

COMMITMENT SUNDAY SERVICE

St. Mark's Commitment Sunday Service is the culmination of our "Growing in Grace" stewardship campaign. Everyone in the parish will have an opportunity to participate during this time of personal, prayerful commitment.

We are being asked to make two commitments:

- † The first is a financial commitment to the ongoing mission and ministry of St. Mark's. This is our annual pledge, and all of us are encouraged to consider making more of a commitment in our regular giving.
- † The second pledge is toward the new Education Building. The second pledge is a unique pledge because this is a unique chapter in our parish's history. Both of these pledges, our personal commitments, are integral to the future of St. Mark's growing in grace.



St. Mark's Episcopal Church

Growing in Grace Capital Stewardship Program

Because we believe in the future of our church and want to be part of its success, we will endeavor to give:

\$ _____	Weekly for 156 weeks	Total: \$ _____
\$ _____	Monthly for 36 months	Total: \$ _____
\$ _____	Annually for 3 years	Total: \$ _____
Or as follows: _____		

PLEASE PRINT BELOW

Name: _____ State: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Signature: _____




"We have discovered that sacrifice is taking something you value and setting it aside for a Holy purpose." ~ The Reverend Bert Baetz

"He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.'" Mark 16:15-16

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CAMPAIN NEWSLETTER 4

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

THE HOLY GIFT

"When he looked up he saw some wealthy people putting their offerings into the treasury and he noticed a poor widow putting in two small coins. He said, 'I tell you truly, this poor widow put in more than all the rest; for those others have all made offerings from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty, has offered her whole livelihood.'" Luke 21:1-4

The poor widow impressed Jesus with more than simply her generosity. She, like these wealthy men, gave to the Temple treasury as a matter of religious devotion. What differed though was where each placed their security. The wealthy men likely placed most of their security in their wealth, material possessions, and money. They found themselves at peace, without worries, content and confident, because of all they had.

On the other hand, the widow did not fear to give her last two coins to God because her security was placed in God rather than in material wealth. It was not what she had that mattered, but who she was; and maybe more importantly who God was in her life. God was her life, her hope, her strength. God would care for her better than money ever could. The gift she made was holy.

"...it is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have."

2 Corinthians 8:12

Remember, God does not ask us to surrender something we do not have. It is not about everybody giving an equal amount, but about each of us giving a comparable proportion of what we do have. The widow understood that and Jesus recognized that in her heart.



Lord Jesus, teach me to give of myself with a generous heart. May sacrifice and suffering never limit what I offer you; rather may they be the constant currency of my gift. Help me place my hope and confidence in you, and not in the fragile possessions I hold in this life. I want always to see my gifts as destined for others. Open my eyes to see them as you do, with goodness and love.

Amen

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COMING SOON

- January 27
Commitment Sunday
- February 10
First Fruits



ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH



ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH



If it is all about people, then...

...perhaps we should hear what they have to say



~ Rhonda ~

When a person is baptized into the Christian faith, a promise is being made to continue on a path that leads us closer to God. Christian formation is a way to guide us along that path.

In adult Christian formation classes, we are not only learning what the Bible says about being Christian, we are also learning how to become truly good Christians.

We are learning from our instructor but at the same time, we are learning from other members of the class as well. So, as the class expands, the more we learn and the closer we get to God.

Having a permanent place to hold adult Christian formation classes will promote consistency in learning as well as provide room for expansion as the class is "Growing in Grace".

I have to be honest. When I found out all that was involved and asked of us for this campaign, I was a little overwhelmed.



~ Lyle ~

The first meeting was scheduled on a busy day for us, coming back from being out of town, and having to drive 1.5 hours back and forth to Church, to attend something we knew nothing about.

I complained to Bert, as friends do...His response was this. "Lyle, if you don't want to do this, that is totally fine. The project is not resting on your shoulders, and it won't fall apart without your involvement." I quickly apologized for my complaints and attended the first meeting.

My attitude on the subject did not change that night. We were being asked for more time, and more money....

I spent that night trying my best to do what Kurt told us to. "Pray over what you want to contribute". I woke the next morning, and the first thing that came to my mind was...

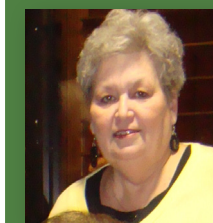
"THIS IS NOT ABOUT US, THIS IS ABOUT OTHERS".

Thoughts of what the church and the community will get out of the new building, suddenly, all made sense. Having tried our best to do our part in the process, we found something along the way.

"Being a part of the campaign has made us feel that we are really part of the church, not just attending on Sundays."

In the building of something new, we have strengthened what we already have. It has been a really wonderful experience, and we look forward to seeing what the campaign will provide to the church and those in the community around us.

"I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God— what is good and acceptable and perfect." Romans 12:1-2



~ Bettye ~

Whoo Hoo!!!!

I love to plan a party and increasing the hospitality room 50% will be wonderful. We will have the room to host all the food and fellowships with room to spare.

*More room =
More People =
St. Mark's*



~ Mother Teresa ~

*Sacrifice is easy when we
"think about what Jesus
will gain and not what
little me will lose..."*

"Every great journey begins with one step!"

FIRST FRUITS OFFERING ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 10

Our first step toward our future plans for St. Mark's begins on February 10th with the giving of our First Fruits Offering. This offering begins our three-year giving to the "Growing in Grace" Campaign for our new Education Building and our continued giving to the 2013 Operating Budget.

Special offering envelopes will be provided to facilitate our giving. A strong response on this day provides the financial resources for St. Mark to move decisively toward implementing our plans.

Our consultant tells us that it is not unusual to receive at least 10% in cash or stocks of what was committed to the project during the First Fruits offering.

Surely, we can do more!

In every church I have attended, the ushers eventually take the collection plates to the front of the church; give them to someone else, who then gives them to the minister or priest. The priest says a few words and then hides the offerings under or behind the altar.



~ Benno ~

Evidently money is dirty, crass, something to be embarrassed about. Father Bert does something wonderfully different. After he blesses the offerings, he leaves them on the altar throughout the rest of the service. It is powerful and meaningful symbolism - our gifts to God sitting on the altar next to the bread and wine, God's gifts to us.

Because of this, instead of writing a check every few months and mailing it to the church, we now put something in the collection plate every Sunday, praying as we do it.