

ST ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH



TO OUR ST ANDREW'S CHURCH FAMILY:

September 15, 2024

In a critical moment in John's gospel, Jesus is trying to tell his disciples, now numbering many, something they'd find difficult to swallow: that those who would eat 'this bread' will live forever. Since he was referring to himself, many of them simply gave up, "turned back and no longer went about with him."

Except the twelve—and, likely, a number more. Just like you and me. Now numbering billions.

In these interesting times, most, if not all of our cardinal, enduring institutions are being challenged, and questioned, and are changing—and some are even dying.

But the Church universal, of course, will never die. When Jesus asked the remaining disciples, "Do you also wish to go away?" Simon Peter immediately replied, "Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life." And then he added:

"We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."

I'm coming toward the end of my 15th year serving as your rector, and remain confident in our journey together, surrounded by excellent leaders and so many of you, with hearts filled with God, in Christ. Our ongoing life as an institution of faith, healing, ministry, and caring for each other and our community may continue to change and grow to reflect the times, but always, we remain steadfast and true to the foundation of our faith, Jesus, The Holy One of God.

In no small part, thanks to you.



Enclosed with this letter is a pledge card for the upcoming year, 2025. I'm asking you to read the materials on the reverse side of this letter BEFORE you fill out and return the card, just so you know where things stand here in the way of our finances, and in our faithful stewardship of our resources. And then, I would ask each of you to take a moment and pray...and consider just what it is God might be asking of you, on behalf of us all, to do for us here at St Andrew's. Please be generous—and *please try to respond with your pledge on or before November 1, 2024.*

Every one of you is critical to our family, as is your personal commitment to give from your heart.

May God continue to bless us, every one.

Faithfully yours,

The Reverend Chip Seadale+

YOUR PERSONAL GIVING TO ST ANDREW'S

FACTS & THEOLOGY

How much you give—and *don't* give—bears directly on our capacity to grow as a church.

HERE'S WHERE WE STAND:

1. Due to unanticipated maintenance costs for our buildings, we expect to run a small deficit for 2024.
2. Here's where St Andrew's annual givers stand related to others:

St Andrew's Average Pledge:	\$1,740 (103 pledges, \$179,000 total)
Diocese of Massachusetts:	\$3,015
Diocese of Connecticut:	\$3,138
Diocese of Rhode Island:	\$2,263 (second lowest nationally)
Diocese of Texas:	\$5,710 (highest nationally)
3. We rely heavily on the generous giving of BOTH year-round AND seasonal members.
4. The number of larger donors (\$10-25k range) has decreased considerably in recent years.
5. Although current attendance figures have stabilized since the COVID years, lower attendance over the last decades requires deeper financial commitment from those remaining.

HERE'S WHY WE GIVE:

1. St Andrew's provides a comfortable, familiar, traditional place for excellent worship and heartfelt community—something you can't easily find elsewhere these days. *"We need friends. Friends guide us, care for us, confront us in love, console us in times of pain."* (H. Nouwen)
2. As we grow as together as Christians, we learn how to serve each other, and those in our world, doing the mission and ministry work God has in store for us—for our community, our nation, and our world. *If we raise funds for the creation of a community of love, we are helping God build the kingdom. We are doing exactly what we are supposed to be doing as Christians. Paul is clear about this: "Make love your aim."* (H. Nouwen)

HERE'S OUR THEOLOGY:

"The pressure in our culture to secure our own future and to control our lives as much as possible does not find support in the Bible. What is our security base? God or mammon? This is what Jesus would ask. He says that we cannot put our security in God and also in money. We have to make a choice. Jesus counsels, "Put your security in God." Our trust, our basic trust, Jesus counsels, has to be in God. As long as our real trust is in money, we cannot be true members of the kingdom. What is the true base of our security? (H. Nouwen)

"The Spirit of Love says: Don't be afraid to let go of your need to control your own life." (H. Nouwen)