

Dear friends,

There is a fragile sheet of paper in our parish archives, the oldest artifact of St. George's Church, dated February 17th, 1796. It is a list of names and pledges. A small and struggling group of settlers, many of them refugees from the American Revolution, had been gathering in prayer since 1792, and they had discerned that the time had now come to build their church community a home. As Bishop Walter notes in his beautiful book *Shaped by the Journey*, "This precious old page is to succeeding generations an outward and visible sign of the deep commitment of our forebears and of their decision to found a church."

We are the benefactors today of 225 years of such generosity and commitment. The 46 names on that list committed a sum of 121 pounds, a remarkable amount in a day when families struggled just to get by. It is the first of countless St. George's stories of faithful people understanding their lives as blessed by God, making the choice to share their gifts for the sake of God's work, and making our church possible.

We have been celebrating our 225th anniversary all year, and we have much to celebrate. Our congregation has grown, including our Outreach initiatives, our Sunday School, Youth Music Program and Youth Group. Many households have settled into St. George's this year and both new and seasoned members speak gratefully of the spiritual home and church family they have here. This fall, we are offering a monthly Sunday afternoon Evensong service, as well as a bus shuttle from Ina Grafton retirement home once a month. Our expanded staff team allows us to consider new ways of reaching out to those in need. Our Narrative Budget, *225 Years of Generosity and Joy*, gives a fuller picture of all that your money and offering makes possible. If you do not already have one, you can receive your own copy at church, through the weekly email newsletter, on our website www.stgeorgesanglican.ca or by calling our church office.

Our Joyful Giving Campaign is part and parcel of our 225th anniversary celebration. When you complete the enclosed Intention Form and return it to the Church (in person or by the provided envelope), you allow our leadership to then plan and budget accordingly. ***Your Financial Intention is kept in the strictest confidence – read only by our Treasurer.*** We are looking for a 5% increase in financial offerings to our church this year, allowing us to both continue and grow the ministry of St. George's for today, and for generations to come. We know that some people will be able to increase their offerings more than 5%, and some are giving all they can give. As always, we ask you to prayerfully consider the financial gift that is right for your family. Look at your household finances and ask what percentage of those finances God is asking you to offer back for the sake of continuing the Generosity and Joy of St. George's.

Our Joyful Giving Campaign is ultimately a response to the same invitation that formed St. George's Church Family together 225 years ago. Day by day, year by year, God needs us to receive the gifts passed down through the generations of faith, and to know that we, too, have the capacity to share. These gifts are not just money, but also the time and talent shared by God's people. It is this whole history of generosity, in which we now participate, that allows this church to feed the poor, welcome the stranger, fill our city with prayer and praise, draw closer to God, and pass our faith along to future generations.

Yours faithfully,
Reverend Martha.