

Gary's Update: How I Calculate My Offering

During our current focus on stewardship, we are asking each of you to consider increasing your offering, or, if you have never done so, to begin making a regular offering to support the ministry of our church.

Our commitment as leaders of St. Anne's Church is that we would only ask of you what we are prepared also to do ourselves. **So I would like to share with you my personal journey of giving a financial offering to the church - how it has changed and how I intend to respond to the St Anne's stewardship campaign.**

When I first started attending church as an adult, my only experience of giving an offering was putting the quarter my mother gave me into the collection plate. I thought I should do better than that, so I looked in my wallet and took out the smallest bill I had. I would see the twenty and the ten, and then think about getting my groceries later, and pull out the five. I did this right up to when I was ordained. I would want to be more generous and then think of my student loan. It's hard to be generous and worry about affording your life!



Setting the table for the Eucharist while the collection plate was being circulated made things easy for me. My role meant the plate didn't come to me until the collection was over. I knew that, as the leader, I should do better than what I was giving, but somehow I just couldn't follow through. I lived the script of scarcity.

The great change came when churches first began to

have PAR - pre-authorized remittance. It suddenly became easy; each month it came out of my account just like my gym membership. I didn't even miss it!

The logic that persuaded me then was that my spiritual life is at least as much a benefit to me as my time in coffee shops, so I started at the amount I spent on coffee each week. This pre-dated Starbucks and independent coffee houses, so it was less than you might think.

My next logic came from the phrase Body/Mind/Spirit used by my gym. My spiritual health should be worth at least as much as my physical health, so I should raise my monthly offering to the amount of my monthly gym membership. That doubled my offering to \$60/month.

I still wasn't satisfied, because I knew my children's bible stories. I remembered that Jacob, when he was alone and fleeing, appealed to God for help. That night he dreamed the scene we call Jacob's Ladder, a ladder reaching to heaven filled with angels watching over him. He was so moved by this assurance of God's protection that he promised he would give to God one tenth of everything God helped him to accomplish. This is the gold standard of what we give to God for giving us life, energy, abilities, the blessing of employment, inheritances - everything.

The great challenge for Anglicans is that almost nobody does it. The average Anglican in churches in the Diocese of Toronto gives 2% of their income for the ministry of their church. We do all kinds of rationalization about this. There are the other charities we support. There is the portion of our taxes that fund the social safety net that did not exist in Jacob's time. I had never even calculated what percentage of my income I give to God.

I know your wardens have given you a step chart to help you decide your gift. It's a good thing. But for me, the real challenge is - over time - to get my total gift to God up to the gold standard of one tenth. (That includes the charities I support.)

I am going to share my calculation with you. This is uncomfortable because it's so personal. However, anyone who can read the accounting pages in our church's annual report already knows my income.

- **My current salary is \$69,983.** A clergy salary is established by the Anglican Diocese of Toronto and made up of stipend and housing allowance, based on years of service, and adjusted annually for inflation / cost of living. You can find your own amount on your T4, or more reliably from the total income box on your tax return (for example, if you are retired).
- **My current offering for the ministry of St. Anne's is \$200/month for a total \$2400/year.**
- Keeping in mind Jacob's one tenth, my gift to God represents 3.4% of my total income. My other charities bring the total amount to about 4%.
- I want to respond to the stewardship campaign with an amount that will help us reach our parish goal of a total offering increase of \$60,000 to fund our ministry commitments.
- **As a result, I have decided to increase my offering by \$50/month for a total of \$3000.** That \$600 increase is 1% of the amount needed. And there are just over 100 of us in church every Sunday, so I can feel like I am doing my part.
- My offering of 4.3% of my total income moves me up the giving ladder as the wardens have asked, and it gets me closer to the ideal of Jacob's Ladder too.

I am doing this because, like Jacob, I trust that God gives me the energy for everything I do. All that I have comes from God originally, so I am returning part of it to do good in God's world.

I like what's happening at St. Anne's. I believe that our church's efforts to make a better world are not wasted. I'm sure God wants us to change the world by what we do together. **I am investing.**

Everyone has different circumstances. But let's keep stewardship in the language of faith. Since God has given each of us life, energy, abilities, and resources - all blessings, how do you turn your blessings into a multiplier effect that changes our world for the better?

I hope my transparency on this will help you make your own calculation as, together, we support the engaging and meaningful ministry of our church. Thank you, in advance, for your prayerful consideration.

Gary+, The Rev. Gary van der Meer, Incumbent

Photo Credits: Thank you to BarBara, Gary, Mary Lou, and The Anglican Church of Canada for the photos in this issue of Ministry Highlights. Our cover photo is of Roy, Community Dinner Co-ordinator & Warden Emeritus.



Ministry Highlights @ St. Anne's November 23-29, 2015

We are a welcoming community of Anglican Christians who gather at historic St. Anne's Church to worship God richly through liturgy, music, and the arts. We are committed to openness, justice and loving our neighbour. Individually and together in ministry, we strive to grow into our Spirit-given potential to embody Christ's healing purpose for the world.

What's Happening

Monday, Nov. 23	3:00 p.m.	Music & Worship	John Gibson House
Wed., Nov 25	10:00a.m.	Holy Eucharist	St. Anne's Place
	4:30 p.m.	"Messy Church"	Ministry Centre
Thurs., Nov. 26	7:30 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal	Church
Sunday, Nov. 29	9:00 a.m.	Morning Prayer & Bible Study	Ministry Centre
	10:30 a.m.	Holy Eucharist - Social Justice Sunday	Church
	3:30 p.m.	Concert by The Junction Trio	Church
Sunday, Dec.20	3:00 p.m.	Cantate – A Neighbourhood Christmas Concert	Church
Sunday, Dec.27	5:30 p.m.	Community Dinner & Worship	Lower Parish Hall

Join us for Worship:
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Open Monday to Thursday
 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Welcome to St. Anne's

Please join us in the Skey Room following our Sunday worship for refreshments and conversation. Everyone is welcome – a great way to know each other better! **Note that during our accessibility construction project, access to the Skey Room will be through the parking lot.**

Today's Meetings:

- **Cantate** – Arlene Roeder is chairing a meeting for those involved in planning our annual neighbourhood Christmas concert. It will be held in the Skey Room during refreshments. Newcomers welcome!
- **Refugee Response** – Anyone interested in discussing St. Anne's response to the refugee crisis is invited join Andrew Munger and members of the Social Justice & Advocacy Working Group in the Chapel during refreshments.
- **English Coffee** – After our refreshment time each Sunday, members of the "English Coffee" group meet in the Ministry Centre to practise their English language skills. Everyone is welcome to attend. Today's presenter is Marc Potvin who will be leading some fun, interactive, story telling activities.



Sunday Morning Prayer & Bible Study

We meet Sunday mornings at 9:00 in the Ministry Centre for prayer, study, and coffee. We finish up by 9:45 to allow for choir members to leave for rehearsal. We welcome you to join us as Gary, David, and Shauna share in leading the prayers and study. There is always lots of lively and insightful conversation. **The Gospel reading for Sunday, November 29 is Luke 21:25-36. 9:00 a.m. in the Ministry Centre, 276 Gladstone Avenue**

Our Young Parishioners – Patient and Hopeful Waiting

As we move towards the season of Advent, we are presented with the opportunity to learn how to wait. But, sometimes, waiting is really difficult. Sometimes, waiting becomes almost impossible in a world as fast-paced as ours. Our youth sessions will consider the theme of waiting and how it ties in with our faith journey. French author, Simone Weil, wrote that "waiting patiently in expectation is the foundation of the spiritual life." We can try to understand this on many levels: waiting for the weekend, waiting for the tooth fairy, waiting for a loved one to return home or waiting to return home, waiting and watching for how God is working in our lives. We'll look at ways in which we prepare, in our waiting, for the wonderful and joyous birth of our Saviour, Jesus. Year after year, we look forward to welcoming Emmanuel, God with Us! Today, we will prepare the Advent Wreath which will be placed in the chancel next Sunday. Looking forward to our Advent journey! **Shauna, Pastoral Assistant**

Messy Church – Get Messy With Us This Week!

St. Anne's offers children and their parents/caregivers an opportunity to experience church and learn about God at monthly "Messy Church" gatherings in the Ministry Centre. We're looking forward to being together again this Wednesday to bake bread and make a soup for our supper. Our focus will be the story of Abraham and Sarah, and we'll make Advent wreaths. Please spread the word and contact me with any questions. Thanks! **Shauna**
Wednesday, November 25, 4:30 - 6:30 p.m. in the Ministry Centre, 276 Gladstone Avenue

Community Dinner Report

The November 15 dinner's attendance was down a little from recent record turnouts, perhaps because of the Santa Claus Parade. However, appetites were hearty, and somehow the buffet was empty at the conclusion. Shauna again distributed socks and led a moving post-dinner religious service. Because *Cantate* will occur on December 20, our next Community Dinner will take place on December 27. That poses some challenges because our very helpful students will be away, and some regular volunteers will also not be around. If you can assist with this dinner, please let us know or just come. Many of our guests will not have had a sumptuous feast at Christmas, and, frankly, some of them will be financially unable to buy really nourishing food so close to the end of the month. This means that a hearty meal at St. Anne's will be especially appreciated. **Roy Schatz, Community Dinner Co-ordinator**

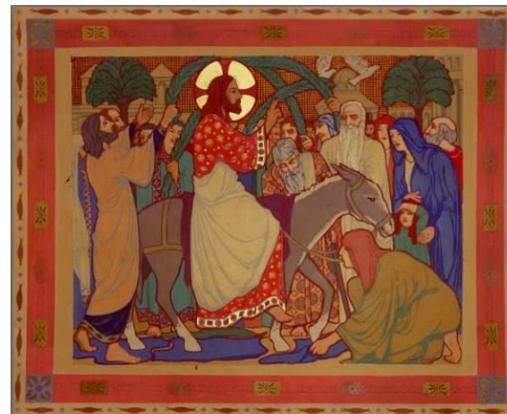
Sunday, December 27 - Food prep from 2:00 p.m. Dinner served at 5:30 p.m. in the Lower Parish Hall at 651 Dufferin Street, followed by a Service of Healing & Communion and clean up.

Socks, Toiletries & Food Needed!

A big thank you to all those who have kindly donated NEW socks! We are still in need of more so that every guest at the December Community Dinner can receive a pair. As the weather gets colder, the need is greater! We also appreciate receiving toiletries such as razors, toothbrushes, toothpaste, and soap. **Please note that all items must be new and unopened.** In addition, we continue to collect food staples for our community partner, the Oasis Dufferin Food Bank. Please place all donations in the blue bin at the back of the church, and I'll distribute accordingly. Any questions, please ask! Thank you so much. **Shauna**

The Junction Trio & Friends – In Concert Sunday, November 29

The Junction Trio, St. Anne's Ensemble in-Residence, returns on Sunday, November 29 with an afternoon concert celebrating the music of Canada's Group of Seven. Invite friends to join you for "In the Shade of the Sheltering Palms," featuring a rich assortment of classical and traditional music of the period, including the music of Bach, Debussy, Seitz, and Alexander Muir, composer of The Maple Leaf Forever. Pay What You Can, \$20 suggested.



Sunday, November 29, 3:30 p.m. in the church – a great opportunity to show off St. Anne's Group of Seven artwork while enjoying some fabulous music!

St. Anne's Community Cantate – Tickets Now Available

Our annual neighbourhood Christmas concert in support of the Youth Scholarship Program of the Division 14 Community Police Liaison Committee (CPLC) will take at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 20. It will feature the Choir of St. Anne's, The Junction Trio, Leah Salomaa, and Ken Whiteley, under the musical direction of John-Luke Addison. Please plan to attend and to invite friends and family for this mosaic of musical genres....from classical to jazz to gospel! **Sunday, December 20, 3:00 p.m. in the church**

Tickets are now available for purchase from Arlene Roeder or online at Eventbrite.ca. You may also buy tickets with cash at the door. Cost is \$15 for Adults and \$10 for Students/Seniors. Children under 12 are free. **Can you help sell tickets?** If so, please speak with Arlene Roeder asap or send her an email at arlene.roeder@gmail.com.

Passion Talks

For our second Passion Talk, Jorge talked about running the Chicago Marathon. He got us thinking about all the different kinds of journeys each of us has. Jorge encouraged us to dedicate the next kilometre of what we do to the well-being of a specific person, as an "action prayer". We talked about refugees and the distance of their journeys and about how we might pray for their safe travels too.



Passion Talks are held monthly and feature parishioners from St. Anne's sharing an interest or passion and how it links to their own faith journey. **Please contact Nathan Lemphers if you would like to present at an upcoming Passion Talk (nathan.lemphers@gmail.com).** The next talk will be held in January, date tbd.

Parish Retreat in April 2016 – Retreat Leader Announced!

It may seem a long way off, but please consider being part of our second annual Parish Retreat. This opportunity for spiritual reflection and restoration will be held at The Convent of the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine from **Friday, April 1 at 4:00 p.m. until Saturday, April 2 at 4:00 p.m.**



Our theme is **Reconciliation**, and we are delighted that the Rev. Ryscilla Shaw will be our retreat leader. Ryscilla recently served on the Primate's Commission on the Doctrine of Discovery, Reconciliation and Justice to the National Anglican Sacred Circle.

Please sign up on the Action Table as soon as possible to reserve your space. The cost is \$125 per person which includes Friday's overnight stay at the convent, three meals and snacks, and a contribution towards the honorarium for our facilitator. If you have any questions, please speak to Gary or Shauna.

Thank You Gardeners!

On Saturday, November 7, a dedicated St. Anne's crew worked to get our gardens ready for their long winter's nap. They cleaned up the St. Anne's yard, raked leaves, and planted tulip bulbs to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Holland by Canadian troops. Many thanks. We'll look forward to spring flowers!

