

Dear Friends,

September 2007

This is the beginning of St. Andrew's 2007 Stewardship campaign. Our theme this year is derived from the Book of Matthew "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Our pledge cards will be entitled the "Caring Heart Pledge" because we know the members of this parish to be compassionate, loving, and committed. We are asking you to commit some of your treasure to support the programs that will meet your and other parishioner's needs and desires at St. Andrew's. It is your support that will enable us to carry out God's work at this parish, in Panama City, and in the world.

There are some things that we want you to know as you make your commitment. First of all, St. Andrew's parishioners have always been very generous in your support of our parish's efforts to carry out God's work. We thank you very much for that support. We hope that we are meeting your churchly needs and desires, and we want to expand our offerings to you. The very real truth is this: We cannot meet those responsibilities without your generous financial support. No one really enjoys asking you for your treasure, but it is a reality that we need it.

The TITHE is the minimal standard for giving in the Episcopal Church -- as has been stated by every General Convention for the last sixty years. As you may know, a tithe is 10 percent of all of our income (tithing is not just giving any amount to the church -- IT IS TEN PERCENT. Also, our commitment of time and talent is NOT a substitute for a tithe of our treasure. It's up to you to decide whether this tithe of your treasure is taken from your gross income or net. If we all tithed, we would probably never have to ask for extra funds for any purpose, and there would always be enough for our programs.

My primary stewardship goal for St. Andrew's is to become a tithing parish. Giving a tithe is one of the strongest factors in building a parish's and an individual's spiritual life. People always become more interested in their parish and spiritual life when they tithe! It has also been said that if we do not give enough so that we have to give up something else to support our parish, we are not giving enough; after all, Jesus gave his life for us. I have also established a secondary goal, just in case everyone does not tithe. I am asking everyone to regularly give something. I ask you who do not tithe to determine your current percentage of giving -, then, raise that percentage by at least 2% until you reach a tithe within three to five years. I do want to be able to proclaim that everyone is regularly giving to support God's work at St. Andrew's.

Friends, one of the things that people want in their lives is to be needed. We need you, God needs you. Our work, God's work, cannot be done without your financial generosity.. Please be generous when you receive your packet; God WILL bless you many times over when you do! For Malachi 3:10-11 says: "Bring the full tithe into the store-house, so that there may be food in my house, and thus put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts; see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing. I will rebuke the locust for you, so that it will not destroy the product of your soil; and your vine in the field shall not be barren, says the Lord of hosts.

Then all nations will count you happy, for you will be a land of delight, says the Lord of hosts."

Love in Christ,

Father Roy +