



December 1, 2007

To the Membership of St. Benedict's Episcopal Church

Re: 2008 St. Benedict's Inaugural Stewardship Campaign

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The members of the St. Benedict's Finance Committee would like to welcome you to St. Benedict's Episcopal Church and to the 2008 Stewardship Campaign.

We are looking forward to beginning our worship together as a St. Benedict's community and, as we do so, we also look forward to new opportunities to serve God in our community. This next step in our development as a church community promises the opportunity for new and deeper relationships with each other. This next step also promises the opportunity for us to make a deeper commitment to our new church. It is this deeper commitment that we would like for you to consider.

From mission work to starting new youth and children's programs, great work is taking place at St. Benedict's and great effort has been expended to bring us to this point. Reaching sufficient numbers to begin worshipping is no small task and we have reached this point in record time. This effort has largely been undertaken and directed by the Reverend Lang Lowrey. We are sure that you share our appreciation for his efforts and the efforts of the entire St. Benedict's staff. Even though we cannot always see it, it is very clear that The Holy Spirit has brought us a very long way in a short period of time.

This equation of time and distance has another element to it. That element is, of course, money. We did not get to this point without the benefit of financial resources. For St. Benedict's, the financial resources have been provided by the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta. In 2007, the Diocese has provided the funding that has allowed us to establish a presence in our community and to announce our Episcopal mission to that community. It is with the generous help of the Diocese and their willingness to provide financial support that we have come so far in so short a period of time.

Now it is our time. Our worship together is our outward sign of our commitment to each other as a community of faith. As we begin worshipping as a community, it is our time to make a financial commitment to our new church. It is time to make our pledge of financial support to St. Benedict's.

As a mission church, pledge cards and stewardship requests like this one are new to us. Candidly, the Finance Committee can tell you that we do not know what to expect. The national church has stated that the average pledge for all Episcopal churches is approximately \$3,000 per family per year, with many much larger annual pledges and some smaller gifts. But we are a new church; therefore we have limited knowledge as to how our community will respond. Perhaps as individuals we have a long history of hearing Stewardship campaigns in our former churches, or perhaps we are hearing this request for an annual pledge for the first time. Either way, it would be understandable to question how these concepts should be applied to St. Benedict's. After all, we do not have the facilities, the programs, or the infrastructure of a long-established church. Because we do not have the overhead of an established church, perhaps we do not have the same financial needs as those big churches. As individuals, we might ask the question "How should I think about a stewardship request for this new church?" In short, we might question how much money we should pledge to the church.

Well, our committee will go out on a limb here and tell you to forget whatever you have heard in the past concerning stewardship. We want to endeavor to simplify this. We ask that you pledge enough to feel it - and then give a little more; that little extra that allows you to "Grow in Faith" and embrace God's mission



for St. Benedict's. You can also, if you so choose, set aside the theological basis for tithing and put money in the offering plate each week (see our website for information on this). We want to endeavor to simplify this. We are simply asking that you pledge enough to feel it - and then give a little more. That little extra that allows you to "Grow in Faith" and embrace God's mission for St. Benedict's.

Let's also simplify the procedure for giving. Please know that you can pledge, give money or make memorial gifts through the St. Benedict's web site, or by completing and returning a pledge card. Payment toward a pledge can be fulfilled by placing a check in the alms basin on Sunday, or by sending payments to the church office via regular mail. Also, in the near future we will establish web site payment methods and provide you with a report of your giving on a regular basis.

One of the extraordinary expenses we will have in 2008 is the purchase of items needed for worship. Although these items are part of the 2008 budget, we are blessed to have received gifts for some of these items. These gifts are in some cases given in memory of loved ones, or in celebration of a loved one's life. If you would like to participate in a thanksgiving or memorial gift please let Lang know.

The celebration of the Eucharist is the celebration of God's abundance. As we come together in Eucharistic Worship, let the fact that you can and are giving be a celebration of God's blessings and abundance. Let it be a celebration of our new mission together – our new commitment to each other. And let our new community rejoice together in this abundance.

Finally, please know that successfully accomplishing our 2008 stewardship goals will put us in a good position to acquire land and buildings and launch a host of new ministries. This is why we need to get off to a good start in 2008.

Just give enough to feel it. God deserves that.

Thank you,

Jack Sickling  
Finance Committee

Alex Suarez  
Finance Committee

Mohan Raj  
Finance Committee

Travis Werner  
Finance Committee

Enclosure: Pledge Card