

Grace & Holy Trinity Church:

Frequently Asked Questions about Pledging

Question: What does it mean to make a financial pledge?

Answer: Making a financial pledge is promising to give a specific dollar amount of your financial resources to the operating budget of Grace and Holy Trinity Church over the course of a calendar year. In the words of our Rector, the Rev. Bo Millner, “Pledging and giving are an encounter with Jesus. They are a spiritual discipline. It is a matter of saying, in a pledge, ‘Yes Lord, I will do this.’ And it is a matter of following through, ‘Yes Lord, I do make this offering.’” With faithful stewardship, truly we receive much more than we give. As each of us gives, we reap the benefits of generosity and faith. We grow closer to God. It is that simple.

Question: Why is pledging important?

Answer: Pledging is an important spiritual exercise, which allows you to reflect on the gifts God has given you and show your thanks for those gifts by giving back to the Church. It also models the importance of our spiritual lives and our commitment to a growing relationship with God and the church, especially to children. For the church, there is another very practical reason. Each year Grace and Holy Trinity Church creates an operating budget based on the total amount of income we expect to receive the next year. A majority of that income is from pledges. The budget is the foundation for planning the future year’s events. If the amounts pledged do not cover the projected expenses of the church, then the expenses must be reduced. Reducing expenses means that outreach, education and other important programs, and possibly the staff who support them, might need to be cut.

Question: How is my money used?

Answer: The Gifts of Your Time, Talents and Treasure Make Things Happen at GHTC! The Vestry and staff work hard to be good stewards of your gifts. Did you know that because of your generosity over 45 VCU students are involved with our Campus Ministry program each week; our youth are able to go on a special fellowship outing once a month, in addition to their regular Christian Education classes; we feed over 4000 people each year in the Friday soup kitchen; worship is provided four times each Sunday and three of those services include music; over 70 people are involved in our choirs; and we are the host rehearsal site of the Greater Richmond Children's Choir and several AA and other service groups?

Question: Who should make a financial pledge to the church?

Answer: Everyone. You do not have to have formally transferred your membership into Grace and Holy Trinity. Perhaps your membership papers are still at another church, but you are now becoming active here, or perhaps you have joined us as a baptized member.

Question: How much should I pledge?

Answer: There are many ways to decide how much to give. The most important thing is that we give in gratitude, attending to that before all else. This is a biblical practice—dedicating the “first fruits” of our labor right off the top, rather than offering what remains after all other expenses are taken care of. The standard of giving in our Episcopal Church is 10% of our income, or a

tithe—although many of us need to start more modestly. For those, proportionate giving—giving a set percentage of our income back to God for God’s work—can be very helpful. Our hope is that everyone at Grace and Holy Trinity will pledge some amount. That is a first and important step for each of us on the path of gratitude and generosity. 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, why not start at 2% of your income? If you are already pledging, please consider “moving up one step” on the proportional giving chart. This chart is enclosed with this mailing.

Question: How and when do I make a pledge?

Answer: Pledge letters are sent each year in October. The letters include a pledge card that is returned to the church by All Saints Sunday (November 6th). The pledge card asks you to record the amount that you plan to donate to the operating budget of the church for the next calendar year, beginning January 1. Pledges may be paid weekly, monthly, quarterly or annually. You may make a pledge at any time during the year. Pledge cards are always available on our website (www.ghtc.org)

Question: What are the different ways to pay my pledge?

Answer: You can pay your pledge by putting checks in the collection plate on Sunday. Pledge envelopes are available and you can request those when you fill out your pledge card. You may also mail checks to the church to the attention of Judy Miller.

If you’d like to pay electronically you can set up a direct bill pay via the online bill pay services of your bank. This is the electronic equivalent of writing a check. It will save you time, especially when you are out of town, and it is fast, direct, and saves trees! The contact details you need to set up the church as an online bill pay account with your bank are: Grace and Holy Trinity Church, 8 North Laurel Street, Richmond, Va. 23220 - 804-359-5628. If you have never used this service before, simply go to your bank's web page and click on a tab for online banking services or online bill pay. You will then be walked through the set up. Or, contact Judy Miller at the church and she will help you set this up.

What about automatic payments? An automatic payment is a transfer of money directly from your bank account into GHTC’s bank account. If you are interested in this, Judy Miller will help you set it up.

Question: Can I give Stocks or other financial instruments?

Answer: Yes, this is a great way to offset capital gains.

Question: Are my donations tax deductible?

Answer: Yes, they are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. You will receive a statement in the first quarter of the year that details all the donations you made to the church in the previous year.

Question: What if I can't pay the amount I pledge?

Answer: We understand that circumstances change. Please contact one of the clergy if you need to make changes to your pledge.

Question: Why are there fund raisers if we pledge?

Answer: There are lots of events and programs here at GHTC. They cannot all be funded by the budget of the church. As a result some groups have fund raisers. As pledged income increases we can more fully fund our events and programs thus eliminating the need for some fund raisers. We would not want them to disappear entirely, because in addition to raising needed monies, fund raisers provide opportunities for team-building and fellowship as we fulfill our mission to build strong disciples, build a strong church community and serve God and the world God has made.

Questions: Who should I contact if I have questions or need help?

Answer: If you need help setting up electronic payments or fund transfers, receiving pledge envelopes, or have a question about your pledge, please contact:

Ms. Judy Miller, Financial Secretary

359-5628 ext. 14 or jmiller@ghtc.org

If you would like to speak to a member of the clergy about pledging, please contact:

The Rev. Bo Millner, Rector

359-5628 ext. 17 or bmillner@ghtc.org

If you have other questions about stewardship and pledging, you may contact:

Carolyn Chilton, Assistant for Evangelism and Stewardship

359-5628 ext. 16, Carolyn@ghtc.org

More information, including a pledge card, is on our website: www.ghtc.org

