



**In Giving, We Receive.**  
*Sunday, September 7, 2008*

Good Morning! I'm George Whitaker. Laurie and I are very excited to chair the 2009 Stewardship campaign.

The main reason this year's campaign is exciting to us is that we are involving the youth of St. Paul's. Stewardship is a difficult concept for children to understand, so through Sunday school classes they will explore this important subject. The youth will get colorful envelopes to put in the offering plate so we can see the impact of their participation. Of course, they won't have financial goals, participation is their goal.

We started giving allowance to our boys, George and Quinn, when they were five years old. We taught them that first they give to God, and then half goes into savings, and the rest they could spend – or save. One day Quinn asked us “What does God do with my money?” It was a good question and one that made us think about why we give. Our gifts are used to do God's work through the church. Our gifts allow us to do more good with our money than we could individually. We hope to instill a strong sense of stewardship in our children.

The theme of this year's campaign comes from James (1:17a). He said *“Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights ...”*. This is important to me because it reminds me that everything I have is a gift from God. Yes, we all work hard to earn our money – but God gives us the abilities to do that. Therefore, it's not my money like Quinn thought, it is God's money and we are responsible for His money.

As a past Treasurer, I know the staff and clergy make efficient use of the resources they are given. It wasn't until then that I realized the church is a very unusual organization. We have budgets and expenses that we have some control over, but we have no control over revenue. We can't run an ad in the paper announcing a yearend clearance or liquidation sale. What about a new member special offer? Join now and get preferred seating at Christmas and Easter services. The Stewardship Campaign is the sales event of the year. This campaign determines what happens next year.

In future communications, you will see more details of how your money is used. We will use some of the same charts and graphs you've seen in the past. But, I can tell you where your money goes. It pays the bills. (pause) It provides air conditioning in the summer and heat in the winter. It pays salaries to the staff and clergy. That is what your money pays for, but the real question is "what does your money do?"

Your money provides **hope**. Hope for those that need guidance. Hope for those who need a new start. Hope for those that are hopeless.

Your money provides **comfort**. Comfort to those that have experienced the loss of a loved one. Comfort to those that don't have food on the table or a roof over their heads. Comfort for those who are sick.

Your money provides **joy**. Joy to those that experience God's touch for the first time. Joy to those that have their first house. Joy to those that can now succeed in school.

There is a brochure in your Stewardship package entitled "The Importance of Stewardship". When you read the list of programs that St. Paul's supports, don't think about them as programs, think about them as gifts that provide hope, comfort, and joy.

I want to thank you for your support over the years. Without your support and the support of those before us, the church would not be here. The first service in this building was in September 1929. 79 years ago, someone like me stood in front of a group like you and asked for your financial support. This process is what keeps the doors to our church open.

Your Stewardship packages are on a table just outside the church. Please pick them up as you leave today. In an effort to reduce expenses, we want to limit mailing pledge cards and envelopes. A motto of this campaign is... programs not postage. To that end, please consider doing a bank draft to reduce costs and to help the church's cash flow.

Also in your package, you will find a puzzle piece. The piece represents you as an important part of our church. Please include this piece when you return your pledge card. We will build the puzzle together in the Library during the campaign and we need everyone's piece. Without you, St. Paul's isn't complete. Without your financial support, our church isn't complete.

Please spend some time thinking about your pledge. Your pledge this year could be the single most important thing you can do for the future of St. Paul's. We are in the midst of a new rector search. The candidates will be very interested in how much support we give the church. If you have never pledged before, this is the year to start. If you pledge annually, please consider increasing your pledge. Your pledge could make the difference in the selection of the next rector.

I know there are many groups asking for your support and you spend time prioritizing where your gifts will go. I am sure many of these have a special place in your heart. Organizations that supported you in times of need, Alumni associations, the school your children attend and many more. If we are living our life to honor God – and believe that scripture is the truth, then please remember this... James said, "...every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above..." I hope you will consider where God is on your priority list.

I would like to conclude with prayer #38 from the Book of Common Prayer.

Almighty God, whose loving hand hath given us all that we possess; Grant us grace that we may honor thee with our substance, and, remembering the account which we must one day give, may be faithful stewards of thy bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*