

# hope & abundance

St. Luke the Physician  
Episcopal Church



November 12, 2023

*For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.* Matthew 6:21

Dear Friend,

If you were to ask Kathy Douglass, our Music Minister, what it takes to become the kind of pianist she is, she might say consistency—playing tedious scales and chords over and over again every day for years until her fingers learned exactly where to be without her thinking about it. If you were to ask Pete Schmidt how he learned calligraphy and the art he makes with it, he might say discipline—practicing strokes and letters until they became muscle memory. If you were to ask Ted Calleton how he created his own huge model train world, he might mention his passion for noticing and recreating the smallest details—the particular green of a tree or a font of a storefront that he painted.

These aren't easy things to do. So why do them?

I can't speak for Kathy, Pete, or Ted, but so far as I can tell, it seems that making a special effort and consistently giving of their time and energy are ways of cultivating joy in their lives, ways of being in prayer, ways of experiencing closeness to God. They are spiritual practices.

**Closeness to God sometimes happens in a flash of a moment. But more often it happens through intentionally cultivating our lives to make space for God's presence.**

A spiritual practice is just that: a practice of discipline, exertion, patience, and generosity to nurture God's peace, joy, and love in our lives. Sometimes it feels light and smooth, sometimes it feels like a chore, but we know no matter how it feels in a particular moment, if we keep doing it, keep practicing, it will slowly change us

Being part of our St. Luke's community is a spiritual practice. It asks you to wake up early on Sundays, a precious day off for most of us, and make time for worship. For many, if not most, of you, it takes time and energy during your week: serving on the Altar Guild or Vestry, learning and rehearsing music for Sunday or visiting church neighbors who are lonely or sick.

**This year, we're asking you to make giving of your financial resources a spiritual practice.**

We know that giving doesn't always feel light and easy. It can seem difficult to carve out resources from your budget. It is indeed an act of trust—trust that what we're doing at St. Luke's is important, even critical. That together we are nurturing God's peace, joy, and love in our lives and in the world.

It is a spiritual practice of discipline, exertion, patience, and generosity.

*(keep reading! →)*

## We have big hopes for 2024.

Our projected expenses for 2024 add up to \$160,000. Last year, you pledged nearly \$128,000, and we budgeted to pull over \$24,000 from our savings to cover the shortfall. As of the end of September, we haven't had to use any of our savings to pay our bills. This is partly because our expenses have been slightly lower—but only partly. So far in 2023, you've given over 100% of what you pledged. You have kept up your commitment to this community. This is an astonishing act of faith.

In 2020, the community set a goal to slowly increase Rev. Sara's salary from 30 hours a week. Because of your pledging, we will meet that goal in 2024. Rev. Sara will officially be paid for full-time work!

We also hope to continue deepening relationships within our parish through the work of our ministries: the Welcome Team who works so hard to connect new people to our community, the Young(ish) Adults who gather monthly, and, of course, our Worship Team who nurtures belonging through singing, praying, and taking communion together.

## How much should I give?

*"Tithe" means 10%, which was what God called the Israelites to give after they were led out of the wilderness. While 10% is the biblical ideal, we know it's not always that simple.*

For financial gifts, we invite you to consider giving on this sliding scale.

10% means something very different to a family who lives on \$150,000 a year than it does to a family who lives on \$40,000.

Some of you are already giving above this scale, and some of you will find giving to this scale is the work of your spiritual practice. Whatever you pledged last year, we invite you to increase that by 10%.

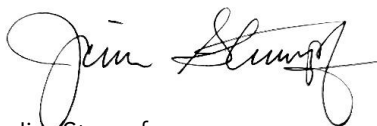
**Enclosed is a pledge card, an opportunity for you to plant your seed in this community and tend to God's love and belonging that is nurtured here.**

Annual Household Income	Suggested Gift (Percentage of Income)
Below \$40,000	3%
\$40,000 - \$50,000	4%
\$50,000 - \$60,000	5%
\$60,000 - \$70,000	6%
\$70,000 - \$80,000	7%
\$80,000 - \$90,000	8%
\$90,000 - \$100,000	9%
\$100,000 or more	10%

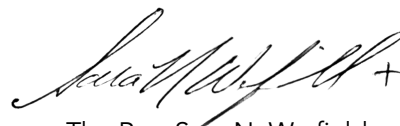
On November 26, you are invited to our Gratitude Sunday for a celebration of hope and abundance. We will collect all the pledge cards and give thanks for all God has given to this community. If you'll be worshipping with us on Zoom or aren't able to attend, you can mail yours in or go to [www.saintlukesgresham.org/stewardship](http://www.saintlukesgresham.org/stewardship) to fill it out online.

Thank you for the gifts you bring, for the joy you bring, for the trust you bring. Thank you for making a special effort, consistently giving in so many ways to cultivate and nurture God's peace, joy, and love in our lives, in our St. Luke's community, and in the world.

Peace,



Jim Stumpf  
Stewardship Chair



The Rev. Sara N. Warfield  
Rector