



ST. BARNABAS

EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Feast of St. Simon & St. Jude
October 28, 2023

Dear Friend of St. Barnabas,

Thank you for your support of the work God called us to at St. Barnabas in 2023. I am writing to ask that you consider submitting a pledge for the coming year.

St. Paul tells us that, though we are many, we are one Body in Christ. Each part of the Body has a different function, is necessary to the whole, and contributes to the greater good.

The theme of our 2024 stewardship campaign is Better Together. We are objectively better together. I am frequently amazed by the many gifts that members of our congregation are willing to share.

One of the long-term goals at St. Barnabas has been **raising up more lay-led ministries** to increase our capacity to serve God and the world. Over the last year, we've made tremendous progress in this area. A highlight of my recent ministry was stopping by the church on a Saturday morning and realizing that there were six or seven concurrent activities in the building – all of it happening independent of me. I love seeing our **parishioners embrace the gifts they've been given and share them** for the benefit of Christ and his Church. We are better together.

Some **highlights of the ministries led by members of the congregation** over the last year include: the Community Cupboard, the new Community Cupboard Garden, Wednesday Morning Prayer, Monday night yoga, Threads of Love, Guns to Gardens, Bellwether volunteer days, marching in Pride, hosting an innovation fair for the whole diocese, building our new inclusive restroom, and many others. All of these have been led by parishioners. Thank you for all the ways you have shared your time and talent over the last year.

To continue the work God has given us, **we need your help.** As our capacity for ministry expands, our financial needs also grow. In 2023 we budgeted \$330,227 in expenses. For the church to continue on its current trajectory, the 2024 budget will need to increase simply to account for the financial realities we all face.

However, our decision to financially support the mission of the church is not simply a response to need. **Giving is a spiritual discipline offered in gratitude for the gifts and blessings we've received from God.** Holy Scripture teaches us to return a portion of our abundance to God and gifts of any amount make a difference in our budget and commit you to the spiritual practice of generosity. The biblical model of giving is 10% of our income, but for most of us this is a distant goal to work toward. Only you can decide what level of support is appropriate for you and your family. Every contribution of every size makes a difference. We are better together.

Acknowledging that stewardship is more than just financial, I'm also **asking you to make a pledge of time and talent** on the back of the pledge card. Time and talent opportunities will be made available regularly throughout the coming year in bulletin announcements and the weekly email newsletter. There will be new opportunities, of course, but many ways we share time and talent are things you're already doing. Thank you.

Please prayerfully **consider how God is calling you to support the work of St. Barnabas by making a pledge – of time, talent, and treasure** – before Christ the King Sunday, November 26 when pledge cards will be blessed. Your prayers, your presence, and your generosity are what make this work possible. Each part of Christ's Body has something to contribute to the greater good. We are better together.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Alex" with a small cross symbol at the end.

The Rev. Alexander D. Martin
Rector