Frequently Asked Questions

What’s the stewardship season about in 2019?
The theme is “Discovering Joy in the Journey.” We each have our own journey in which we grow in relationship with God, and we take that journey together with our parish family.

What does stewardship have to do with my journey of faith?
Stewardship means managing the gifts and responsibilities God gives us. God desires our well-being in all aspects of our lives because God loves each of us passionately. But God also wants us to help bring about God’s purposes in our church, our city, and our world; and how we use our gifts and responsibilities has a direct impact on that. So, growing in our relationship with God is the foundation of making every part of our lives strong and healthy.

How do I know where my journey with God stands?
We can look to several indicators of our relationship with God. How are the primary relationships in my life? How involved am I in the life of the church? Do I follow spiritual practices through the week (prayer, Scripture reading, service, giving, self-care, etc.)? Am I feeling God nudging me to take a next step to deepen my spiritual connection? (See the question below about the spiritual goal of the stewardship season.)

Isn’t stewardship just about money?
Stewardship is about how we manage our whole lives; and that definitely includes money, in at least three senses. First, how we tend the money God gives us says a lot about how we value our relationship with God. If God doesn’t factor into that calculus, the relationship probably needs some work. Second, financial giving is a spiritual practice with a long, honored history. Just like prayer, worship, Scripture reading, or serving others, financial giving connects us with God and allows us to experience divine love flowing over us and through us. Third, financial giving is a vital connecting point with the rest of our parish family. Through it, we make possible the ministries that bless one another and people around us, ministries that require staffing and funding.

Where do our ministries stand, and what needs are coming in 2020?
God is blessing St. Andrew’s with renewed energy and engagement, in contrast to the conventional wisdom we hear about dying churches. For example: Our Sunday attendance is up 9% as of August. Participation is up in children’s ministry (25%), youth ministry (21%), and adult learning opportunities (7%). Our young-adults group meets twice a month and is growing. We’re beginning new groups for married couples across the lifespan. We’ve welcomed 41 new adult members into the congregation so far in 2019, several with children. And your financial support of this work is stronger than we’ve seen in the past 14 years at least, with giving on budget even through the summertime, when giving typically is less robust.

In 2020, we need to continue building God’s work among us. Our beautiful, classic facility inspires us in worship and fosters many ministries, within and outside the congregation; and it costs more and more each year to operate and maintain (about 23% of our annual budget). But the largest part of your giving supports the clergy and staff members who carry a tremendous workload as they lead the ministry growth we’re seeing. One example of those ministries is engagement – building relationships with guests, bringing them into membership, and drawing existing members into greater participation. This year, we come to the end of special funding for the engagement-coordinator position, and we’ll need increased giving to continue it. Similarly, in early 2021, we’ll come to the end of special funding for the assistant rector’s position, and that position also will need to be funded through the operating budget.
Does our giving just support the church? Aren't we supposed to bless the people around us?

Absolutely – and your giving does just that. St. Andrew’s has more than a dozen outreach ministries and relationships with outreach partners: Amethyst Place, Banneker Schoolyard Garden, Clement Waters, EPEC/The Grooming Project, Fabric of Life, Free Store, Freedom Fire Urban Ministries, Gordon Parks Elementary, Kansas City Community Garden, Nourish KC, Rose Brooks Center, Sister Berta’s Friendship Circle, St. Augustin’s Episcopal School in Haiti, St. Paul’s Pantry, and Welcome House. This year, we’ll give away 4 percent of pledged giving, or $50,000, to support these ministries and the difference they’re making in God’s world. Next year, our goal is to increase that to 5 percent. But support from pledged giving is only the beginning. Including outreach gifts from events and special fundraisers, St. Andrew’s members annually give away more than $100,000 through the church to bless our neighbors nearby and far away.

What’s the financial goal for this stewardship season?

Here are three answers, all equally important.

1. **100% participation among members.** A pledge can be $5 a year, but the pledge itself matters – making an outward and visible sign of commitment to God and this parish family.

2. **A $125,000 increase in support for our ministries and operations in 2020.** This increase would fund the engagement-coordinator position and create a reserve for facility and organ maintenance. We’re asking everyone prayerfully to consider increasing your current giving to support the strong energy and participation in St. Andrew’s worship and other ministries. We can’t keep growing without you.

3. **Proportionate, loving giving.** Sometimes, when we think about giving, we get hung up on percentages and definitions. Do I have to give a true tithe, 10 percent? And, if so, 10 percent of what – net or gross, income or wealth? It’s probably easier to think in terms of holy giving as being proportionate and loving. If I’m someone who struggles to make ends meet, my pledge probably will be a relatively small percentage of what I earn; but that gift may be a deeply loving and sacrificial commitment. If I’m someone blessed with resources, I can probably give a higher percentage; and that might be a percentage not just of income but of wealth. In either case, the goal is to increase our giving each year so we keep taking our journey deeper.

What’s the spiritual goal for this stewardship season?

As the theme says, the goal is to discover joy in the journey, to go deeper in our relationship with God and others. Making a proportionate, loving financial pledge is one aspect of our journey because our pledge is a sacrament, an outward and visible sign of the love we share with God and our parish family.

But we’ll also use two new tools for going deeper in relationship with God. The first is a parish-wide assessment of St. Andrew’s spiritual vitality. Every member will have the opportunity to take this assessment, called RenewalWorks. From it, we’ll get a picture of our strengths and growing edges as followers of Jesus. This will help clergy, staff, and ministry leaders do a better job of helping you grow as a disciple. Then, in the winter, we’ll offer a second round of RenewalWorks that lets each of us assess our own spiritual vitality, helping us see for ourselves how we’re individually “wired” spiritually and how we can go deeper.

What does money have to do with our mission?

In the life of our parish family, God asks us to use all the tools at our disposal to achieve our mission of loving God, loving our neighbors, and loving each other. Some of those tools are spiritual – worship, music, practices of prayer, serving others, welcoming people into our family, sharing Good News with others in our lives. Some of those tools are more practical – outstanding facilities, dedicated staff members, and the financial support that makes them possible.

Money is not the point of church, but it’s an integral part of our capacity to serve as Christ’s instrument in changing people’s lives.