

Good Morning,

I am Catesby Beck and I am this year's stewardship chair. I am going to spend a few minutes speaking about why I make a financial pledge to Grace and Holy each year.

When I first joined Grace and Holy and received a pledge card, I wasn't quite sure what to do with it. I had grown up in an Episcopal church, but had not been an active member since becoming an adult. I always saw my parents putting money in the collection plate, but I was never aware of the promise they had made to do so.

At the time, my wife, Kate, and I already contributed to various charitable organizations and we weren't sure how much more we could spare for Grace and Holy. So I left the card on my desk and didn't do anything with it. I hoped that it would disappear and I could avoid the tough conversation with Kate about how much we wanted to pledge. Then, the phone rang. I don't remember who it was, but I thank you for calling to remind us to return our pledge card. At that moment I realized that the pledge card wasn't going away. Kate and I talked it over and decided that if we were going to be active members here, we should make a planned financial contribution. I felt good giving to an organization that I knew and participated in. Strangely enough, after that I started paying a little more attention to the activities of the church.

Since then, Grace and Holy Trinity has become an increasingly significant part of my family's life. It is like a second home and family. It is so special to have hundreds of brothers and sisters to support us during difficult times like the passing of Kate's grandmother, to help us celebrate the good times like the births of our sons, Gibson and Ware, and more importantly to help us navigate the ups and downs of everyday life.

It is invaluable to have a place where we can gather with people who share a similar belief system and a common goal to serve God in the world that he created. And, here at Grace and Holy Trinity, we will go out of our way to help each other achieve that goal.

Serving on the Vestry and as the Stewardship chair this past year has opened my eyes to the amount of time and money that is required to sustain the many great programs of this church. I now understand that pledging is necessary from a functional perspective: it allows us to plan each year's programs with confidence that there will be money available to support them. If pledged amounts aren't high enough, programs will need to be cut. That part is easy for me to grasp.

What has taken longer for me to understand and appreciate is that making a pledge to Grace and Holy is about much more than just giving money to a charitable organization. It isn't about getting my money's worth or expecting anything in return. For Kate and me, pledging has become a spiritual discipline. It is an opportunity to reflect on the blessings that God has given us and to show our thanks for those gifts by giving back. Pledging to Grace and Holy allows us to demonstrate our faith in the leadership of the church to spend the money wisely, and faith in God to help us to find a way to fulfill our pledge. And, most importantly for us as parents, pledging is a way to model God's generosity and our commitment to this church, for our children.

No doubt you have heard that our goal for this year's stewardship campaign is one hundred percent participation. As the Stewardship chair, I invite you to take the next step in your stewardship journey. Please join the generations of generous givers who have made it possible

for us to worship at and minister through Grace and Holy Trinity Church. If you currently do not pledge but contribute by putting money into the Sunday offering plate, you might consider pledging a percentage of that amount this year. If you've never tried proportionate giving before, please consider starting at one or two percent of your income. If you are already pledging, thank you, we hope you will consider "moving up one step" on the proportional giving chart.

We've provided a number of materials in the pledge packets mailed to you to help in your decision-making. Regardless of where you are in your stewardship walk, please know we are blessed to have you as part of our parish family. We are enriched by your presence, generosity of spirit and sharing of all your gifts of time, talent and treasure.

Thank you.