

Living God's Story

"Return... and tell the story of what God has done for you." Luke 8:38a CEB

November 1, 2022

Dear People of St. James':

Against a landscape of systemic corruption, a warming planet, continued oppression of minority groups, and global violence crippling innocent lives, St. James' seeks to make this corner of our world a better place. It is easy for our eyes to fall only to the negative, for our hearts to dwell only in despair. So much seems off kilter. I thank God that this is just a piece of the story, and while it may be the story of our world, it is not the story of God.

Instead, the story of God is alive and well at St. James'. Over the past two years, amid a variety of tensions and struggles, we have made a difference by living the story of God. In God's story, people are fed, spiritually, emotionally, and physically.

In God's story, people know they are loved. As a community, we have distributed countless blessing bags to those living on the street. These bags contain practical items such as toiletries and socks. More importantly, they contain the love of God shown through the simple act of offering a gift to another human being.

In God's story, children are given the tools they need for success. Together, we provided backpacks, pencils, tablets, crayons, folders – a whole myriad of school supplies to underserved children in Fremont and Union City, giving kids a hand up as they began the new school year.

In God's story, families are housed. As part of our deanery effort through the Corazon Build program, St. James' contributed finances to help build houses for homeless families in Mexico, allowing for critical shelter and a place to call home.

In God's story, opportunities to move out of poverty are provided. Through the Maisha Bora program, St. James' successfully assisted Hope and Miriam, two young ladies in Kenya, in completing high school. We have committed to supporting them through their university years, giving them the chance to break the cycle of poverty in their families.

In God's story, young people learn the sacred stories of God's love for them and of all people. At St. James', our children and youth are taught the stories that affirm such love, equipping them to better live in a world that can sometimes be harsh.

In God's story, sounds of joy rise from the gathered faithful. Each Sunday we gather to worship God together, as One Body, and in doing so, we sing, we pray, we laugh, we build relationships with each other that are life-giving and lasting.

All of this and more is possible because of your financial pledge. It is that time of year when we ask you to prayerfully consider how much of your household income you will give to the work of the church. It is our hope that you will keep your pledge at the same level offered last year or increase your pledge to help us meet the increased costs of doing ministry. It is important to know that 97% of our funding comes directly from pledges like yours.

If you've never pledged before, or if you're wondering how much to offer, please use the proportional giving chart at the end of this letter as a guide. Keep in mind that pledging to your church is different than a charitable contribution you might offer to other non-profits. The pledge to your church is a response to all that God has blessed you and your family with. It is a response to the story of a God who heals and redeems and lifts up all that has been cast down. It is a response to the truer reality that God continues to move in our lives and in the lives of others.

It is through your generosity that St. James' will continue telling God's story to a world hungry for the Good News that God is Love, a love meant for every single person, for all of creation.

In deep gratitude for God and for your part in God's story,

The Rev. Lori A. Walton
Rector

As a guide, we offer this proportional giving chart. To meet the ministry needs of the church, the average annual pledge would need to be around \$4,500 (about \$375 per month). When discerning your offering for 2023, you might ask if you can reach the \$4,500 level. If you're above the \$4,500 giving threshold, you might challenge yourself to increase your pledge by 10% (the estimated growth in our budget for this upcoming year).

Annual Income	Monthly Income	Beyond the Tithe		Tithe	Proportional Giving								
		15%	12%		9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	3%	2%	1%
\$20,000	\$1,667	\$250	\$200	\$167	\$150	\$133	\$117	\$100	\$83	\$67	\$50	\$33	\$17
\$25,000	\$2,083	\$313	\$250	\$208	\$188	\$167	\$146	\$125	\$104	\$83	\$63	\$42	\$21
\$30,000	\$2,500	\$375	\$300	\$250	\$225	\$200	\$175	\$150	\$125	\$100	\$75	\$50	\$25
\$40,000	\$3,333	\$500	\$400	\$333	\$300	\$267	\$233	\$200	\$167	\$133	\$100	\$67	\$33
\$50,000	\$4,167	\$625	\$500	\$417	\$375	\$333	\$292	\$250	\$208	\$167	\$125	\$83	\$42
\$60,000	\$5,000	\$750	\$600	\$500	\$450	\$400	\$350	\$300	\$250	\$200	\$150	\$100	\$50
\$70,000	\$5,833	\$875	\$700	\$583	\$525	\$467	\$408	\$350	\$292	\$233	\$175	\$117	\$58
\$80,000	\$6,667	\$1,000	\$800	\$667	\$600	\$533	\$467	\$400	\$333	\$267	\$200	\$133	\$67
\$90,000	\$7,500	\$1,125	\$900	\$750	\$675	\$600	\$525	\$450	\$375	\$300	\$225	\$150	\$75
\$100,000	\$8,333	\$1,250	\$1,000	\$833	\$750	\$667	\$583	\$500	\$417	\$333	\$250	\$167	\$83
\$120,000	\$10,000	\$1,500	\$1,200	\$1,000	\$900	\$800	\$700	\$600	\$500	\$400	\$300	\$200	\$100
\$150,000	\$12,500	\$1,875	\$1,500	\$1,250	\$1,125	\$1,000	\$875	\$750	\$625	\$500	\$375	\$250	\$125