

Annual Giving Q&A's



St. James's Episcopal Church, Richmond, Virginia

Considering your annual gift

Each fall, every member of the congregation is asked to make a financial commitment to the ongoing ministries of St. James's. Collectively, our gift commitments provide about 90% of our annual budget. Without our support, St. James's would not be this church that we love.

What to consider as you determine your annual gift:

Pray. Give it to God. We are members of St. James's because of our love and commitment to Christ and the Christian life. Ask for God's help to guide you.

Your life's blessings. Your gift should be given in a sense of gratitude and joy for all we have received in our lives.

Why is St. James's special to you? Is it the liturgy, our service to others in the community and the world, our lifelong Christian education, the music, or just the pure joy of our fellowship?

Why is St. James's not another "charity?" At St. James's, we know all the great things we do are in God's name. Your annual gift to St. James's is an affirmation of your faith and your commitment to ensure the vitality of our parish, just as we have done since 1835.

Challenge yourself. In the end, pledging is about letting go of our agenda so that we can say yes to God's agenda for us.

Every gift matters. Some folks think that St. James's is funded primarily by a few very generous members of the parish. This is **NOT** the case. Each of us is responsible for supporting and maintaining our wonderful church and ministry. Your gift matters.

Some Questions and Answers

What is a pledge? *An annual gift or pledge is a financial promise, a commitment to the ministry of St. James's.* Your gift reinforces the importance of God and St. James's in your life. And our pledges provide the Vestry with an estimate of expected income essential to the preparation of our annual budget. St. James's simply cannot operate and thrive without a reasonable estimate of its financial resources.

Doesn't St. James's receive support from our Endowment Fund? The St. James's Endowment Fund provides capital support for our church physical plant and campus. This year the Endowment Fund provides about 11% of our annual budget. The Endowment Fund is an important resource for St. James's, but the Church's annual operations depend almost entirely upon annual giving.

How much should I pledge? The Vestry has endorsed the Biblical tithe and we urge everyone to aspire to reach that goal and to make St. James's your primary philanthropic priority. (Please refer to the proportional giving chart on the back of your pledge card.) The actual amount, of course, is entirely a personal decision. But it should be grounded in your faith, love and commitment to God's work through St. James's. Your pledge should not be an afterthought or casual decision. It requires reflection, prayer and priority.

What is the average annual gift? The average annual gift is \$3,341.

Is my gift confidential? Yes. Fewer than three members of the Stewardship team know the actual amounts of individual pledges. Each year St. James's publishes an alphabetical list of all who have pledged, with a provision for those who choose to remain anonymous. Included in our Annual Report and the Chimes, this list is intended to thank those who have pledged.

When should I pledge? We ask everyone to make a pledge between August and October for the following year so that we can revise our budget. You may fulfill your commitment throughout the following calendar year. New pledges are always welcome throughout the year.

How can I pay my pledge? There are several convenient ways to honor your pledge:

- a. Set up a recurring gift with your smartphone. Download "St. James Doers" from the app store and click on GIVE. The app has the prayer book, worship bulletin, Bible, eChimes, and more!
 - b. Use your bank's online bill paying system and set up regular weekly, monthly or other periodic payments directly to the church.
 - c. Use the secure electronic payment option under the GIVE tab on St. James's website, www.doers.org.
 - d. Make regular payments by check using the envelopes provided to all who request them.
 - e. Use appreciated stocks, donor advised funds, or IRA payouts to pay your pledge. (If you are 70½ years of age, your IRA payouts should be fully tax-deductible). In either case, please alert Suzanne Hall at shall@doers.org to ensure that your pledge payment is properly credited.
2. ***What if my situation changes and I cannot fulfill my pledge?*** We understand that life's circumstances do change, often unexpectedly. In this case, please alert Suzanne Hall, Director of Stewardship and Development at 804 355-1779 x335 so that our records can be amended as needed.