

Dear Friends,

Every fall, St. Philip's has a stewardship campaign. This is an invitation for each of us to think a little more deeply about what St. Philip's means to us, and how we can support the life of this parish and the ministries it offers.

Stewardship is about more than just fundraising. Stewardship is about recognizing and responding to God's goodness to us. There are many ways we can respond – we can offer our time and our talents as well as our financial support to help sustain the life of our church community.

But Stewardship is not only about looking after the gifts we've been given – it's also about growing those gifts for the future. It's about all of us as essential members of the Body of Christ and the life of our church.

This is an exciting time in the life of our parish. We celebrated our 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2015, and are already looking forward to our Centenary in 2025. Last year at this time, our former Rector John Stephens introduced the 20/25 Vision campaign. He invited us to imagine what St. Philip's will look like in 2025. What do *you* see for our church? Do you see more people on Sunday mornings, more youth in our congregation, more support programs for adults and seniors? Do you imagine a vibrant community living out its faith on the West Side of Vancouver? Can you imagine a transformative Christian outreach to those around us who live without the hope of the Gospel? It is exciting and perhaps a bit daunting to think of all this and more.

I wonder, though – have you ever stopped to reflect on what members of St. Philip's imagined in 1925? Consider just for a

moment the faith and vision it took to lay the foundation for this place we call our church home. What legacy will we pass on to those who will call St. Philip's home many years from now?

Giving time and space for thoughts such as these is perhaps even more pressing this year, as we face a season of uncertainty and change. In one short year we have seen one John leave and another John come. We are currently in the search for a new Rector, and possibly a new youth leader. Our office support staff are also undergoing changes.

Change is never easy. But change can also be a time for reflection and renewal. The challenge is to hold on to what is essential, and consider what we can do to transform unavoidable change into opportunity and growth.

This year's Stewardship Campaign theme is Community in a Time of Transition. The campaign will draw your attention to the many programs and people of this church – the essential elements that make St. Philip's such a vital Christian community. There is so much more going on here at St. Philip's than what might be seen on a Sunday morning. For example, you may or may not be aware of the extensive concert series, or the Senior's Café. You might be interested to know more about what the youth and children get up to, or wonder about the new Alt Vespers. You may like to get involved in street ministries, or attend a roundtable discussion on physician assisted dying or some other ethical or spiritual topic at a Curtis lecture. You may wonder how it is that the gardens always look so beautiful, or how the sanctuary gets transformed from season to season with liturgical symbols. This is only a short list – I could go on!

You are also encouraged to think about the future of this church. There are many capital projects that will be our gift to members of this community in our Centenary year and beyond. There are plans to renovate the Chapel. The piano and organ are both in need of repair and renewal. There are windows in the sanctuary that await installation of new stained-glass witnesses to our faith.

All of this needs Stewardship. All of us can carefully and prayerfully consider how we can contribute our unique gifts – our time, talents, and treasure – to help sustain and grow St. Philip's. We hope that you will take this opportunity to spend some time reflecting on your ongoing support of this community. Please prayerfully consider what you can contribute to the life and ministry of this parish as we go through this time of transition, and respond to God's goodness as you fill in your pledge card for 2017.

With thanks,

*Brian Mix*

Chair, Stewardship Committee 2016-17.