



Stewardship letter September 2009

BUILDING ON A SURE FOUNDATION

Dear **Parishioners** and Friends of Transfiguration,

This year we will take the four Sundays of October commencing on Foundation Day, this coming Sunday, for our annual focus on Stewardship. The theme we have chosen this year, “Building on a sure foundation”, hardly needs explanation. We all know that the foundation of this parish which we have celebrated every year on the first Sunday in October since 1848 was built on the sure foundation of faith in Jesus Christ. And on that sure foundation many clergy and laypeople have continued to build over the parish's long and distinguished history and are building today. And that includes you and me. For all that dedication and commitment over 161 years we are truly thankful.

This past year has been an exciting one with the move into the new building, the return of the Episcopal Actors' Guild to Guild Hall, the move in of our tenants, New York Open Center, to the second and third floors as well as the 30th Street shop in Transfiguration House, and last but not least the magnificent restoration of the church garden. The garden restoration was made possible through the generous bequest of the late Joan Touye. This is a helpful reminder how your good estate planning can benefit the church. But even as we have completed so many major projects the vestry are planning to do more especially with much needed restoration to parts of the exterior of the church. It is rather like repainting a room in your house. You do one thing and then realize that everything else, like the curtains and the furniture need attention. Fortunately we were required to have an Existing Conditions Survey done before the new building went up so we are well aware of what needs still to be done and what are the priorities.

But we all know that it is the ongoing and regular life of the parish that needs underwriting most of all with our pledged given. This parish is blessed with a modest

Fides opera.

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endowment and with an income flow from the leased property. But it is the pledged weekly giving of parishioners that enables us to sustain our rich liturgical and musical life; to provide pastoral and spiritual leadership for this community of faith and beyond; to reach out to the wider community through our support of diocesan and other agencies; as well as serving the local community. Stewardship of course covers time and talents as well as treasure. Many of us are able to contribute in all three areas. Some of us may be stretched with regard to treasure. But even if we are there is nothing like pledging a little something so that you experience that sense of being a contributor on all fronts and the joy that participation gives.

I have spoken many times of seeing your financial commitment as part of a mature spiritual discipline. It is something much taught about in the Bible. Jesus taught about putting your treasure where your heart is. St Paul taught with great clarity in 2 Corinthians chapters 8 and 9 about the centrality of giving. It is a way of expressing your commitment to Faith in God's Creation and Providence and to recognizing God's Generosity towards us in Giving us the Gift of Jesus Christ. We love because he first loved us says St John. So we give because God has given us so much. One of the traditional (and biblical) ways of expressing our thanks to God is by giving a proportion or percentage of our treasure to God. By choosing a particular percentage (say 3% or 5%) of your income as your pledge that percentage stays the same no matter what happens to your income. This saves any embarrassment should your income go down (as it sadly does sometimes in times of recession).

Accompanying this letter you will find a pledge card for completion and return either on Stewardship Sunday, October 25, or by mail. Also enclosed is an information sheet explaining E-pledging (an easy and convenient method of giving) and a pamphlet about Planned Giving opportunities. We have also included a sign up sheet for parish committees as a way of expressing your commitment of time and talent.

May God continue to bless you in all that you do and contribute to His Church.

With my prayerful good wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew', written in a cursive style.

Rector