



The Parish of Christ Church

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Dear Parishioners of Christ Church,

September 2024

This is the time of year when our churches are given the opportunity to look at how we give to our parish and how our parish addresses each other's needs and the needs in the community around us. Stewardship is about the many ways in which we give back. Our talents and time are just as important as financial giving. Each one of us is called to a particular ministry that is rooted in Christ, His Body, and the Church. The leadership at Christ Church is so grateful to those of you who give so much of your time, talent and money. In the past year of serving with you, I see a parish that continues to be in great need in all three areas.

I will let our lay leadership address the financial situation more fully. But what is very clear is that we need to close the financial gap, so that we no longer draw from the endowment to meet monthly expenses. If we do this, we will have enough to support our excellent liturgy and music, maintain our robust Sunday school, serve the needs of the community and continue to run the parish with a full-time priest. We might also be able to meet our diocesan pledge and return to a full-time parish administrator. Again, in order to do this, financial giving needs to increase substantially. And the number of people who actually pledge needs to increase. Pledging says that we are still committed to the place we belong to, and in which we worship. Pledging commits us to the parish's ministry, a ministry that is part of the larger church, and the Body of Christ. It shows that we are committed to doing the work of Jesus in the present time and into the future.

Another aspect of stewardship which is especially challenging these days, is the giving of time and talent. It is harder and harder to find people to commit their time, and it seems that the same people step up to fill the gap and their energy can burn out. Even as many of you signed up for different ministries on Homecoming Sunday, I still sense a real exhaustion from a few of the people who lead those ministries. We need people willing to step into those roles. I hear more and more that other things and obligations get in the way of volunteering and even attending services at church each week. This is often hardest among families balancing different schedules. I understand that there is so much to keep us busy. But in a beautiful, but very troubled world, there is always too much to distract us. The church offers us a real antidote to the anxieties of our very busy, technologically focused, impersonal, and troubled world. It is in our parish community, the place we come to pray as a family, that we can connect in real-time. The Church offers us various ways to slow down and be present in person, face to face through worship and fellowship in different groups. It is the place where we are sustained at the Lord's altar, and the place where our children are formed spiritually through classes and activities they do together with other children as a church. So, the Church is where our faith is formed. Research shows that we lose most of our

members from around age 13 to 25. This happens when families decrease their involvement in church during those important formative years. And when they go, they most likely won't return.

Christ Church can only grow in its mission into its future if we see ourselves as a parish that does more than maintain itself. It will only grow if we make the parish a priority in our lives. Your support can come in so many ways as we move forward together. And your pledge is an important way that commits us to growing into the future and to the ministry we have to each other and to the community around us. Pledge Sunday is November 3rd. We encourage you to either bring in your pledge card to Mass that day, or send it to the parish office by mail, or especially electronically. The parish leadership and I are grateful for all that you do!

Faithfully in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Civale", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Father Civale