



ST. JOHN'S
EPISCOPAL
CHURCH

ESSEX, CONNECTICUT

STEWARDSHIP 2024

October 2023

Dear Parishioners of St. John's,

I am writing on behalf of our 2024 stewardship campaign. As the Stewardship chairperson, I would like to thank you all for your past and future generosity.

This generosity has made St John's a thriving congregation, a beacon in the community, and an organization that can be counted on to help during crisis, both financially and spiritually. With your generosity we are able to support our many ministries, both local and global.

The number of citizens helped through the soup kitchen has increased significantly over the past few years, providing for many in need. The Witness Stones Project has educated many of us within the church and the community about a part of our local history that, until now, was not widely known. We continue to support our ministries abroad, improving the lives of God's children in distant lands.

The pandemic has changed many things in our day-to-day lives. It has caused financial and emotional hardships for many of us. The financial picture at St John's has changed post pandemic as well. The cost of operations has risen, we've seen a decrease in pledges, and our clergy, staff and volunteers are doing more with less, taking on more responsibilities.

At one time the parish had the benefit of additional part-time clergy (Charlotte LaForest and Benjamin Straley). This was once the norm but is no longer the case, as St. John's and many other parishes prioritize the needs of the parishioners and community. The good work that our talented Buildings and Grounds Committee provides would otherwise require outside contractors. Our Liturgical Coordinator, Allison Fresher, volunteers innumerable hours, working alongside staff to plan and implement our vibrant worship life. We are fortunate that we have dedicated volunteer lay staff spending many hours carrying out all kinds of tasks. Without this volunteer support, our staff would be overwhelmed and there would be a significant increase in expenses for outside contractors.

The Stewardship Committee has been working diligently over the past months to provide more information regarding the efforts we support. Rev. Kate and our treasurer, Dave Rogers, are working to provide more budget transparency to keep you informed about the needs of the church.

We do all this as Christians, walking in the light, to help others in need and less fortunate, to serve God and our community.

St. John's has been blessed. Many congregations are struggling to stay viable and solvent. We want our parish to continue to thrive today and for many future generations.

I am asking for your support and your pledge. For the many who have pledged in past years, please consider increasing your pledge this stewardship season as you are able.

Thank you and God bless.

Sincerely,
Greg Perruccio

COME GROW WITH US

God Is Inviting People To St. John's.

How do we welcome & incorporate these new people into our community?

And, how do we continue to provide a place where all people will be transformed by God?

- We do it by continuing to offer meaningful worship services with excellent music and compelling preaching.
- We do it by inviting people to try on new spiritual disciplines, like reading scripture, individual prayer, and going on pilgrimage.
- We do it by investing in the professional development of our staff and lay leaders.
- We do it by offering opportunities for fellowship and relationship building.
- We do it by providing outreach to our communities both locally and abroad.
- We do it by providing classes and programs which deepen and enrich our lives of faith.

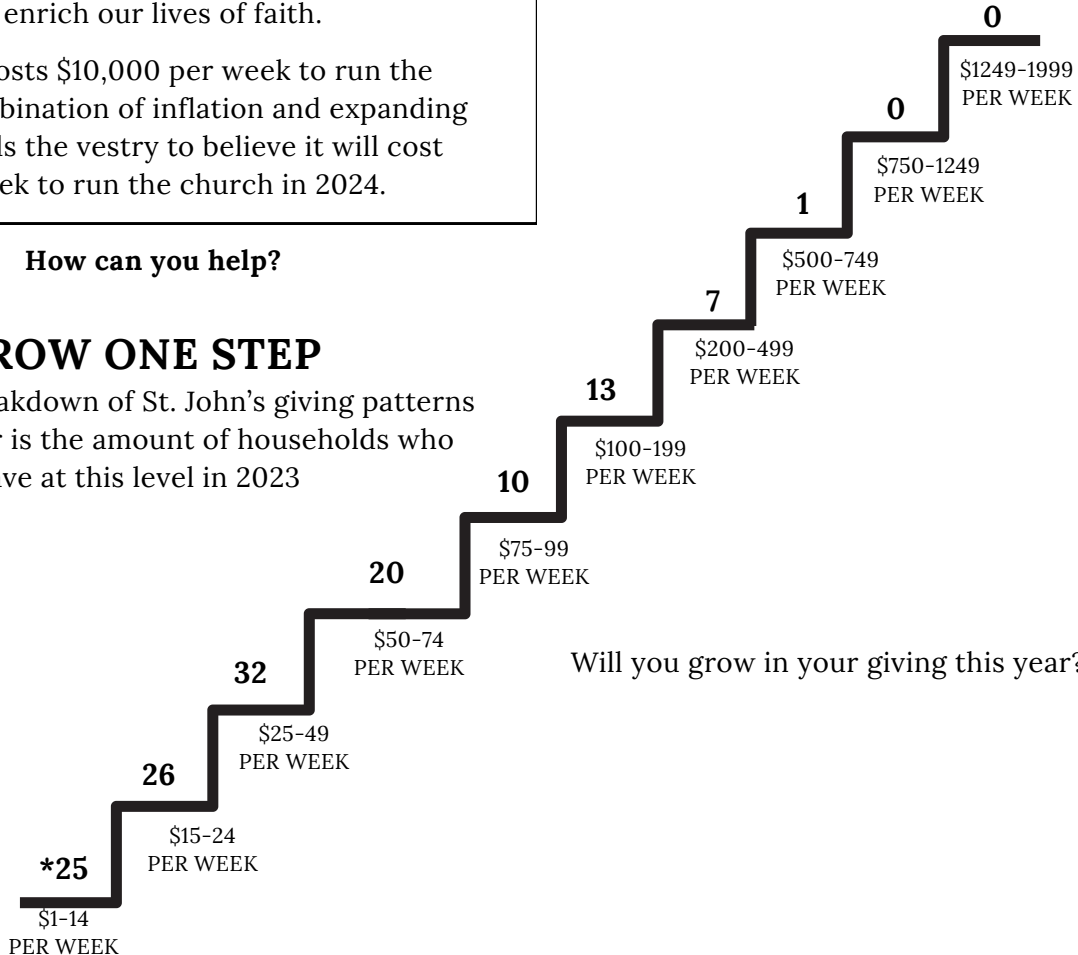
Currently, it costs \$10,000 per week to run the church. A combination of inflation and expanding ministries leads the vestry to believe it will cost \$11,700 per week to run the church in 2024.

How can you help?

GROW ONE STEP

a revealing breakdown of St. John's giving patterns

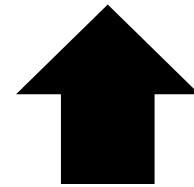
*This number is the amount of households who gave at this level in 2023



We Need Your Help To Keep Up With Our Growth

In 2024, we hope to be able to:

- Expand paid choir section leaders to four
- Hire a 1/2 time Associate for Community Life
- Provide substantive continuing education for staff & key volunteers
- Have funds for a Seminarian Summer Internship
- Provide staff merit increases



To do these things, we need a **15-20% increase** in pledge income.

Will you grow in your giving this year?

Note from the Rector:

God is inviting St. John's into something new. Our congregation is healthy, vital, growing, and thriving and that is exciting. You can feel the energy on a Sunday. The church is humming with activity throughout the week, from worship services, to Bible studies, to outreach efforts, and fellowship events. God is transforming souls through the embodied congregation at St. John's. Attendance has increased 12% year-to-date over the year prior and numbers are getting close to where they were before COVID.

Your vestry has a bold and realistic goal for the Every Member Canvas (EMC) this year. I say "bold" because it is an increase. I say "realistic" because we have already grown into a system that requires more resources (people and financial) to keep up. This Realistic Budget for 2024 combines what God is already doing at St. John's with the financial resources to sustain this growth and vitality.

In gratitude,
The Rev. Kate Wesch



Attendance Information

In September 2022, the total Sunday attendance YTD was 4,745 for an average of 125 people each Sunday.

In September 2023, the total Sunday attendance YTD is 5,306 for an average of 140 people each Sunday.

That is a 12% increase year over year reflecting steady growth.

