



Dear members and friends of All Saints Church,

As we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ this Easter season, we're mindful of the abundance of new life, life that lasts forever, life that we share with Jesus even now. It's in that context of abundance, then, that we begin our stewardship season.

God continues to bless All Saints. We've welcomed several new people into our congregation over the past year (including many new babies!) and participation in our worship services, small groups, and mission partnerships has also increased. Importantly, we continue to hear testimonies from parishioners of their deepening awareness of God's love, God's goodness, and God's call on their lives.

As the staff and vestry work on the budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024, we're aware of three dynamics at work at All Saints. First, continued growth in numbers, especially among our children, requires increased staffing to care well for this important group. To that end, we're proposing increasing hours for our ministries to youth and children. In addition, as the size of our staff increases, associated administrative costs such as laptops, phone systems, professional development, and financial / support software will also increase. Second, leadership development continues to be a core calling at All Saints. This year we will begin contributing to the cost of our curacy (just under 15%), in addition to adding an additional intern who will focus on music ministry. Third, like all individuals, institutions, and families, we are experiencing the pressure of inflation, thus the cost of day to day operations and ministries have increased accordingly. With all of that said, however, the increases we are considering as we put the budget together are relatively minor, which speaks to the dedication of both our staff and volunteers in their stewardship of the congregation's resources.

As we share our hopes for ministry in the next year, we also extend an invitation to you all to begin to prayerfully consider your commitment to the life and ministry of All Saints. It's common to speak in terms of "time," "talent," and "treasure" as we engage in this discernment process. What does it mean to invest time in worship, formation, community, and mission at All Saints in the coming year? What gifts and skills do you have that you might offer to the congregation as we seek to respond faithfully to God's invitations to us in the year ahead? Finally, as we receive all of our material resources as a gift from God, how is God leading you to give back a portion for the work of the church—worship, formation, community, and mission? Historically, God's people have practiced tithing, meaning taking the first 10% of one's income and giving it toward the work of God through the ministry of the church. Without being legalistic, the tithe is a helpful baseline as we prayerfully consider what God might be asking of us in the coming year. It is important to note that All Saints, in addition to giving 10% of our income to the diocese (which, in turn, gives away close to half of its income), we give another 10% to local and international missions partners, including two church planters.

We have so much to be thankful for at All Saints. Sunday after Sunday the worship is rich, the music, the prayers, the Word of God, the liturgy, and the fellowship are full of life. It's a gift to hear testimonies of individuals and families connecting with one another outside of Sundays, whether in small groups or other, less formal gatherings where friendship can deepen, where we can bear one another's burdens and thus experience a deep sense of belonging.

It's also a gift to walk closely with our mission partners. Through their work we're reminded of the imperative of evangelism, especially in those places where opposition to the gospel is strong, and the centrality of those on the margins to the heart of God, whether immigrants, the unborn and their mothers, the poor, those who live with disabilities, and the individuals and communities who have experienced discrimination because of their racial or ethnic identity.

In all of this, we grow in our awareness that each of us is called bear witness to the good news of Jesus and his kingdom, in our words and our actions, in such an anxious, cynical, and polarized time. I believe that God continues to invite All Saints Church to be a place marked by deep, thoughtful, prayerful, and joyful worship, intentional, compassionate, and encouraging relationships, and courageous, sacrificial, and humble service, all toward the end of announcing that, in and through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the kingdom of God has come near.

We're grateful that you are on this journey with us, and trust that God will lead each of us as we prayerfully discern how God is calling us to participate in this good work in the coming year.

Peace,

Chris