

Fall Campaign FAQs

1. Why is my pledge so important?

97% of our income to operate St Thomas comes from our pledges. The remaining 3% comes from plate offering (2%) and other sources such as grants and fundraisers (1%).

2. What does it cost, per household, to run ST?

The average cost to operate St Thomas in 2023 is \$4,000 per household. Our current average pledge is approximately \$2,900.

3. What is our pledge goal for 2024?

St. Thomas' goal is \$425,000 of total pledge income to support the operating budget and ministries.

4. What is our "real cost" of ministry now?

Our actual cost of ministry in 2023 is approximately \$419,000 (FINCOM revised to reflect actual expenses in Summer 2023). And 2023 expenses are expected to grow slightly to \$445,000 in 2024.

5. What were pledged dollars in previous years?

Pledging in 2023 is strong, and we anticipate it to be close to \$300,000. In 2022, it was \$240,000. Our goal for 2024 is to have a total pledge of \$425,000. We can balance the budget, restore our tithe to the Diocese, and offer modest investments in our strategic plan.

6. How will we fix our income problem?

We believe God has provided our parish with the resources when each household gives back to God as they best can in their faith journey. From data passed to us from most of our members, St. Thomas has a 1.59% giving rate. A complete spiritual tithe is 10%. A modest increase to a 2.5% giving rate in 2024 would fund our current operations.

7. Why do we have an income problem?

The dollar amount given from households has provided, on average, \$300,000 of operating income/year for over 20 years – less in 2020, 2021 and 2022. Nevertheless, the cost of ministry (including staff compensation and health care), contractors, supplies, electricity, gas, water, technology upgrades and tools for ministry have increased annually. This led to deficit spending in the past five years drawing from minimal cash reserves. In previous years, the parish was able to apply a few techniques to balance the budget: using special donations and gifts, selling the rental property, reducing staff, not offering regular cost of living or livable wage pay increases, not fulfilling our 10% tithe to the Diocese, and underfunding outreach. All of which made it possible to "balance the budget."

8. What is the difference between "making my pledge" and "paying my pledge"?

It our tradition and practice at St. Thomas that each active member household make a pledge (anticipated declaration of financial offering for the upcoming year). A pledge card is your offering to God and to St. Thomas that you intended to honor that pledge.

After you fill out a pledge card or pledge form on-line, the next step is to set up a payment schedule. We invite you, if you are able, to set up automatic payments from your bank account to the church

Making regular, reliable, payments towards your pledge reduces stress on the finance committee and helps our cash flow balance over the year. It also has no fees. If you prefer to use your credit card using Tithely, you may do so. We welcome you to help cover the fee for each transaction. Others may prefer to send monthly checks from your online check writing account or write a check and place in the offering plate on Sunday. Cash is also welcome. Please place cash in an envelope, marked with your household name and the word “pledge”.

9. Why do I need to connect at St. Thomas?

Our baptismal roots and covenant call us to give time, talent, and money to God. When we give our time, we CONNECT. When we share our talents (gifts), we CONNECT. Our baptism calls us to teach children, youth, and adults about Jesus Christ. To teach is to CONNECT. To attend a class is to CONNECT. Our baptismal roots call us to serve others: when we sing in the choir, welcome people as they approach the church, feed someone, clothe someone, and show another human being dignity, we come to know Jesus Christ because we CONNECT. To be a Christian is to love our neighbors – to love is to take action and CONNECT.