December 13, 2023

Matthew 6:33 " Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.
and all these things shall be added to you."

Dear St. Mary and St. Stephen Parishioners:

We continue to give thanks for your ongoing support of our churches through time, energy, and finances. All form who we are as a family of believers. We have missed seeing those of you who are still staying home and practicing self-care. We pray you are keeping well. As we have returned to our buildings for in-person worship, we are pleased to see familiar faces as well as many new ones. We hope you are feeling connected and welcome.

It is important that we update you on how both our congregations are managing financially as we approach the end of 2023. Despite all of the commitment you have shown, we continue to fall short in one key area. While our non-offering revenues from a variety of sources have done reasonably well at both churches relative to our budget, those from offerings at St. Stephen have been significantly less than those in the approved St. Stephen budget at the Annual General Meeting last February. Below you will find additional details on the financial situations in each of our two churches within the parish.

The Financial Situation at St. Mary

As of November 30, 2023, the operating deficit at St Mary was $6,500. Our expenditures to that date are 4% below those expected for this point in the year. The Operations Committee continues to exercise due diligence in keeping expenses under control. Our income to date is 7% above where we expected to be at this time. It should be noted that at the Annual General Meeting, the deficit in the approved budget for St. Mary was $22,900.

We give thanks for all that our parishioners have done so far to financially support our ministry and for the return of pre-Covid fundraising activities. You have worked hard to achieve success in these ventures. We ask that you give prayerful consideration to making an extra donation during the last few weeks of the year to help us achieve our goal of offsetting the existing small deficit.

The Financial Situation at St Stephen

For St. Stephen, we are 7% below budget for income and expenses. We had a deficit of $18,945 as of November 30, 2023 which is projected to increase to $20,000+ by year-end if the trend continues. Were it not for a gratefully received $10,000 bequest, this number would be substantially higher. Although we have a Fund which is earmarked as Contingency Reserve of $24,500 if we reduce this to $0, what happens in the future?

We are continually looking for ways to reduce costs and are always open to suggestions. There are many hours of volunteer work already being done. Our congregation is aging and the ability of folks to do some of the heavy tasks is not possible. We are thankful for the hours that have been given over the years. We need to be creative! We need to keep the lights on, and the Preschool loves it when the furnaces work to keep the little ones warm.

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As always, we appreciate that you give what you can but want you to know in advance what our financial situation is at this point, nearing the end of the year. May God continue to bless all our lives as we continue to gather together as the family of Christ.

As the Wardens and Priest of this parish we recognize that we are all stretched financially as inflation has risen significantly. We ask that you give prayerful consideration to increasing your regular offerings or making a special donation to help improve our financial situation at each church and help us come closer to balancing our budgets by the end of the year.

Yours in Christ,

Deb Butler	Lynda Clifford	Ken Pedlow	Ian Stuart	The Ven. Dr. Lon Towstego
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