

We Are Gifted, We Are Called St. James Annual Stewardship Appeal

November 2024

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We are
gifted
We are called

What is Stewardship?

Stewardship is a two-step process starting with recognizing that all that we have, including our total being, has been given to us by our loving God. The second step involves the question, "What are we to do with our gifts from God?" The answer in the Gospels is "To build the Kingdom of God here on earth." In the Catholic Bishops' document on stewardship, they write, "*As Christian stewards, we receive God's gifts gratefully, cultivate them responsibly, share them lovingly in justice with others, and return them with increase to the Lord.*" The Bishops identify stewardship as central to what it means to be a Catholic in our world today, and it encompasses the sharing of our time, talent, and treasure.

Our Stewardship Prayer

*Loving God, You have called us to
Embody Your servant, Jesus, at
St. James Church in Midtown.*

*You have anointed us to be good news to the
poor, sight to the blind, release for captives,
food for the hungry, a home for strangers
and a refuge for the broken-hearted.*

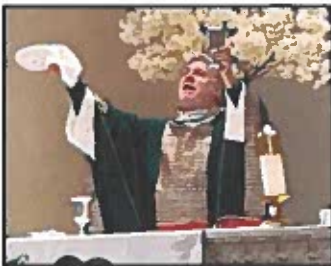
*All our abilities and possessions are gifts that
You have given to us.*

*Help us to share these gifts to
build Your Kingdom.*

*Make us wise stewards of the past,
faithful prophets for today, bold witnesses to
all that is still to come.*

*Give us joy in praising You, strength in serving
Your people, unity in loving one another.
In Jesus' Name, we pray. Amen.*

A Note From Our Pastor



Saint Teresa of Calcutta visited Australia. A new recruit to the monastery in Australia was assigned to be her guide and "gofer" during her stay. The young man was so thrilled and excited at the prospect of being so close

to this special woman. He dreamed of how much he would learn from her and what they would talk about. But during her visit, he became frustrated. Although he was constantly near her, he never had the opportunity to say one word to St. Teresa. There were always other people for her to meet. Finally, her tour was over, and she was due to fly to New Guinea. In desperation, the friar had his opportunity to speak to St. Teresa. He said to her, "If I pay my own fare to New Guinea, can I sit next to you on the plane so I can talk to you and learn from you?" St. Teresa looked at him. "You have enough money to pay airfare to New Guinea?" she asked. "Oh, yes," he replied eagerly.

"Then give that money to the poor," she said. "You'll learn more from that than anything I can tell you." The problem was the young man wanted to experience a feeling when he needed to simply learn by doing. Dear friends, throughout this campaign, my prayer has been that we, as a community, build a culture of generosity where all of us become more generous with our time, talent, and treasure. The story above illustrates it so well. If we want to be better stewards of God's gifts, we must learn by giving these precious resources away.

On Commitment Sunday, November 24, you will be asked to make an investment in our faith community to ensure that we continue to be a source of encouragement, faith, and God's love to the world. Join me in making commitments to the *We Are Gifted, We Are Called* and praying for our parish and its leadership so we make the right decisions for our faith family.

In Christ,
Fr. Don Farnan

THE ANNUAL STEWARDSHIP APPEAL

Stewardship is a year-round activity, and we invite parishioners to share their time and talent throughout the year. St. James has designated November to focus mainly on sharing our financial gifts. Our annual stewardship appeal requests that parishioners commit treasure to support the work and ministries of the parish from January 2025 through December 2025. This includes parish staff salaries, programs such as worship, religious education, mission outreach, and maintenance of our facilities and utilities.

With your support over the past year, St. James has been able to address the spiritual needs of our members in many ways. Here is an overview.

- We held a ministry fair in May, showcasing all the different ministries and inviting members to share their time and talents with the parish.
- Between 120 and 200 faith-filled individuals worship with us each Sunday.
- So far in 2024, St. James has conducted 11 baptisms and four first communions, confirmed 17 teens, confirmed four who received the sacrament of Reconciliation provided six weddings and said goodbye to four of our friends who passed away.
- St. James Community Garden makes available healthy food for neighbors and others.
- Our Liturgy Team works tirelessly to provide the St. James community with meaningful and engaging worship experiences.
- The Social Justice Committee works to address the needs of those on the margins, such as immigrants and those on death row. They also assist people experiencing poverty in the neighborhood.
- The Parish Growth Committee engages the entire parish to be a welcoming community to everyone who worships with us.
- Between the Cracks Ministry assists any family that needs help with utilities, medicine, housing, transportation, and bereavement.
- The Bus Stop Ministry ministers to those who use the 39th and Troost bus stop. This year alone, they gave out over 1,000 hats and gloves and provided snacks and water to over 1,300 people.
- Knitting and Crocheting Group makes hats, mittens, and scarves that the Bus Stop Ministry distributes.
- We host the annual Good Friday Stations of the Cross along Troost Avenue. Continued on Page 4

Current Operating Budget

As with many churches that survived COVID-19, our parish finances have taken a hit. In this fiscal year, we are spending more than we bring in. Below is the current financial picture.

Parish Income	July 1 2023-2024	% of Budget	July 1 2024-2025	% of Budget
Tithing (76%)	\$201,402	76%	\$213,000	78%
Fundraising (11%)	\$30,809	12%	\$32,000	12%
Operational (9%)	\$23,399	9%	\$25,700	9%
Religious Education (0%)	\$444	0.20%	\$500	0.20%
Ministry/Program Fees (1%)	\$3,019	1%	\$3,100	1%
Diocesan Allocation (3%)	\$7,000	3%		
Total	\$266,072	100%	\$274,300	100%
Parish Expenses				
Personnel (wages/benefits)	\$107,363	39%	\$99,800	36%
Facilities (Utilities/Maintenance)	\$28,902	10%	\$29,900	11%
General/Operational**	\$130,823	47%	\$135,300	49%
Prayer/Worship (Supplies, etc.)	\$3,803	1%	\$4,700	2%
Religious Education (PreK-Adults)	\$1,697	1%	\$1,900	1%
Pastoral Ministry (Family Ministry, etc.)	\$3,173	1%	\$2,700	1%
Total	\$275,762	100%	\$274,300	100%
Deficient	(\$9,690)			

*Refund from Diocesan Annual Appeal
 **Includes Diocesan Assessment, Property Insurance, School (Support for St. James Children attending Catholic Schools)
 Contact office for complete budget information.



We have a vision that is amazing and exciting. We are inviting you to invest yourself through the resources that God has given you – your energy, your prayers, and your money – in this work to which God has called us.

Tithing, Proportionate Giving, and Your Commitment

The leadership of St. James is presently engaged in prayerful deliberation about the ministry of stewardship to which God calls each of us as disciples. Stewardship as a ministry focuses more on how we, the members of St. James, can joyfully give back to God from the gifts God has given us and less on the dollar amounts needed to balance the church budget. A community that embraces Stewardship as a ministry takes seriously the biblical call to tithe 10% of our time, talents, and money to building God's Kingdom.

Recognizing that everything we have is a gift from God, we encourage every parish household to consider accepting the following challenge prayerfully: **allocate 10% of our net household treasure to building God's Kingdom—5% in support of the vital ministry of St. James Parish, 1% to the Diocesan Annual Appeal and 4% to other efforts in building God's kingdom, such as non-profits serving those who are in need in our community and the world.** If you give 5% or more to our ministries at St. James, we appreciate your sacrifice to

our mission! If you can consider a more significant commitment, we will be grateful because we know that some of our members will not be able to increase their commitment this year.

The chart below will assist us in evaluating our challenge. The household income ranges will allow us to determine our current giving levels to St. James. **We are asked to prayerfully consider increasing our commitment to St. James by half of one percent of our family net income for 2025.** If we continue this pattern as we move into the future together, we will reach our stated goal of supporting the church ministries with at least five percent of our family income.



The chart below will assist us in determining what impact a one-half-percent increase will have on our giving.

Total income	0.50%	1%	1.50%	2%	2.50%	3%	3.50%	4%	4.50%	5%
\$150,000	\$750	\$1,500	\$2,250	\$3,000	\$3,750	\$4,500	\$5,250	\$6,000	\$6,750	\$7,500
\$125,000	\$625	\$1,250	\$1,875	\$2,500	\$3,125	\$3,750	\$4,375	\$5,000	\$5,625	\$6,250
\$100,000	\$500	\$1,000	\$1,500	\$2,000	\$2,500	\$3,000	\$3,500	\$4,000	\$4,500	\$5,000
\$75,000	\$375	\$750	\$1,125	\$1,500	\$1,875	\$2,250	\$2,625	\$3,000	\$3,375	\$3,750
\$50,000	\$250	\$500	\$750	\$1,000	\$1,250	\$1,500	\$1,750	\$2,000	\$2,250	\$2,500
\$25,000	\$125	\$250	\$375	\$500	\$625	\$750	\$875	\$1,000	\$1,125	\$1,250
\$15,000	\$75	\$150	\$225	\$300	\$375	\$450	\$525	\$600	\$675	\$750

The Decision to Give to the Annual Stewardship Appeal

For many of us, participating in this appeal could be our most significant charitable gift this year. Please consider the following as you reflect on your decision about your commitment.

- Recall all the blessings God has bestowed on you, knowing that these gifts are given to you, not for your personal use only but to build His Kingdom on earth.
- Pray to discern what sacrifice God is asking of you in this appeal.
- Remember, St. James needs each of us to make a sacrificial gift. We know the need to provide for our current members and those who will follow us.
- Remember that every gift, regardless of the size, will be an essential contribution.
- You can change your commitment at any time by calling the office.
- Discuss with all family members what participation in the appeal will mean to each of you. It may involve the family giving something up or doing something special.

We NEED 100% of Parish Household's Participation

If you are new to giving to St. James, we encourage you to prayerfully consider committing at least \$5 (less than a latte) or \$10 or more a week. A \$5-a-week commitment equals \$260 a year, and every commitment, regardless of size, is greatly appreciated.

Now Is the Time To Act

Please bring your commitment card to Mass on Commitment Sunday, November 24, or mail it to the parish office in the enclosed envelope before Commitment Sunday.

Why Do I Need to Turn in a Commitment Card?

Every household must make a formal commitment by turning in a commitment card. This allows the parish leadership to plan more accurately and to budget appropriately. If you are still determining how much you can contribute to the Appeal, please write a modest number on your commitment card. If, during the commitment period, you find that you need to adjust your commitment, you may do so at any time by calling the parish office.

Can I change my commitment level at any time?

Yes, by calling the parish office and requesting a change.

May I use my retirement account's required minimum distributions (RMDs) to contribute to the stewardship appeal?

Yes, you can use your RMDs. However, the contribution must be sent directly from your account to the parish to avoid paying income tax.



Can I contribute non-cash gifts like property, autos, jewelry, collectibles, or crops?

St. James will accept anything of value. It would be best if donors converted the items to cash and then donated the money to the parish. We can help convert the items to cash.

"Christian giving is not a natural act, but a supernatural act of God in your life. It is God's grace and love that will give you the ability to give and share according to what He's given you. Your Christian giving is to be more delight than drudgery, more privilege than pressure, and More anticipation than anxiety."

Anonymous

Continued from page 2

St. James is a very social community. Throughout the year, we get together to eat and have fun, such as with our once-a-month Hospitality Sunday, provided by a team of 14 individuals.

St. James parishioners are also very active in sharing their time, talent and treasure with the following organizations.

- Bishop Sullivan Center
- Troost39 Thrift Store
- Manos Amigas
- KC Welcome Alliance
- African Self-Determination Foundation
- Harvesters

"Each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace"

(1 Peter 4:10)

