

# Saint Mary's Episcopal Church

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November 3, 2022

Dear members and friends of St. Mary's,

For those of you who were unable to join us for breakfast this past Sunday, as usual, we had an amazing assortment of delicious breakfast fare, including Jack Olthuis making pancakes and a large batch of crispy bacon. Everyone enjoyed the food and our time together.

Mother started off our breakfast conversation with an amazing announcement. We received a gift of \$100,000 from a member, who is inspired and encouraged by the ministry we are doing here and in our community. Their only wish in kicking off this Stewardship Season is to inspire others to give whatever you can of your time, talent and treasure. Their gift is an affirmation of belief in St. Mary's mission and ministry in our world. Yes, we are accomplishing a lot. We are forming disciples, feeding those in need and engaged in various outreach. It is all made possible because of you and your generosity.

On Sunday, we watched a 16--minute video that Mother Allison put together recapping many of the wonderful things St. Mary's has accomplished and participated in this year and still there's more to come. You may watch this video on our website: <https://www.stmarysstoneharbor.org/>

What followed was even better. For the first time in a very long time, there was the realization that St. Mary's is a thriving, joy filled church and we are all blessed to call St. Mary's, Home. As members, friends, and supporters, we continue to exude the energy which is the beating heart of our mission and ministry. Together we are doing God's work in the community.

The discussion that followed the video was exhilarating and many fantastic ideas were put forward that your Vestry will follow up on. How we invest in our future, in our mission and in our ministry is propelled by your voice and participation. The realization of where we are financially was discussed in detail and, again, ideas were presented that could possibly make a difference in meeting the challenges ahead along with what funds we have that are available to everyday "operation" of our church. Your participation in that discussion and future discussions are invited and very appreciated.

HOWEVER, your pledge is still a critical part of the equation. Your pledge assists us in planning the year ahead and adds to the diversity of our ministry in the world. The more you give of your time, talent and/or treasure, the more we can accomplish together. We have succeeded thus far with little resources, and, sadly, as you can see by the following graph, pledges and pledge amounts were down in 2022. We believe with your help 2023 will be a very good year. But yes, we need your COMMITMENT.

We are all struggling financially with greater demands on our incomes and we realize asking you to consider making a pledge to St. Mary's or to increase your pledge is a big request. But, quite clearly, we need your help to move forward in 2023. We are ready to take yet another "leap of faith" by implementing some of the ideas presented last Sunday in an effort to supplement the dollars we need. Our Diocese encourages a "transformational" approach to Stewardship meaning the focus isn't on raising funds needed to operate the church, but about growing in your relationship with God. We saw from the video and throughout the year, that we are accomplishing just that. To keep it going we need **YOU**. Whether you are a Year-round, Part-time, or seasonal member, please consider this commitment pledge. If you are unable to make a financial commitment, please consider pledging your time and/or talent to service in one of our many ministries: Acolyte, Altar Guild, Usher, Greeter, Lector, Hospitality, Prayer, Outreach, etc...

We thank you for your generosity in previous years and ask for your continued support by completing the enclosed pledge commitment and either mailing it to the office or dropping it in the collection plate no later than November 27<sup>th</sup>. YOU can make a huge difference in what we can accomplish this coming year . . . what we can do to provide opportunities to grow and the opportunity for you to grow in your own faith and relationship with God.

I repeat what I wrote in our invitation to breakfast:

*All of us coming together in community are the **HEARTBEAT OF ST. MARY'S**. Think about it . . . we are all helping to keep St. Mary's alive and well, **financially and spiritually**, not just for us, but for anyone and everyone who may be looking for a church home, walk through our doors and feel welcomed by all of us. We are faithful Stewards of Jesus Christ as we are commanded to do.*

With grateful hearts,

Rev. Allison Burns-LaGreca

Janet Proulx – St. Mary's Stewardship Committee