

Dear fellow member of St. Stephen's,

Do not say, "Why were the former days better than these?" For it is not from wisdom that you ask this. (Ecclesiastes 7:10)

These past two years have tested all of us, some a great deal more than others. The pandemic has changed our lives unexpectedly. Some of us started working from home. Some of us lost employment when businesses were forced to shutter their doors. Finances have certainly been stretched for budgets, and the church has faced the same budgetary issues.

How do we endure grief and hardship? How do we rise up and move forward with hope and strength? We do so together, as a community.

Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. (Galatians 6:2)

Our Bishop took action to keep our parishioners safe by moving our beloved worship services online. We are now back worshipping together, and we are all thankful for this. However, with the changes in how we were worshipping on Sundays, pledges and plate giving dropped off significantly. Having online services has made giving a little more challenging. The church is only as strong as the faith and support of its parishioners. While this is still in process, the Vestry would like to remind all of our parishioners the church still needs their support to keep our ministries going in 2022.

Our combined pledged and plate offerings have slowly been declining since 2017:

2017 – \$112,000 2018 – \$97,000 2019 – \$107,000 2020 – \$104,000

As of Sept. 2021 - \$74,000

Please help us keep the doors open this holiday season and beyond through your generous financial support of St. Stephen's. Please make your contribution(s) for the end of this year and return your pledge to the office for 2022.

Sincerely,

The Vestry of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, your worshipping community