

As your Assistant Treasurer, I am the second chapter of a 2-part story about the 2010 budget and how it affects our daily operations.

Let me tell you a short story about our family. Two years ago, almost to the date, my mother-in-law Betty was in the hospital. She had been in and out since Thanksgiving and was beginning to feel her impending mortality. It was the Saturday morning between Good Friday and Easter when Mike called me to say that Betty wanted to speak with a priest. I rolled my eyes and sputtered that it couldn't be a worse day to ask a member of the clergy to add a trip to the hospital to their schedule. Nevertheless, Mike called the church. Andi was on call, responded immediately and said she happened to be on the way downtown and would stop at the hospital. Within half an hour she was at Betty's side and they had a wonderful conversation which prepared Betty for the next few weeks leading to her death.

You heard from Ted that the Vestry finalized the 2010 budget. You have also heard at various times over the last year and a half that in order to balance our 2009 budget, we cut all staff salaries by 20%. In addition, the staff was asked to cover their own medical insurance premiums resulting in a real salary reduction exceeding 20%.

As a parish you indicated to the vestry that your first priority for 2010 was to reinstate staff salaries, so we set a pledge goal with that in mind and no further reduction of programs. We were able to relieve the staff by covering their medical insurance for 2010. However, we are still short \$160,000 needed to restore salaries to their 2008 level. That may seem insurmountable, but if every giving unit of record in this parish gave an extra \$5 per week we would be there.

We don't talk much about tithing in the Episcopal Church and we keep our stewardship speeches confined to those few weeks in fall which are in the official pledge drive season. I'm asking you to give some prayerful thought during this holy week, the last week of Lent, as to how your stewardship fits within the definitions of tithing as we knew them in the Sunday Schools of our youth. How do you prioritize your pledge donation? Is it top of your list or is it what is left over?

What does Betty's story have to do with all that? We all attend weekly services. Many of you also hold dear other St Boniface activities. We take all this for granted. But we all have those life events where the staff and clergy do more than the norm and often not at times that fit conveniently into their schedules. In my example it was the preparation for death. But let's also think about the celebration of marriage or the joy of having your child baptized. This staff is here for you, please keep them here by prayerfully rethinking your 2010 pledge.