



Pleasing to God

St. Benedict's 2024

“Through Christ let us continually offer to God the sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his Name. But do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.” Hebrews 13:15-16

Since launching our food pantry ministry with St. Jude's this past St. Benedict's Day, each Sunday we've seen those gifts brought up to the altar before communion, along with the bread, wine, and offering plates. It's become one of our favorite moments in worship: a sweet kid or two pulling the red wagon down the aisle as we sing “Praise God from whom all blessings flow,” while patient ushers help make sure nothing goes too awry and pile grocery bags before the altar. What was simply an extra bag of beans or carton of diapers thrown in a grocery cart is joined to everyone else's offering, too, and suddenly it can feed multitudes.

Our theme for this year's financial giving campaign comes from the Letter to the Hebrews. In it, the writer links Jesus's cross— he is the high priest who offers not an animal sacrifice to God, but instead offers himself— with the shape of our own lives. That somehow, because of Jesus, our own sacrifices find meaning in his own. Now, that can sound a little lofty and abstract, until we think about life at St. Benedict's. Whether it's those bags of groceries; or one shaking voice raised in praise joined to others in the congregation or choir; an afternoon reading stories with children at Path to Shine; or a new member of St. Benedict's asking “How can I help?”; an insight offered in Bible Study; a whispered prayer for a church friend who is struggling; a pledge check in faithfulness, generosity, and hope. Suddenly it seems undeniably true: each of us offers to share what we have—from our time, treasure, and talents—and God transforms those gifts into something more efficacious, powerful, and glorious than we can imagine.

Your consistent and generous financial support of St. Benedict's is an offering to God and to our parish. Staff and programming support the people of St. Benedict's in deepening our faith, loving and serving God and neighbor both within the walls of our church, and out in the world. We ask you to prayerfully consider making a financial pledge for 2024. Yearly pledges allow us to make wise financial decisions with an accurate budget and plan our ministries for the coming year. Planned, regular giving is an act of spiritual maturity. Enclosed is a 2024 pledge commitment card, which you can return to the church in the offering plate or by mail. If you prefer to pledge online, you can at mysaintb.org/giving. Thank you for your many faithful offerings of treasure, time, and talent: We believe that they are pleasing to God.

Last year, we asked for your help in hiring an Associate Rector whose programmatic focus would be Children, Youth, and Families. The vestry created a three-year plan to use some of our significant cash reserves, and increase giving to fund an additional third of this position each year, building towards self-sustaining. You generously met this goal, and we welcomed Fr. Daron last month! Thanks be to God. Now we begin Year 2: we are looking to increase giving by 11%, through a combination of increased and new pledges, in order to stay on track. Please prayerfully consider making a new pledge, or increasing your current pledge, as an act of faith that God will continue to use our offerings to his glory at St. Benedict's.

Yours in Christ,

The Rev. Jenna Strizak
Rector

Greg Stevens
Sr. Warden and Stewardship Chair