



st. thomas episcopal church

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*"The aim of this instruction is love that comes from a pure heart,
a good conscience, and sincere faith." (1 Timothy 1:5)*

Dear St. Thomas Church:

As we get ready to begin the Annual Giving Campaign on October 15, I want to make it clear what underlies our fundraising effort: Love.

- ◆ Love of God that calls us to worship regularly and reach out compassionately to those in need;
- ◆ Love of our community that challenges us to live out our best impulses, not our worst ones;
- ◆ Love of our church buildings that creates a safe place for all people to gather, celebrate, grieve, and move toward wholeness.

Love is not just an idea or a feeling; love is an action. When you give to the Church, you are putting Christ's love into action.

As we get ready for the Annual Giving Campaign, I would like to remind you what we have accomplished in 2017 and what we hope to accomplish in 2018 and beyond.

What We Have Done

- ◆ With help from Erin Weber-Johnson and the Episcopal Church Foundation, we completed a comprehensive, parish-wide strategic thinking process that helped us develop a strategic filter for decision making, clarify our core values, and articulate goals and strategies to live more deeply into those values. Action teams are meeting now to put these intentions into practice. I have enclosed a copy of the final strategic thinking documents for your review.
- ◆ In an effort to bolster our pastoral care offerings, we joined Stephen Ministries, selected our first training class, and will begin training in early November. We expect to commission new Stephen Ministers in April, 2018. This lay-centered caring ministry will complement, not replace, our other pastoral care offerings.
- ◆ We have strengthened and expanded our visiting priest program. The Episcopal Church is diverse and we need diverse voices in the pulpit.

- ◆ We have expanded worship offerings with a new Sunday evening service called Sacred Space, a growing bell choir, and regular offerings of choral evensong. We also have an emerging ministry that is exploring how to help our brothers and sisters in the Middle East who are being persecuted for their faith.
- ◆ St. Thomas Playhouse continues to grow and thrive with outstanding productions like *Godspell* and *Into the Woods*. I can't tell you how many times people in the community stop me and thank our church for offering this remarkable outreach ministry.
- ◆ We have been faithful stewards of God's bounty. Pledges and grants continue to increase and we are committed to growing our Capital Improvement Fund and Endowment so we can strengthen St. Thomas Church for generations to come.

What We Have Left Undone

- ◆ I think there are new expressions of outreach right here in our local community that are just waiting for St. Thomas parishioners to get involved in. I am delighted that this is one of our strategic goals and can't wait to see what grows out of this endeavor.
- ◆ There are still opportunities for us to move from a passive consumption model to an active discipleship model. When we come to Church, we are not an audience waiting to be entertained, but a community being equipped to follow Jesus into the world. As a famous President once said (with slight revisions by me,) "Ask not what your [Church] can do for you, but what you can do for your [Church and the world]."
- ◆ The vestry is putting together a seven year plan for capital improvements. This will include replacement of things like boilers and roofs, necessary renovations in the church and rectory, and possible real estate acquisitions that will ensure the integrity of our property. Just this summer, an anonymous donor made a \$100,000 gift to the Capital Improvement Fund to get this work started; we will need everyone's help to bring these projects to fruition.

St. Thomas Church is growing in love and it wouldn't be possible without you.

Next week, you will receive a letter from John Ashton, the Chair of the Stewardship Committee, inviting you to take the next step in the "Journey to Generosity." I hope you will respond to his invitation with an open and joyful heart.

In gratitude,



The Rev. Kenneth H. Brannon
Rector

"It is the continuing vision of the parishioners of St. Thomas Church to establish our church as a community center for diverse activities and programs for children, youth, and adults of all ages – a village church that is a hospitable haven providing comfort, peace, succor, and spiritual inspiration to all. We seek to be a worshipping community that calls all members into deeper levels of communion with Christ and each other and inspires them to go forth to see and serve Christ in the world."