



***How awesome is this place!
This is none other but the House of God,
and this is the Gate of Heaven.***

Genesis 28:17

The Church of the Advent Stewardship 2019

O MERCIFUL CREATOR, thy hand is open wide to satisfy the needs of every living creature: Make us always thankful for thy loving providence; and grant that we, remembering the account that we must one day give, may be faithful stewards of thy good gifts; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Collect on Stewardship

A MESSAGE ON STEWARDSHIP FROM THE RECTOR'S WARDEN

Dear People of the Parish of the Advent,

This year we are making a special stewardship appeal. In the coming months, we will together see our beloved Rector into his retirement, and work together in the process of study and search that will lead to the selection of his successor. This is a moment of challenge and opportunity for our Parish family. Part of making a success of this transition is reaffirming our collective responsibility for the continued vitality and life of the Advent as a community of worship, teaching, and service. That includes the financial health of the Parish. We have a particular opportunity in this stewardship season to show that today's Adventers continue to dedicate their treasure to the Parish, just as those before us did in building our endowment.

My request to you is that you consider a meaningful increase in your pledge. I'm calling this year's stewardship appeal "Ten Percent for the Advent." In that vein, I have already committed to increase my annual pledge by ten percent or more. My fellow Warden, Paul Roberts, and his wife Mary, have likewise committed to increase their family's pledge. In this we have also been joined by nearly all of the members of the Vestry and of the Stewardship, Search, and Administration Committees. I ask you to make the same commitment.

Our collective commitment to increased pledging will have a number of important effects. First, and most practically, our year of transition will involve a number of additional costs. Second, it will be a sign to the Diocese and to our candidates of the underlying strength of our commitment to the Advent and her mission. Third, it will remind us of our ongoing obligation to support the Advent just as much as those who have gone before us.

The Advent's continued growth and flourishing requires more of us than harvesting the fruits of past generosity. Like the generations of Adventers before us, we must do our part not just to maintain what we have inherited, but to continue to build it up for those who will come after us. Please keep this in mind as you consider your pledge for next year. Please also know that the Wardens and Vestry, now as ever, take seriously our responsibility of ensuring the sound administration of donated funds, both in the endowment and from annual giving.

Thank you for your prayerful consideration of the stewardship appeal, and for your pledge. May God continue to bless the Advent.

Yours,
C. Thomas Brown
Rector's Warden.

ALMIGHTY GOD, FATHER OF ALL MERCIES, we thine unworthy servants do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us, and to all men. We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all, for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And, we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we shew forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives; by giving up ourselves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost be all honor and glory, world without end. Amen.

Reflections on Stewardship

Dear Members and Friends of the Advent,

In many Episcopal churches the yearly rhythm of parochial life has the fall season alert parishioners that a stewardship campaign is headed their way. They know it's coming and the thought of the approaching "ask" for the campaign is met with the same temperament as when one is asked to pay participation dues. The sentiment on the part of the parishioner might be, "I'll do it because I have to. After all, I like being part of a church and I want to do my part." Some parishioners might pass off the stewardship campaign as the fundraising portion of their lives in a parish. It is seen as a kind of necessary evil. Some less enthusiastic members might see stewardship as a euphemism for "tax season". When we put the "Christian" in front of "stewardship" and learn how it's an essential part of our lives as followers of Christ then we begin to actually welcome and desire the opportunity to be part of the stewardship campaign. The Spiritual gift of joy and the virtue of hope become present in very real ways.

Stewardship in the Christian sense means that everyone one of us is called to take care of all the gifts God has given us. "Taking care of them" means thanking God for them and using them to serve Him. This is true for both the practical and spiritual aspects of our lives. As stewards we are not called to ownership of what God has given us. We are called to care for, use, and pass on to those who come after us, the good gifts He has let us have while we are here. This kind of stewardship is presented to us in the First Letter of Saint Peter and Saint Peter is clearly considering stewardship a Christian duty.

Above all hold unfailing your love for one another, since love covers a multitude of sins. Practice hospitality ungrudgingly to one another. As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, **as good stewards of God's varied grace:** whoever speaks, as one who utters oracles of God; whoever renders service, as one who renders it by the strength which God supplies; in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. *(1 Peter 4:8-11)*

Every aspect of our Christian lives ought to be considered part of our stewardship since all of our lives are Christ's. He gave His life for us. To follow Him, our lives are to be given to Him. Our health, our wealth, our friends, our families, our minds, and our souls are all gifts that we are to steward through this life. When we use the gifts God has entrusted to us, and use them as He would have them be used, two things happen. We grow closer to Him and His work and Word are extended and distributed so others can be brought to Him. It should be clear that our lives in this wonderful parish are certainly part of our Christian stewardship.

This church is where the joy is for me in Christian stewardship. When Father Warren asked me to come and serve as Associate Rector part of answering the call was knowing that I would be helping to preserve and promote this great gift we have in the Church of the Advent. I knew that Betsy and I would have a hand in stewarding and being part of a parish family that is from a tradition we know and love. Think of the gift we have in this historic and beautiful Church. We have the gift of worshipping everyday in a place that glorifies God by reflecting back to Him something of His grace and beauty. Art, architecture, music, and poetic words all come together to lift our hearts and minds to receive some glimpse of God's Glory. That is only part of the privilege given to us. We are given access to exceptional adult Christian education. Our children can be nurtured in the Faith of the Church through our Children's ministry programs. People in need in our neighborhood are assisted by weekly meals, periodic food drives, meal preparation, clothing, and numerous other ways that we can be the hands of Christ in the world. Being a steward in this Church is certainly a privilege and joy.

Never is there a better and more important time to practice good Christian stewardship than now as we will enter the search for our next

Rector. Father Warren has shepherded our parish family for two decades and guided us with love, wisdom, boundless enthusiasm, serious teaching, and deep devotion. He has been a great gift to us and he has been a fine example of what it takes to be a good and faithful steward. Now his life and ministry will begin new chapters and early in 2019 we will have to wish him well as those chapters unfold. This leaves us at a point in the life of the Advent where we have the opportunity to be living examples of good Christian stewardship. Wouldn't it make a sound witness of our responsible stewardship to hand the gift of this parish to the next rector in excellent shape? What a joy it would be to know that we have continued to care for this place even through the search and calling of a rector, and have the budget healthier than in 2018, the buildings and property in tip top shape, and all the programs not missing a beat. This will only be achieved if the 2019 Stewardship Campaign is supported and surpasses all previous efforts.

Joy is given by the Holy Spirit and hope is deepened in the soul when good Christian stewardship is practiced. Let's use this time of the 2019 Stewardship Campaign to receive that gift of joy and know that virtue of hope. When the pledge card needs to be signed for 2019 please first say a prayer of thanksgiving for being able to live your Christian Faith in this place and let the amount reflect your gratitude for the Advent. If we do that faithfully, we will continue live out our Christian Faith in a parish that we can cherish as a gift given to us. We can rejoice that our faith will be maintained and deepened here, and we will have great hope that others will continue to be converted, forgiven, strengthened, and sustained in this place.

Yours faithfully, in Christ, and with a glad and grateful heart,

The Reverend Jay C. James
Associate Rector



What follows on subsequent pages is the practical mechanics on pledging and how it works at the Advent. If you have been pledging for

decades, you may skip the rest of the brochure. If you haven't, or if you have questions about how pledging works at the Advent, please read onwards!

In any case, please return your pledge card to the Advent in a collection plate or by mail, no later than December 2, the First Sunday of Advent.

You may also pledge online on the church's website, www.theadventboston.org. When you pledge online, you will get an email confirming your pledge. **If you do not receive such an email**, please contact the Parish Office at 617-523-2377 ext 122, or office@theadventboston.org.



MEMBERSHIP AT THE ADVENT

Anyone is always welcome to worship at the Advent. And as we all hear from the pulpit every Sunday, we very much try to extend a warm welcome (and generally succeed, I think!) to all of our visitors. Once a visitor becomes more than just a visitor, however, and decides to make the Advent his or her Christian home, then it is time for that visitor to become a member of the Parish.

To be a member of the Church of the Advent, one must commit both to regular worship at and regular financial support of the Parish. At the Advent, as is the general Episcopal tradition, we commit to support the church financially with a pledge of giving for the upcoming year through the annual Stewardship Campaign.

By our Parish by-laws, only members of the Parish who make a recorded financial contribution are allowed to vote at the Annual Meeting, and only financially supporting members of the Parish may serve as Vestrymen and Officers. By Parish tradition, we have extended this requirement to the other ministries in the Church, from acolytes to ushers to readers to church school teachers, and on and on, all of whom must also be pledging members.

Membership in the Parish is a way of formalizing your spiritual discipline of regular worship in and regular support of God’s holy church. If you have not supported the Advent financially in a regular way, but think of it as your church, your spiritual home, or your Christian family, this is an especial call to you.



PLEDGING

A pledge card is enclosed with this brochure. Cards are also available at the back of the church or you may contact the parish office to get one. You may also pledge online on the church’s website, www.theadventboston.org, and click on “Pledge Online” and follow the instructions.

Once you have made the decision to pledge, hopefully prayerfully and joyfully, you can fill out your card and return it to the Advent in a collection plate on any given Sunday, with the First Sunday of Advent, which is December 2, being the deadline of sorts. We make the First Sunday of Advent our deadline for three reasons:

- ✘ First, and most important, it is important simply to have a deadline so that we can hold ourselves accountable, rather than ignore the question of the disposition of our worldly treasures until some vague moment in the future when we might want to face it.
- ✘ Second, that date is our Feast of Title and Dedication, we being the Church of the Advent, and so it is a fitting date to dedicate all of the pledged giving we have done as a Parish family through the Stewardship Campaign to God’s holy church and her work.
- ✘ And third, practically, if we know the pledging total by that date, it can help the Vestry more fairly budget for the upcoming year.

There are a few questions the pledge card will ask, other than the amount of your annual pledge—such as whether you want to pay weekly or monthly, or whether you want envelopes for your pledge or not. You may answer these as you like, as there are many ways to follow through on your pledge.



RECORD-KEEPING

Once your pledge card is received by the Parish, it will be recorded in the Parish office. It then becomes your responsibility to fulfill the pledge during the upcoming year. Some people put a check weekly or monthly in a pledge envelope and drop it in the collection plate. Others simply have their bank or online bill-pay send a regular check. If you give cash, though, ***it is important to put the cash in an official pledge envelope*** so that it can be recorded as given by you, and count toward your pledge.

Your financial contributions will be recorded by the Parish office toward the fulfillment of your pledge. A statement will be mailed to you in April, July, October, and early in December, with a record of your pledge and your donations to date, so that you can keep track of how you are doing on your promise, or make sure that the Parish office hasn't missed something (which very rarely happens, I am pleased to say!). And, of course, every January the parish office will send you a statement for tax purposes.



QUESTIONS OR DISCUSSION

Members of the Stewardship Committee would love the chance to talk to you individually about stewardship and giving at the Advent. As we have said before, our Stewardship Campaign is not first and foremost about collecting dollars to pay for the church's electric bill, though that is important. It is about giving all members of this our Christian family a formal opportunity to deepen our relationship with God through the sacrificial giving that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ asks of each of us. Let us all use this Stewardship Campaign as a chance to examine our relationship with money and all worldly things, and to ask God to help us redirect our eyes and our hearts to those things of eternal value.

If you would like to speak with a member of the committee, please feel free to do so directly, or contact the office if you would like to have someone get in touch with you.

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

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|------------------|-----------------|
| Barbara Boles | Virginia Pierce |
| Michael Gnozzio | Kyle Pilares |
| David Lapin | Paul Roberts |
| Philip Le Quesne | Kara Rodgers |
| Peter Madsen | Adam Rutledge |
| Meg Nelson | Steven Sayers |
| Frederick Ou | Fr Jay James |

Thatcher Gearhart
Francesco Piscitelli
Co-Chairmen

(cover photo by Julianne Turé)