

Episcopal Diocese  
of  
El Camino Real



CATHEDRAL

Established 1861

## Stewardship and Pledging FAQ

### What is Stewardship?

Christian stewardship is grateful and responsible use of God's gifts in the light of God's purpose as revealed through Jesus Christ. Christian stewards, empowered by the Holy Spirit, commit themselves to conscious, purposeful decisions. Stewardship has also been defined as what I do, with all that I have, using the gifts God has given us, to do the work God is calling us to do. Stewardship is lived out in:

- Sharing God in seeking justice, peace, and the integrity of creation in an interdependent universe.
- Wisely employing God-given human resources, abilities, and relationships.
- Sharing the material resources we hold and giving them in service, justice, and compassion.
- Providing for future generations, sharing in the life, worship, and responsible stewardship of the Church and of its mission both for the individual and for the community.

*Matthew 6:21 "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*

Stewardship is the regular practice of returning to God a portion of all that God has given us. It involves teaching ourselves how to create a life built upon the idea that all we have is a gift from God. This includes teaching the holy habits of keeping the Sabbath and tithing and the concept that giving regularly of our time, talent, and money to God's work on this earth is as much a spiritual practice as prayer and worship.

### What is Pledging?

Pledging is promising to give a certain amount of money to your church in the next calendar year. A pledge, by definition means, "to offer or guarantee by a solemn binding promise." Each year, we have the opportunity to renew our commitment to one another and the ministry of Trinity Cathedral by making a financial commitment. Each and every pledge makes a difference and works toward the building of our faith community.

### Who should pledge?

Anyone who feels a connection to Trinity should consider making a pledge of support.

### Why are annual pledges important?

Annual pledges support everything we do and are at Trinity. Our annual operating budget is driven by the generosity of our parishioners through pledges. These pledges support all the operating costs of our ministry programs as well as our building and staff operations, and expenses such as heating, outreach, liturgy and music, and nursery caregivers.

**Why should I pledge when I regularly put money in the offering plate?**

Non-pledge funds collected each week do help to support the ongoing life of Trinity Cathedral. However, pledges are very important because they enable us to plan responsibly and to establish the operating budget for the coming year.

**What is the annual operating budget?**

The operating budget is the very tangible way we give witness to our plans to continue Christ's ministry in this world through Trinity. The budget is neither arbitrary nor inflated. It is carefully designed to allow the Cathedral to practice responsible stewardship.

**How does annual pledging fit in the ministry of stewardship?**

Annual pledges are a major part of the practice of generosity and stewardship that supports Trinity. Planned giving is a gift or series of gifts that can help secure the church's ministries beyond our individual lifetimes. Special gifts fund additional priorities such as building renovation and maintenance, special programs, and endowment support.

**How is giving to the church different than other charitable giving, say, to the American Red Cross?**

First, we celebrate and encourage all giving. Often we give to a charitable organization because its mission is important to us. This is also true of our giving to the church, but true Christian giving is more than this. As Christians we are called to be a generous people.

*Matthew 6:19-20: "19Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal."*

The path of Christian Stewardship involves intentional "giving back" in gratitude for all that God has given us. It is more than mission-based giving; it is spiritual practice, a holy habit.

**How much should I give?**

It is the teaching of the Episcopal Church and the Biblical norm to give 10% (a tithe) of one's income. That being said, tithing may not be possible for everyone. Each parishioner should consider making a pledge that is both responsible and significant based on his or her financial situation. We encourage you to engage in proportional giving. If you are new to the practice of pledging, start at a comfortable but significant level, say 3 to 5 %, and plan to increase toward the tithe in coming years.

**What does it mean to give proportionately?**

Proportional giving is based on the premise that the first fruits are given back to God in grateful response to what God has given us. It refers to a conscious effort to determine an appropriate level of giving. The church believes that our standard of giving should reflect our standard of living. Each parishioner should consider making a pledge that is both responsible and significant based on his or her financial situation.

*Luke 21:1-4: "1And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. 2And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. 3And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: 4For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had."*

**How can I pay my annual pledge?**

Trinity accepts cash (when included in a pledge envelope), checks, or Electronic Fund Transfers. You

may also make a pledge payment of stock or other securities. In most cases, such a pledge payment may be considered a charitable deduction to avoid capital gains on the appreciation of the stock. Please call the Cathedral office at 408-293-7953 to learn how to make a gift of securities.

**Do I have to pay when I pledge? Can I pay in installments?**

Returning your pledge card on In-Gathering Sunday, November 9, is simply a promise to pay. Once you've made your pledge, you can fulfill it in as many payments as you wish throughout the year. Trinity offers monthly or weekly pledge envelopes designed to help you with your payments.

**I'm not sure what I can afford this year. How can I pledge?**

We suggest that you pledge responsibly, based on your best estimate of the year's income. Your pledge can be adjusted by contacting the Treasurer if your circumstances change.

**If I have questions about my pledge, who do I contact?**

For questions about pledging, contact a member of the Stewardship Committee at [pledge@trinitysj.org](mailto:pledge@trinitysj.org) or 408-293-7953. Questions regarding your own pledge or contributions should be directed to the Treasurer.

**How is pledging good for ME?**

Pledging encourages our spiritual growth and trust in God. It brings a spiritual component to our finances and allows us to have control over our money, rather than letting money and things have control over us. The practice of regular giving can be transforming. Truly, it is in giving that we receive.