



The Church of St. Andrew



CHRONICLES

Volume 6, Issue 1 of the Monthly Newsletter

Feb. 2010

Lent A Time for Spring Cleaning

Did you ever have one of those days when every drawer you opened, every stack of papers you came across, every shelf in every closet, every cabinet and every room in your house was calling out for your immediate attention? The other day I found myself straightening, organizing, cleaning, purging, and rearranging everything that I set my eyes on. It all started out with my dresser drawers that have needed my attention and purging for quite some time. Then, I suppose that the rest of the house was feeling a bit neglected and began drawing my attention to various and sundry piles, stacks and hiding places for large amounts of dust balls. There was a moment, and it was just a moment, when I wondered, how many cups of coffee have I had today? Clearly I was getting the energy from something outside of myself. But, after several hours of this high paced “Mr. Clean” frenzy, I began to notice a remarkable difference. Not only from the missing piles and stacks of books, magazines and papers, but from an incredible feeling of accomplishment and relief.

When I finally sat down, exhausted, winded and worn my mind drifted to thoughts of Lent. There’s something to be said about losing the clutter, the disorganization, and the dust – it opened me up. It freed me and within the new boundaries of household order, I was able to enter into a sacred space. That’s it. That’s what Lent should be all about, a journey into a sacred space where God touches my heart and reminds me of how much I am loved.

There’s no way I could have quieted myself enough that day if it weren’t for the fact that my surroundings were somewhat in order. Cleaning up the mess around me enabled me to finally be still and know the presence of God. Within the freedom of my newly organized space, I was able to focus on the things that really mattered. As I filled the large trash bags, washed, dried and folded the laundry, gave the stacks and piles meaning, vacuumed up the dust and ordered the shelves in a way that I could see what was actually there – the distractions were gone. What a wonderful feeling and how amazingly simple.

It has been known that the three days that preceded Ash Wednesday were called Shrove Sunday, Shrove Monday and Shrove Tuesday. The Old English word, ‘shrove,’ means to confess your sins, to unbind yourself of former weaknesses and failings. In other words, to strip oneself, through the Sacrament of Confession, of all the baggage that we have collected over the days and months. The traditions of the Episcopal Church taught us well, though sometimes antiquated, their message still calls out to us. Free yourself from the heaviness of heart, mind and soul and enter the Lenten journey as one who has been made clean.

Our more modern and less effective method of ‘shrove’ Tuesday is to clean out the kitchen cabinets of all things fattening. This process led to the traditional Pancake Supper, and in more daring communities, to an all out celebration of Mardi Gras, the letting go of everything, and I mean everything. It became clear to me when I lived in Louisiana that all the celebrations leading up to and including Mardi Gras were so wild that the

beginning of Lent, with its imposition of ashes, was just what the doctor ordered. As wonderful as our celebration of Mardi Gras and as delicious as our pancakes are, it won't be wild enough to bring us back to church on Wednesday pleading for forgiveness. But, it will remind us of our need for each other and the fact that we enter the season of Lent as a parish family, committed to grow closer to God and to each other.

Continued on page 3

In this edition of the Chronicles, there are many ways for you and your family to enter this holy season of Lent. Once you have cleared away some of those things that distract you and keep you from participating fully in the life of this church, reflect on those ways that you can enter into the sacred time and space of Lent.

Faithfully,

If this article seems familiar to you, you might have read it a few years ago in the Chronicles. As I was looking through the piles of files, I came across this article and I was amazed at how my life is so patterned. Here I am several years later going through the same acts of purging, organizing and just clearing out the distractions of my life. I hope that as this article came alive again for me, so may it help you in your preparations for the season of Lent.

2010 Lenten Schedule

Sunday Bible Study

Following the 8:00 Rite I Eucharist, Bible Study of the Hebrew Scripture readings appointed for each Sunday in Lent will take place in Burch Hall.

Tuesday evening celebration of Eucharist and Healing

Each Tuesday evening during Lent at 6:30 pm, we will gather in the Church for the celebration of Holy Eucharist. This liturgy will include prayers for healing and for those who wish, to be anointed with oil.

Soup and Conversation

On Wednesday evenings, we will gather in Burch Hall at 6:30 pm for a meal of homemade soup and join in a conversation about the book, “*The Return of the Prodigal Son*” by Henri Nouwen. The evening will conclude with the praying of Compline, the traditional night prayer of the Church.

An Evening of Pardon & Peace

On Friday evening, March 26th, we will celebrate a service of Reconciliation. This is an opportunity for all of us to prepare ourselves for the great feast of Easter. It is a time for quiet reflection, prayer, singing and confession. Don't miss this beautiful evening.

Inter-Parish Council Lenten Program

Anglican Identity at the Crossroads given by The Rev'd Dr. J. Robert Wright, Professor of Church History at General Theological Seminary. The program will take place at All Saints Church on March 21st, beginning at 4:00 pm. There will be a light meal served followed the lecture.

Please note these dates on your calendar. I hope to see you at these events during the Lenten season.

Fr. Michael +



WINTER PRAYERS

Let us remember to pray for each other and for those who have asked for our prayers:

✠ We pray for all who yearn for health, for people with disabilities, for those in mental anguish or spiritual turmoil, for the incurably ill, for all who live with cancer and HIV/AIDS, we remember especially; Mae, Lou, Georgia, Albert, Antoinette, Joni, Mary, Rose, Devon, Michael, Jennifer, Marian, Stephanie, Helen, Doris, Gail, Doug, Frank and those that were injured in the Haitian earthquake. We pray for all who remember and care for them.

✠ We commend to your mercy all who have recently died, including Rene Calderon, father of Charles Calderon, and for those who lost their lives in the Haitian earthquake. We pray that they may share with all your saints in your eternal kingdom.

✠ We pray for peace in the world and for an end to crimes of bias, hate, and terrorism, for people of Africa, Palestine, Haiti, Israel, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Darfur, Afghanistan and Iraq.

✠ We pray for our divided and restless world, that those who hold power over others, especially Barack H. Obama, our President, George Patterson, our Governor, Michael Bloomberg, our Mayor, and James Molinaro, our Borough President, may be troubled and transformed by the demands of justice.

BIRTHDAY WISHES

To all birthday celebrants, we want to ensure everyone is mentioned in the Chronicle. If you did not see your name, please call the office or leave a note for us so we can have ALL the names next year. Thank you and God bless.

The Parish Office



- 01 Craig Furlani, Helen Giordano
- 02 Elizabeth Almerigotti, Melanie Gong, Joseph Mondì
- 03 Thomas Gaglio
- 04 Robin Staaby
- 05 Priyan Wickremesinghe
- 06 Anson Lee-Sam, Jake Mondì
- 07 Katie Kelman
- 08 Christopher Eadicicco, Joseph Ferraro, Brian Jackson
- 09 Garrett Gyimesi
- 11 Justin Pedone, Claire Richardson, Corrine Quigley
- 12 Martha Barahona
- 13 Nicole Beyl
- 14 Christopher Mema
- 16 Audrey Casso, Barry Maita
- 18 Dawn Wyatt
- 19 Antonio Morelli
- 20 Matthew Cassone
- 21 Gianna Chirelli
- 22 David Carles, Donald Kiernan, Aidan Russell, Rita Wangenstein
- 23 Alyssa Rose Barbera, Christine Brady, Emma Faith Rabin
- 24 Dennis McGowan
- 25 Jennifer Bridgewater, Keith Miscione, Theodore Wright
- 26 Lorretta Choquet
- 27 Alexander Brower, Charlotte Griffin,

FINANCE/STEWARDSHIP

As of January 19th, 2010, our statistics are:

2009 Stewardship – Final Report

Number of Pledges 127
Amount Pledged \$191,230
Pledges Fulfilled 93
Partial Payments 32
No Payment 2

Total – Pledges:	\$174,573.75
Total – Non-Pledge Envelopes	\$663.00
Total – Non-Envelope Contrib.	\$8,950.00
Total – Loose Plate Contrib.	\$6,265.31

2010 Stewardship

Number of Pledges 100
Amount Pledged \$175,828

If you have not submitted your pledge card for 2010, we urge you to please do so. Pledge cards were mailed to homes in mid-November. You can obtain a pledge card from the Usher Stand. You must hand in a new pledge card each year in order to receive envelopes for that coming year.

Respectfully submitted by,
Harry J. Campbell
Finance/ Stewardship Committee

STEWARDSHIP MEDITATION

“and behold, the Lord stood above it and said, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants; . . . Then Jacob made a

*vow, saying "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way . . . then the Lord shall be my God, . . . and of all that thou givest me I will give the tenth to thee." **Genesis 28:13-22***

While not the earliest mention of tithing in the bible, this passage shows the direct connection that the writers of the Torah saw between gifts from God and the need for a specific response to those gifts. It is certainly easier to make such a spontaneous and significant response when one has heard God's promise directly. Unfortunately, things don't work quite so simply for us today. It takes more effort to understand our dependence upon God and God's gifts. Upon hearing that someone was a "self made man", Winston Churchill supposedly responded that this relieved the almighty of a very grave responsibility.

What are our gifts from God? They start with the gift of Jesus Christ, a gift that gives us love, mercy, forgiveness and ultimately, gives us a way to God. For each of us, there is then life itself (time), those abilities or talents that we are born with, and the ones that we acquire along the way. We learn so much as children, especially from the example of our parents, that we sometimes confuse that which was learned with natural born talent. This makes it even more difficult to understand the level of God's gifts to us. But, ultimately, all of our talents, including the will to work hard, are gifts from God. These talents employed in God given time enable us to earn money or treasure. In biblical times, the gift of land was really a gift of money because it enabled people to provide for themselves and their families. The people of that time felt called to give back a tenth of what they had received. At St. Andrew's, we believe that we are called to do the same.

God of our fathers and mothers help us today to fully understand your gifts to us, and the magnitude of your love for us. That love is greater, wider and deeper than any of us can even imagine. Guide us so that every day we are aware of your gifts and your love is to us. Help us to be like Jacob and to make the appropriate response. Amen.

The Church of St. Andrew

40 Old Mill Road
Staten Island, NY 10306

Phone: 718.351.0900

Fax: 718.667.0788

Email:

churchofstandrew@mac.com
www.churchofstandrew-si.com

Parish Office Hours

Tues, Thurs, Fri: 9:30 am – 4:30 pm

Wed: 9:30 am – 12:30 pm

Evening Hours by Appointment

Sunday Services

Sundays at 8:00 am, 10:00 am and
7:00 pm

Parish Staff

The Rev. Michael F. Delaney, Rector
frmichaelstandrew@mac.com

The Rev. Deacon Fred Fausak,
Deacon

The Rev. Deacon Jack Girard,
Deacon

Mr. Brandon Beachamp, Associate
to the Rector for Liturgy and Music

Ms. Karen L. Kelly, Parish Admin.
Asst.

Mr. Richard Ragsdale, Facilities
Manager

To arrange for weddings and
baptisms, please contact the Parish
Office.

For information regarding rental of
Hemsley Hall, please contact Karen
Kelly or Richard Ragsdale.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

7:00 PM; Burch Hall

28 Bible Study
After 8:00 AM Service; Burch Hall

FEBRUARY:

- 2 Evening Guild Meeting**
7:30 PM; Burch Hall
- 3 Bible Study**
7:00 PM; Hemsley Hall
- 4 ECW Eucharist & Meeting**
12:00 PM; Church; Followed by Meeting in Burch Hall
- 14 Parish Annual Meeting**
10:00 AM; Church
Please note that 8:00 AM Rite I Service & 7:00 PM "Come as you are" mass will not be held
Parish Brunch
Immediately following Annual Meeting; Hemsley Hall
- 16 Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper**
7:00 PM; Hemsley Hall
- 17 Ash Wednesday**
Holy Eucharist & Imposition of Ashes at 12:15 PM & 7:30 PM
- 19 Charity Fur Sale**
12:00 – 5:00 PM; Hemsley Hall
- 20 Charity Fur Sale**
10:00 AM – 5:00 PM; Hemsley Hall
Soup Kitchen
Trinity Lutheran Church
- 21 Bible Study**
After 8:00 AM Service; Burch Hall
Charity Fur Sale
10:00 – 5:00 PM; Hemsley Hall
- 23 Holy Eucharist & Anointing**
6:30 PM; Church
Vestry Meeting
7:30 PM; Burch Hall
- 24 Soup & Conversation**



ECW

I want to start off by wishing everyone a healthy and happy New Year!

Some of you were unable to be with us on January 7th for our first meeting of 2010. You were missed! Nothing new or exciting happened. Actually, it was the shortest meeting we all can remember – we were out by 2:00 PM!! However, we did get to welcome Pat Hartstein as a new member of our group. She has retired and now looks forward to working with us on our sundry projects.

The gifts you so generously donated for Project Hospitality were received by Rev. Terry Troia with thanks. Sid and I delivered them personally.

We will meet again on **February 4th**. Mr. Tom Bellino, our friend from CASC, will be the guest speaker.

I hope that the weather permits you to join with us at 12:00 PM for our traditional Eucharist. Also, just a small reminder that Lent begins on February 17th.

Jeanne Svoboda
President

EVENING GUILD MEETING

The Evening Guild will have their next meeting on **Tuesday, February 2nd, at 7:30 PM**. The meeting will take place in **Burch Hall**. All members are requested to attend. If you would like to find out

more about the Guild and what we do, all interested parishioners are invited to attend.

PUBLISHING SCHEDULE OF THE CHRONICLES

The Chronicles will be published on the last Friday of each month. All Parish Groups & Organizations are requested to have their articles submitted to the Parish Office by the second-to-last Friday of each month. It is preferred that groups submit their articles via email, but handwritten reports are acceptable.

ADULT BIBLE STUDY CLASSES

Adult Bible Study of The Acts of the Apostles is held **every other Wednesday at 7:00 PM** in **Hemsley Hall**. In February, it will be held on February 3rd. The evening will begin with prayer and a light meal followed by a study of the New Testament book of Acts.

Please note that Wednesday evening Bible Study will be suspended during Lent because of Soup and Conversation, which begins on Wednesday, February 24th at 7:00 PM. During Lent, you are invited to attend Sunday morning Bible Study, which takes place after the 8:00 am service in Burch Hall. Wednesday evening Bible Study will resume after Easter.

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES

Ash Wednesday is **February 17th**. The Church of St. Andrew will hold two services of Holy Eucharist

that day, at which you will have the opportunity to receive ashes:

- **12:15 PM – Holy Eucharist Rite I**
- **7:30 PM – Holy Eucharist Rite II**

We look forward to seeing you there!

A MESSAGE FROM THE TREASURER

Well here we go again – It's a New Year and we are off and running. During 2009, we were in the process of putting all the parish financial records on the computer. That task has now been completed, and I need to ask you to do some things a bit differently regarding your pledge payments. I promise, it's not too bad and this will help to make our computer records as accurate as possible. Please note the following:

1. If you have pledge envelopes, you will notice that there are 52 weekly envelopes dated for each Sunday of the year. There are also several miscellaneous envelopes for the Holidays, such as Thanksgiving, Easter and Christmas. **PLEASE DO NOT USE THE HOLIDAY ENVELOPES TO MAKE PLEDGE PAYMENTS.** The Holiday envelopes are for extra, optional donations, and are not for pledge payments. This is an important distinction because these Holiday envelopes are posted separately in the computer so that we can track donations made on those special occasions. It is similar to how we record donations made for flower memorials.
2. If you are making several donations for different things, such as a pledge payment, a flower memorial donation and a Capital Campaign donation, please make separate checks and mark them accordingly. Each check is credited to a separate account and are posted in the computer differently. Also, if you give cash in an envelope and it is for several different donations, please mark on the envelope the amount for each donation.
3. If you do not receive envelopes but still pledge, please make sure your check is marked in the memo section with your number, if you know it. If you do not know

your number, you can also ask Harry Campbell or me what it is. Or, you can just mark the memo section "pledge" so we can post it correctly against your 2010 pledge.

4. Lastly, whenever writing out checks out to The Church of St. Andrew, please only use **BLACK** or **BLUE** ink. Our bank will not accept checks written out in any other color.

it can be used to make a donation toward future capital improvement projects.

I have spoken to several people who have been members of the parish for many years. Therefore, I am aware that the practice in the past has always been that if you put money in the Christmas envelope or one of the other special envelopes, it has always been credited towards your annual pledge. Unfortunately, due to the computer financial system this can no longer be the case. If a correction to your pledge has to be made in the computer, it is more than just erasing the number from one column in a paper ledger and adding it to another column. Corrections are rather involved and time consuming. Therefore, with everyone's cooperation and assistance in these matters, the quarterly reports and the year-end reports will be accurate in listing your pledge payments as well as all your other donations to St. Andrew. Also, my Assistant Treasurers, who volunteer their time to enter the financial information into the computer, will have an easier time. All it takes is a little cooperation and consideration.

Thank you all in advance for your help in this matter and may we all have a Happy and Healthy year.

Faithfully,
Veronica Larney
Treasurer

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN ENVELOPES

Enclosed with the Chronicles we have included an envelope for the Capital Campaign, for your convenience. This envelope can be used to pay your Capital Campaign pledge, or if you weren't able to make a pledge toward the Capital Campaign,

CARPENTER'S KIDS

We are coming up on the fourth anniversary of sponsoring of K'ndege Parish in Tanzania. I would like to thank all of the parishioners that are participating in the program. As we begin the third year, it is now time to please forward your third year payment of \$50 to the Parish Office. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.



A NOTE FROM DEACON FRED

Happy New Year to all of our parishioners!

This year the Super Bowl will be held on **Sunday, February 7th**, I would also like to ask everyone to participate in our annual ***Souper Bowl Sunday***. As we prepare to cheer for our favorite team, please remember to bring a can or two of soup or other non-perishable food items with you to church that day. We will donate the soup and canned goods to the Episcopal Feeding Ministry at All Saints' Church. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

In His service,
Deacon Fred Fausak

A NOTE FROM YOUR FACILITIES MANAGER

As I clean church each week, in preparation for your three services on Sunday, I have come across many misplaced items. These items include prescription eyeglasses and sunglasses, car keys, hair brushes, lipstick and even jewelry. If you would like to reclaim your lost items, please stop by the Parish Office. Karen and I keep them off to the side waiting for you to claim them.

We all need to work together to keep your church clean. To help with this effort, please remember to dispose of your trash in the proper receptacles. Please do not leave trash on the pews or on the floor. Additionally, during this cold and flu season, especially given the heightened concern over H1N1 influenza, please be sure to not to throw used tissues on the floor or the pews. Trash receptacles can be found in the Choir Room and in Burch Hall.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation in assisting me to keep your church *spic and span*.

Richard Ragsdale,
Facilities Manager

GIFT CARD FUNDRAISING PROGRAM

Now you can order your gift cards through The Church of St. Andrew and the church receives a percentage back from the retailers!! **All major retailers, supermarkets and gas stations can be ordered.** For example you can purchase **Shoprite, Pathmark, Macy's, Exxon, Applebee's and CVS.** The program also has **Visa and American Express cards with no activation fee!** For example, you can order your favorite supermarket's gift card to do your weekly food shopping instead of using cash. This way, St.

Andrew's will receive a percentage every time you shop!! Order forms can be found on the usher stand. Any questions about the program can be referred to Stacey Krebushevski (718.667.4291).

PARISH BUDGET AND HEALTH

Probably every year since 1708, the Vestry of this wonderful church struggled over the preparation of an operating budget. Our Treasurer does it now and it is not unlike what all of us do with our own family budgets. I know I just sat down to do the same for my family. You look back and see what was spent in the past year and you try to anticipate what it will cost for next year. Budgeting is one of those processes that most people list right up there with root canals, shoveling a ten-foot snowfall and washing the family Irish Setter. Hard to commit to, but satisfying when completed. Some start with a template while others start from scratch. In either case, I will guarantee you that we all stop and keep looking up and down the list and it seems like it gets longer and longer. But when completed, two things become very clear: We know how much money we need to run our households and how much we need to tighten our purse strings.

This type of budgeting is repeated over and over again and when one does budget ones income, it becomes very clear what it costs us to operate our homes on a weekly, monthly and yearly basis. We rely on the paycheck or other income to come in on schedule, just like the bills come in on a schedule. And, I know that everyone has to play a juggling act when income and bills do not coincide.

I know. Now you know what I am writing to you about and you are probably about to stop reading this, but stay with me for just a little longer.

St. Andrew's is 301 years old. That's the good news and that's the bad news. We love this old church and the rich history of it all, but not unlike people, it requires more care. The costs are not only for the upkeep, but for the operating costs. That means a little more for heating, a little more to keep clean, a little more for just about everything. We are fortunate in that the Church does generate a good sum of money through our hall rentals, and you all help with some of the major fund-raising efforts, like Fright Night and our famous Christmas Fair.

But, what we really rely on to meet our costs are you.

When we look at what it costs for each of us to sit in a pew each week, (and it costs the same even if you are not sitting in that pew because we expect you to be there) the cost can be a little overwhelming. With the cost of electric, oil, gas, etc., etc., not unlike in our own homes, it's amazing how things add up. I was going to break everything down to dollars and cents and divide that by the number of communicants and then that would give us a per unit price (more for adults, less for children and maybe a special price for adolescents but then I think we would start to feel like apples, pears or nuts -- maybe some of us are fruits). Instead, what it all comes down to is, if each of us could reach into our pockets and add just a few dollars extra to our pledges, we could pay all our bills and not have to jeopardize the future by dipping into our annuity funds (as has been done in years gone by) to pay our operational expenses.

It's been a difficult year for all of us and for some a few extra dollars might be impossible, but there are many of us who might just be able to make up the difference. Do you realize that more than half of the parish pledges less than \$1,000 a year, while another large number of parishioners pledge less than \$5 a week? Imagine if our cable bill was equal to our pledge. Either we would get little or no reception or the cable companies would find themselves going out of business. It's all about balance. Balancing our priorities. Obviously, we all have room for improvement. This is really another way of saying that our spiritual health is just as important as our social, physical and mental health. So, have a spiritual check-up each week. It will keep you healthy and help keep your parish healthy too!

Robert E. DiMilia
Vestryperson

The Rector Reflects on the Reality of our Pledges for 2010

I want to extend a very special thank you to all of you who have renewed your pledge to God through the mission and ministry of the Church of Saint Andrew. To say that we rely on the pledges of our parishioners is an understatement. It is more like; we desperately depend upon the generosity and the commitment of your pledge. It is from your pledge that we determine the total dollar amount that needs to be raised in order for us to meet our annual budget. Ideally, in a parish that has made a commitment of faithful stewardship, there should never be a need to fund raise for the budget. In such a parish, fundraising is translated as “*Fun-raising*” and its proceeds are always directed through the ministry of Outreach.

So far, we have received pledges amounting to \$183,360 by 104 members. Last year, our pledge amount was \$189,692 from 127 members. Several things immediately strike me as I look at these figures. First, the financial pledge has gone up but the number of people pledging has gone down. This might sound like good news, except that we also received several pledges from new members and the 23 missing pledges really concerns me. Back to square one. There is another problem. Pledges are not always honored. It has been the odd habit of some of our parishioners that they only pay their pledge when they come to church. If you don't come to church, your pledge is off.

I want to suggest that there are several ways in which you can keep your pledge regular. One would be to sign up with the Diocese for direct debit, called e-pledging. I have been using this process for the past three years and have had no problems or concerns, but only a feeling of delight knowing that my pledge is kept regular each and every month. The other way in which to pay your pledge on a monthly, weekly, or bi-weekly manner is to have your bank issue a check to the Church. Several parishioners use this method and find it quite successful. I know that life interrupts and quite often we cannot fulfill some of the promises we make, the Budget process takes this into account when identifying the total pledged amount from parishioners.

This year our total budget for the expenses of the mission and ministry of the Church of Saint Andrew is close to \$375,000. \$180,000 will come from your pledges, \$30,000 from investment interest, leaving us with a total of \$165,000 to be raised through various fundraisers and entrepreneurial ventures, such as The Pet Cemetery, The Antique and Collectibles Market, Hemsley Hall use and St Andrew's Cottage.

Have we set ourselves up for failure? I hope not. Have we given ourselves an impossible financial goal? Unfortunately, the numbers don't lie. This year's budget is based on the reality of our common life. So, I'm guessing that the only question that we can ask ourselves is; What are we going to do to meet our financial goal?

Continued on next page

Though the responsibility of the Parish Budget has been placed into the hands of the Wardens and Vestry, it is the responsibility of every member of St. Andrew's. If you haven't pledged for this year of 2010, I suggest that you give it a try. If you don't believe in pledging, I suggest you reflect on how you personally plan your budget around the income you receive. I wonder what would happen if your job, your social security or your pension all of a sudden decided to give you a different amount each month. How could you ever meet your expenses? How fair would that be to you and to your family, especially to those who are depending upon those resources? And, for the 104 families who have made a commitment of time, talent and treasure to the mission and ministry of the Church of Saint Andrew through a financial pledge, I say thank you. It is my belief that you are giving to the best of your ability.

Pledges for 2010

- 43 pledges have increased
- 52 pledges have remained the same
- 4 pledges decreased
- 4 pledges are new
- 2 are returning pledges

- 27 pledges from 2009 have not pledged for 2010 = \$37,546

Pledged amount for 2009 = \$189,692
 -Pledged amount for 2010= \$183,360
- \$6,332

I ask you to compare your pledge with the cost of cable TV. Some of our pledges are equal to two months of cable, while the majority of our pledges are equal to 7 months of cable. No judgment, but just a reflection on the order of priorities.

Is our Parish Budget in line with what we believe as outlined in our Parish Mission Statement, as Episcopalians and as Christians? Does our parish budget reflect the values of this particular community of faith, called to be the presence of Christ in Richmondtown? Would you say that our annual budget is a reflection of what we value and is \$3.40 a day sufficient?

I know that everyone's circumstance is different. Everyone has different financial situations. Everyone is not able to pledge the same amount as his or her neighbor. And, that is exactly the reason why you and I are called to live, work, minister in a spirit of community. I bring a glimpse of our financial life before you because it is important for all of us to know the reality of how much we depend upon you, and upon your time, your talent and your treasure.

It's easy to say, "Well, we'll just have to cut back." But, you and I know sometimes that cutting back is the hardest thing to do. When I was a senior in High School, there was a major cut back in all extra-curricular activities. That year the year book was plain, simple and small, there was no school paper, and the gowns we wore for graduation were faded and did not come with caps. The only activities that continued to take place were those that either cost no money or that gave the school much needed public relations, like our sports teams. At the end of my senior year, we felt as if we were not worthy.

The reality for you and for me is that **we are worthy**. That the Church of Saint Andrew is an important place in the life of Staten Island and it is up to you and to me not only to preserve it, but also to make it into a place of worship, welcome and witness for generations to come. It is only through your continued support of time,

talent and treasure that this can become a reality. It really is up to you and to me.

KEEP THOSE RESOLUTIONS!

People tend to make the same New Year's resolution three years in a row. The tendency is to set overly ambitious goals, when setting a smaller, more realistic goal, is often a better strategy. Once you've reached your first milestone, you can build on your success by setting a new, higher goal. The five levels of readiness are:

Pre-contemplation — “No way! I am not making any changes.”

At this point, you are not thinking about changing a behavior. Smokers who are "in denial" remain unaware or seemingly uninterested in the consequences of their habit. People with high cholesterol or hypertension usually don't even feel they are at risk. Those with weight issues may have tried so many diets that they have no desire to start another.

Contemplation — “I may start, just not today.”

While there is recognition that change is needed, there are ambivalent feelings about “giving something up.” When giving up something is viewed as a loss, it is difficult to see the positives to be gained. During this stage, the focus is more on the obstacles to change than on the benefits.

Preparation — “I have made some changes and stick to them sometimes.”

You have fully decided that change is needed and you are gearing up to make it. You may already be trying different things and increasing your determination to stick with them.

Action — “I am making changes and usually follow them 3 to 4 times per week.”

You're following through on your commitment, and you should feel proud of your hard work. To

make sure the changes you've made become long-term, it is important to stay focused on the benefits.

Maintenance — “I am changing and stick to my commitment every day.”

You have no doubt that what you're doing is great for your life. You've reached your goal and are staying focused on maintaining the results. But keep reminding yourself that you're in it for the long term. Should you lapse at any point, you may find yourself "recycling" through the different stages before change becomes permanent. If you slip, don't get discouraged. If you did it once, you can do it again. Dust yourself off and keep trying.

Where you are on this scale?

After reading about the five levels of readiness, you may have a better idea of which changes you're the most prepared to make. If you are still pre-contemplating, don't worry. Just maintain where you are. If you want to lose weight, start by trying not to gain any more. If you want to quit smoking, don't increase how much you smoke. Make maintaining your current level a goal in itself.

Ready to change?

One of the reasons you might not have kept resolutions in the past is that you simply may not have been mentally or emotionally ready to change. Knowing where you are on our “Readiness to Change” scale can help you to figure out how prepared you are at this point to do something different in your life.

Most of all, stay positive.

Once you've identified what you want to change, be positive. After all, you've just taken the first step to reaching your goal. Next, make a list of the benefits of making that change and refer to it frequently for motivation. And see if a friend will take on the same goal with you. A partner can make the process fun, and keep you on track.

This article was reprinted here with permission from the newsletter, Health & Wellness published by the Episcopal Church Foundation.