

# hope & abundance

St. Luke the Physician  
Episcopal Church



October 13, 2024

*Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.* Matthew 11:29

Dear Friend,

Most of the folks at St. Luke's have told me, at one time or another, that this parish community feels like home. It's my favorite thing to hear—AND it gets me wondering, What does that mean? What does home mean to you, and what does it mean for a church to feel like home?

For me, home is a place where I can fully and freely embody who I am and how I'm feeling. The walls of my home give me a sense of safety and ease. I hope your home makes you feel something similar. A place where you can collapse on the couch after a long day of work and eat ice cream for dinner. Where you smile at the crayon marks on the living room wall that your child put there years ago that you never erased because they make you smile.

**Home is a place of rest for our souls. Home is also a yoke, in a way.**

You pay the mortgage so that you and your family have a safe place to rest and grow and become together. You pay for electricity so that you can read your child a bedtime story and watch a movie with your sister on a Friday night. You pay for groceries so that you know your children will be nourished. And all these things add up to rest for our souls. And when we can't pay for these things, our souls can't be at rest.

**It's not so different for your church home.**

Our church is also a yoke. We must pay to keep our older building healthy, so that we have a safe place to gather. We must pay for electricity so that everyone can see one another and hear the music so that we may sing together. We must pay for internet so that even our family who can't be with us in person can join us on Zoom. So that we may have a safe place to rest and grow and become together.

The yoke isn't a bad thing. When Jesus says, "take my yoke upon me," he means to take on the investment of love, the investment of relationship that gives us rest for our soul. Investments of love and relationship are sometimes—maybe even often—investments of money, especially in our culture.

**Pledging is the practice of taking on this yoke so that we may find rest for our souls. So that we may take care of one another. Together.**

*(keep reading! →)*

When you pledge, you make a commitment to give a certain amount of your resources in 2025—usually monthly, though some people give all their pledge quarterly or in one payment. Your pledge helps our Finance Team to plan our budget for next year and, hopefully, live into some hopes for the future.

### We have big hopes for 2024.

Last year, we aimed for pledges to cover \$160,000. You pledged nearly \$129,000, and we budgeted to pull over \$25,000 from our savings to cover the shortfall. Throughout the year, though, we have raised money for specific ministries and received some large, unexpected donations, so we haven't had to dip into our savings (Praise Jesus!). But we know we can't rely on surprise gifts to balance our budget.

And we still carry some hopes from previous years into this 2025! In 2020, the community set a goal to slowly increase Rev. Sara's salary from 30 hours a week to full time. Right now, we are compensating her for 37.5 hours/week—so close! We had hoped to meet that goal in 2024 but weren't able to. We'd love to meet it in 2025. We also hope to continue deepening relationships within our parish through the work of our ministries: the Welcome Team, the Young(ish) Adults, our aspiring Children's Ministry, and, of course, our Worship.

### How much should I pledge to give to St. Luke's?

*"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.*

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%

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

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

Some of you are already giving above this scale, and some of you will find giving to this scale is the work of taking on God's yoke for your community.

On October 27th, 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,



Judy Bevilacqua  
Senior Warden



The Rev. Sara N. Warfield  
Rector