



The Rev. Paul J. Stephens, Rector

The Rev. Dr. Billy Walton, Deacon

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October 16, 2017

Dear All Saints' and Christ the King family,

As school and football season begin, days become shorter and nights get cooler, the leadership for our congregations turns its attention to some of the practical issues that all churches face. This letter pertains to two key elements of the church's practical reality: next year's operating budget and the annual commitment campaign. Before we look to the future, however, let's focus briefly on the current.

We started 2016 by approving a budget that was expected to generate revenue that would fall short of expenses by \$24,000. We had an accumulated operating surplus from 2015 and prior years that would cover about \$20,000 of the \$24,000 shortfall with the shortfall balance being funded through cost cutting, special gifts or growth. We're glad to report that as of September 30 we are sitting in a surplus position of \$8,000 rather than an anticipated deficit of \$20,000 for the 9 months. We're also happy to report that this favorable position is the result of growth in revenue rather than cost cutting. Most notably, that growth has come from the generosity of our friends from Christ the King Lutheran Church who joined All Saints' in July as our new ministry partnership began. This relationship has clearly been a win for both congregations. In addition to growth from Christ the King we've also seen significant growth from the surrounding community.

After years of either flat or shrinking attendance, All Saints' and Christ the King appear to have moved into a growth phase. Many books have been written regarding congregational development, and they all recommend various approaches to the challenge. They, however, seem to be consistent in one particular: A congregation must intentionally choose its mission, and then sincerely commit to that mission with its inward and outward actions. In the case of our parish, that mission seems to fall into the categories of openness, outreach, and care. The growing diversity within our congregation, Saints' Brew, legal aid, and our pastoral care teams are a few of the many examples of this mission which are supported by our rich worship and musical traditions and the quality of our educational offerings.

Turning now to 2017 and those practical issues, we expect to see relatively modest growth in our expenses for the year. In 2016, with the pressure we had on giving, we were unable to make any cost of living adjustments or give raises to the staff and clergy. We hope to be able to give increases for 2017. Other expenses will increase as well, with group health insurance increasing by 4 percent. At the 2016 Diocesan Council, a resolution was passed changing the formula for parish diocesan support. This change goes into effect in 2017 and is designed to stabilize the diocesan budget process by fixing the parish revenue base at the actual results from two years prior to the new budget year. Assuming that our diocesan pledge remains at 14.5% of our 2015 actual revenue, our diocesan pledge will increase by about \$10,000.

In addition to raises and diocesan support, we will also have an increase in expenses to cover specific items necessary for our Lutheran brothers and sisters to continue their work in the world, which

by the way, are much less than the monetary and time support Christ the King members so freely and generously contribute to the church.

All the increases mentioned above come to a 7% increase in total expenses. Given our position at September 30 and the apparent likelihood we will end 2016 at break-even, we're asking everyone to consider a 7% increase in their pledge for the 2017 operating budget. For some, this won't be possible while others will be able to do more. Others, for various reasons, have not been able to pledge at all in the past. Perhaps circumstances will allow for a pledge in 2017. Newcomers are encouraged to participate by making a pledge as well. Remember, every pledge is important.

The reality of the world we live in requires us to use money in fulfilling our mission. Please help us realize that which we are called to do by placing your commitment card in the offering plate on or before All Saints' Sunday, November 6, or complete the online pledge card by going to the All Saints' website.

With gratitude for your continuing support,

The Stewardship Committee

