

Testimonial speech 11/21/2010. By Sylvia Duncan

I am the last of the speakers for St John's pledge campaign. What can I say that had not been already said well by previous speakers? I asked a friend from another church if she had heard anything new and fresh about pledging.

"No," she replied. "I don't really listen. It is always the same. Give more money and time. I don't have more money or more time"

I was taken aback, a little horrified. I decided to take a different approach today. I would ask everyone to support the spirit of St John's.

I am allowed to be sentimental. I have been a member here for 26 years. I have always pledged to support the spirit of this place. It is strong and beautiful, always present and I ask you to support it too.

How can you pledge to do that? There are three ways.

First. Show up on Sundays.

Show up as regularly as you possibly can. There is no attendance roll but your being here to partake in the service is an enormous part of the backbone of this church. Pledge to be at one of the services here. I have sat in the same pew for twenty-six years. I come alone but am never alone here. Nor will you be. The spirit of community is strong. Pledge to come weekly.

Second. Help in whatever manner you are able to help.

It doesn't matter how small the commitment. Make a commitment. If it is a dollar a week, that will add up to fifty-two dollars a year. Fifty cents a week will be twenty-six dollars guaranteed. Put it on a pledge card and follow through. Begin there. Don't be intimidated by feeling that you can't give enough. If you are able to give more - excellent Participate.

There are many, many other opportunities to serve. If doing coffee hour for eighty is daunting - team up with others to do it.

As Adrian said on altar cleaning day
"Grab a duster and help out"

Over the years I have helped in various ways. Don't worry I won't go through all 26 years!

I was senior warden, vestry member, co -editor of the newsletter; youth group teacher, journal workshop presenter and playwright.

Now I attend regularly, read the lesson occasionally and bring flowers for the altar. It is where I am now, as a teacher who travels a lot. You could help me by bringing flowers from your garden or donating an occasional bouquet. Marcia and Phyllis fill in when I am away. When there are big orders for poinsettias or Easter lilies, there is extra help from Chris and others.

You, as individuals, know where you are and what you are best able to do. A small pledge made with good spirit will be appreciated.

Third Support and encourage those who are doing hard, concentrated work here, especially Pastor Teresa. I worry that she works too hard. Show your appreciation for her fine sermons and her dedicated work. We are fortunate to have her. In an article from the January 12th 2003 issue of "The Living Church" I wrote of how several of us took turns preaching the sermon here. We alternated with Father William Baker, who was then in his eighties. It was hard work. I wrote "We are filled with strong interest when a newcomer takes the preaching stance". Newcomers no longer have to take turns preaching because we are fortunate to have Pastor Teresa. Our preaching must now be out in the community. Bring in others to join us in continuing the strong ongoing spirit.

Support those who are the backbone of the outreach programs, the vestry members and various committees. Seek them out with praise.

Those are three ways I pledge. You can do it too.

I asked Michael, our organist and the choir if we could sing "There's a sweet, sweet spirit in this place" It is a gospel hymn that summons up the rare beauty of worshipping at St Johns. Show up each week, pledge some money, help or support even if it is small. Encourage and appreciate others. This sweet fine spirit can't easily be measured. It must be maintained. #