

Stewardship 2024



**This year's theme comes from our belief that God is drawing us together in a new and exciting way.**

Just as the Bethlehem Star lit the path showing the Magi the way to Jesus, God is lighting our path into the future God is inviting us into.

Dear friends,

As we reflect on the past year, we are filled with gratitude for each of you and for the many ways God has been present with us, showing us the way forward as we

- came together around the altar for worship and around the table for a kelp dinner and so many delicious coffee hours.
- prayerfully walked the labyrinth.
- delved into the challenge of racism by exploring *The Church Cracked Open*.
- gathered food for St. Stephen's in Boston.
- volunteered for New Life.
- welcomed in many new families.
- invited children to join Rev. Lynn at the altar.
- began formation for children, youth, and adults.

***There is a renewed energy at the Church of the Advent thanks to each of you and thanks be to God!***

At the end of the summer, we launched the Congregational Assessment Tool (CAT) from Holy Cow! Consulting to learn more about ***your experience and your hopes and dreams*** for the Church of the Advent.

***The results show that we are a highly satisfied, highly adaptable, and highly energized parish.***

This, in addition to our noticeable growth and the stability that comes from our Interim Priest transitioning to our Priest-in-Charge, positions us well for the work of discerning our renewed mission.

We have come this far because of your generosity and the generosity of the generations who have come before. Now, as we look ahead, you are invited to invest the resources God has given you—your energy, your prayers, your time, and your money—into this work to which God is calling us.

During the annual stewardship campaign we look specifically at the ways our financial investment in one another and in the work of God in our church makes our ministries possible. This investment, known as a pledge, is our primary source of income.

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The CAT data identified developing our spiritual generosity to financially support the church as one of our top priorities.

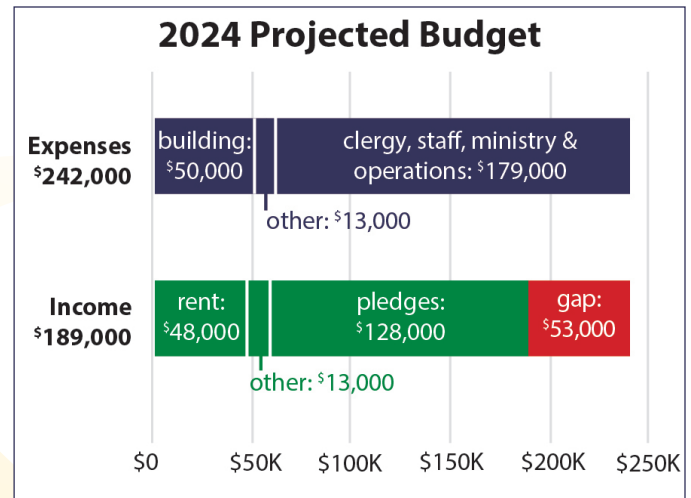
***Current pledgers give on average about 1.22% of their income. The average for churches our size is 4.88%, which puts us in the bottom 8%.***

The good news is there is a lot of room and desire for growth in the stewardship of the money God has entrusted to each one of us.

As you will see in greater detail in the Light Our Path flyer, we hope to continue building on our momentum and growth by supporting a full-time clergy person. In order to do this without completely draining our reserve fund, we estimate that we need to increase our pledges by about \$53,000 or about 40%. We know we can't do this in one year, but we hope that we will be able to in the next 2-3 years.

After about 15 years of running a deficit budget and decreasing our financial reserves, our goal for 2024 is to increase pledging by \$25,000 as an interim benchmark towards building a stable financial future. To reach this goal we are asking our Advent family to increase their pledge by 20% this year.

We understand that there are some who are already tithing or for whom it will be a stretch to keep their pledge the same as 2023. That is why we need other members of the Advent family who are able to increase by more than 20% to prayerfully consider doing so. Rev. Lynn is getting us started by raising her pledge by 30%.



***This is a family goal, and we can only achieve it together.***

Friends, we have wonderful offerings—friendship, prayer, love, spiritual vitality, fellowship, affection, ministry to those in need—that the world needs, and you have the opportunity to help sustain and extend these resources. With your increased support, and with God lighting our path, the Church of the Advent will take its next faithful step, following the way of Jesus.

Please prayerfully consider what you are willing and able to give from what God has given you and return your pledge card by Sunday, December 3. That is the First Sunday in Advent, a new liturgical year and a new chapter in our unfolding story.

Faithfully,  
Becky Poynot, Co-Warden; Chris Remington, Treasurer;  
and the Rev. Lynn Campbell, Priest-in-Charge