



“But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.” – Isaiah 40:31

This year, Jessica asked the Annual Giving Campaign Committee to ponder the theme of “hope”: where we find hope, where we need hope, how we define hope, and how St. Luke’s offers hope to our community. This passage from Isaiah describes hope as strength, as courage, and as resilience. In that case, given the challenges and stressors of our daily lives, it seems hope is something we could all probably use a little more of! And for many of us, St. Luke’s serves as a beacon of hope in our lives; hope is something we receive during services at St. Luke’s and something we experience in the St. Luke’s community. So it is with the theme of hope that we kick off our annual giving campaign.

During the annual giving campaign, each of us is asked to consider the financial needs of St. Luke’s, the value we derive from the community, and the value of the work done by this community, along with all our other commitments and obligations, and determine what financial support we will pledge for 2019. While for some this may be a very personal discernment, for others it may be a decision to make through discussion in the community.

We spent much of 2017 engaged together in a parish-wide conversation about what we want St. Luke’s to be, and how the Church can continue to thrive as the Body of Christ in an ever-changing world. We wrestled with the questions of who

we are as a Christian community, who we want to be, who God is calling us to be, and what God's expectations are for us.

We believed then, as we do today, that God is calling us to make sure that however we adapt to our changing world, St. Luke's must be a loving home where we hear in the Gospel an invitation to everyone to join us in serving one another. St. Luke's has always been known for its radical hospitality and its commitment to service, but as a community, we agreed that today's world is challenging us to step up our efforts.

St. Luke's can only be a beacon of hope if it is a sustainable beacon. So the Annual Giving Committee and the Vestry developed a five-year plan of action to achieve financial sustainability. Last year we asked you, the Church, to join us in implementing this plan. And you did: In 2018 we received 128 pledges totaling \$440,021—an overall average per pledge of \$3,438, the highest average pledge in recent history. We have made good progress toward our financial goals. Now, as we begin the second year of this effort, we again ask that you work with us toward financial sustainability for St. Luke's. This year's pledge goal is \$480,000.

Much has changed since last year, most obviously and significantly, the retirement of our beloved rector Stephanie Nagley. We're a one-clergy parish now, but we thank God (and Bishop Mariann) that our one clergy is Jessica Hitchcock. We also thank God for Cynthia Carr's flexibility as her responsibilities evolved and for Sarah Horick's willingness to take on additional responsibilities as Minister for Music AND Liturgy.

At the same time, much hasn't changed. Revenue still doesn't quite cover expenses; therefore, while we have the Bridge Fund to help us make the transition to sustainable operations, we need to stick to the five-year plan. And we have not substantially increased our Community Engagement budget line in many years. Our budget should reflect our commitment to service to God's people, and therefore one of our goals for 2019 is to be able to increase our Community Engagement budget.

New and exciting programming ideas are in the works for the coming months. We have just had our first 5th Sunday "Be the Church" event, a day for us to remind ourselves with our actions that church is who we ARE, not a place that we go to. Jessica and Sarah are also planning a number of Saturday intergenerational

worship and formation opportunities that include a simple shared meal: a Day of the Dead celebration in November, a pop-up kid-led Epiphany pageant in January, a Lenten Kick-Off in February. During the Epiphany season, we will immerse ourselves in Bishop Curry's call to practice The Way of Love in our daily lives, opening ourselves up to become vessels of the joy and wisdom we admire in our Presiding Bishop. All of these events and experiences offer hope to our community. We find hope as we serve others, diminishing the sense of hopelessness they may be experiencing. We find hope as we gather over a shared meal across generations; we find hope in optimistic, exuberant youth; and we find hope in the stories of those who years ago overcame the obstacles we're still in the middle of.

As we prepared last year's campaign, many parishioners asked us to just specify the amount we need. So for the first time, the SLC Contributions Officer prepared individualized pledge cards, showing what each person pledged the previous year and suggesting a specific increase for the coming year. Because we received positive feedback about this process, the 2019 campaign will take the same approach. We ask you to prayerfully consider the suggested amount—but only you can decide whether it is the right amount for you. You may prefer to write in a higher or lower amount.

Finally, we know that people may have questions—for example, about the church's finances, the budget breakdown, or the Annual Giving Campaign. We've attempted to answer many possible questions in the [attached Q&As](#); but if you continue to have questions or concerns, please talk to any member of the Committee or the Vestry, the Senior and Junior Wardens, or Jessica.

As you prayerfully consider your pledge to St. Luke's, think about what the Church means to you. Think about what we have, and what we can become; what we can do together over the course of the next few years; and what's at stake—personally, locally, and even globally—if we fail.

Thank you for being part of what gives us hope!

Jim Bradley & Michelle Bales, Annual giving Committee Co-Chairs
