

September 30, 2018



by Susan Branch
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Dear Friends,

Each fall, I invite the entire community to reflect on the ministries and mission of St. Andrew's and to consider making a generous commitment to the work we share as the Body of Christ in this place. A large percentage of the households who gather for worship at St. Andrew's give regularly to ministries that not only provide a place for worship and study on site, but also strengthen people to go out into the world, to live with integrity, meaning, and a holy connection to community. The ways we worship, learn, and serve God together shine the Light of Christ into the world in ways we are unable to measure.

Through 83 annual pledges¹ of financial support for 2018, we continue the good work begun in Glenwood by 12 families in 1980². Each year, the Light shines more brightly, and our community grows in size and spirit.

- Thanks to a special one-time grant, we have added a new, part-time Vocal Director to enhance our music program and worship experience.
- We gathered with 250 community members at the Pig & Jig, raising funds for and awareness of the mission of St. Andrew's.
- Sunday School and Youth Programs have been refreshed, and fellowship groups continue to provide ways for us to deepen and keep our connection with one another as God's beloved people.

All of this is made possible by the generous contributions of the community!

As the vestry³ looks ahead to craft a budget for mission and ministry for 2019, we have two goals:

**To grow the annual giving by 17%, and
to increase the number of pledges by 17.**

We invite you to prayerfully consider making a pledge to the mission and ministry of St. Andrew's for 2019. Annual pledge amounts vary based on each household and that household's capacity to financially support ministry. No pledge is too small, and no pledge is too large-what matters most is that households discuss, discern, and pray about it, gaining a deeper understanding of how they are committing to their core values as faithful Christians, and participating in the work of building up a community that shines the Light of Christ into the world.

While an annual pledge has no legal commitment should your financial circumstances change suddenly, it does allow vestry leaders to make sound decisions for next year's budget. Based on the pledges made for the coming year, the vestry will be confident in building a sustainable ministry budget that:

- Continues to support salaries for our existing staff, including the new part-time Vocal Director.
- Reduces our budget's dependence on fundraising events, freeing us to utilize the popularity of the Pig & Jig as pure fundraising for outreach, rather than for annual operating expenses.
- Supports the community we serve by maintaining our facilities for programs like People Who Need People, Education for Ministry, Royal School of Church Music, Scouting, and more.

¹ A pledge is a written statement of intent to financially support the mission & ministries of the parish for one year.

² St. Andrew's was founded in 1980 as a mission of St. Peter's in Ellicott City, and became an independent parish in 1997.

³ The vestry is the governing body entrusted with leadership oversight, elected by the congregation.

- Allows us to pay our appropriate share of diocesan ministry expenses in 2019, which supports Guardian Angel, diocesan youth activities, and domestic & international ministries. (In 2018, due to financial concerns, we asked for and received a reduction in this share.)

If your household can commit to financially supporting the ministries of St. Andrew's for 2019, know that it will enlarge the reach we have in this community. It will ensure that we can continue to reach out in love to those who seek solace, and it will offer many entry points for exploring and deepening a Christian faith.

I do not know how much people give financially-this information is confidential and known only by the Treasurer and the Parish Administrator. Pledging is a sacred spiritual discipline that allows us to commit more deeply to God's work in the world-to commit to shining the Light of Christ in partnership with other faithful people.

I will close by sharing one story of how the St. Andrew's community shines the Light of Christ. I pray you will know that the same Light shines through you, and that you will consider how the Light of Christ can grow in you and shine even more brightly in the year ahead.

***Making a place for Katie:** A few years ago, Carol Evans began talking with me about her concerns for her daughter's future living situation. As the parent of an adult with special needs, Carol wondered where Katie would live once Carol is no longer able to care for her. Together, we began to pray, dream, and talk to other people in our area. Carol started networking and researching in earnest. At Carol's invitation, folks from the wider community came to the Parish House to listen to one another's concerns for the well-being of their family members with special needs. In this important work to create a place where Katie will thrive in the future, Carol has invited others to come together and share the journey.*

At the first gathering of families, Carol invited youth from St. Andrew's to come "hang out" with the young adults with special needs. A few teenagers came and played Uno and ate pizza with the young adults in one of the youth rooms at the Parish House, offering their presence to people whom they had not met before. The Light shined in all directions as Christ was revealed in the fellowship they shared.

As a community, we shine the Light of Christ as we welcome all to worship, making a place for all people, regardless of ability and mobility, to worship and be in Christian community. We shine the Light as we prayerfully support Carol and other parents engaged in this important ministry so that those with special needs-and their families-can one day be assured that they will have a caring place to live in our local community.

Thank you for your time in looking at these materials, and for your ongoing and generous support. We have an important leadership role to play in our local community. I am grateful that you and others in the congregation are willing to shine. It is an honor to serve alongside you in ministry.

In the Light of Christ,



The Rev. Dina van Klaveren, Rector