. We recommend consulting the financial institution managing the DAF or financial advisor if you plan to make a donor advised gift to fulfill your pledge.

Gifts given at the end of the year must be received by December 31, 2025. In order for you to claim a deduction on your 2025 tax return, anything mailed to St. John's must be postmarked by midnight Dec. 31, 2025.

The Bible teaches us about the many spiritual reasons for pledging and giving to the church. If you would like to explore further how your gifts to St. John's can be part of your faith story and Way of Love, please email St. John's at info@stjohnsgloucester.org and a clergy member will be in touch with you.

We appreciate your discernment and prayer around your giving to St. John's this year.