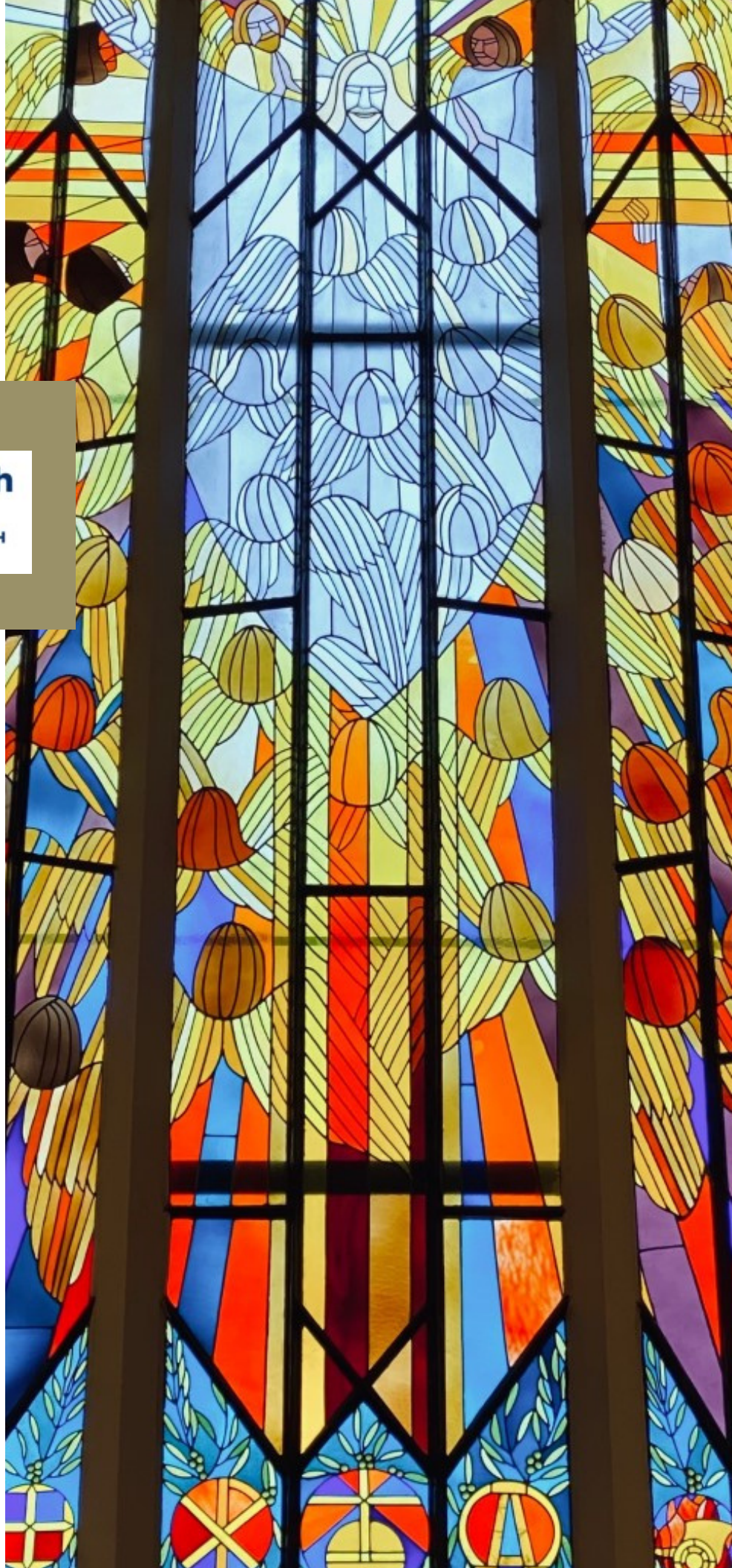




Stepping Up In Faith
Our Spiritual Home
SAINT ANNE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Gratitude 2024



I LOVE MY SPIRITUAL HOME
The Reverend Hannah Kelly
September 15, 2023

Although it is fun to get out and travel, especially in the summertime, I always look forward to getting back into a routine in the fall. While I love getting the chance to be adventurous every now and then, I am a homebody at heart. I love Atlanta and I feel so lucky to live here. Ask any of my friends to do an impression of me and chances are they will say, "The Episcopal Church welcomes you!" And "Atlanta is the greatest city on Earth!"

I have always had a great deal of city pride. And it's not just the Hawks and the Braves and the Falcons that I'm talking about. One of my earliest childhood memories is learning that it was unusual to be so attached to where you are from. It was a rude awakening when I went to summer camp for the first time and felt a homesickness I had never known before. The other campers seemed totally indifferent about being away from home, but I really struggled with it. I missed my parents and my siblings, yes, but I also missed Atlanta itself. I missed feeling at home, I missed feeling like I belonged, I missed looking out the window in the car on the Grady curve. I missed making eye contact with the squirrels and I missed playing at Piedmont Park. The camp I was attending would serve Gatorade on particularly hot afternoons, and I couldn't believe that the other campers weren't concerned about being loyal to the Coca Cola Company. They didn't even know that Gatorade was a Pepsi product! When I would ask about their cities and hometowns, my friends would look completely taken aback. Some didn't even know the name of the city where they lived.

All of this was completely shocking to me, and I remember feeling pity for them not having this deep attachment to where they were from. They were missing out on a whole entire dimension of happiness that comes from loving where you live.

Today, I feel a similar sense of loss for the friends of mine who aren't part of a worshipping community. Although they are perfectly content with their jobs and friendships and have found other ways to socialize and recharge, I know there is deep value in being a part of a church community. I know how sacred it is to kneel in the pews praying alongside other people, and I have seen how well this community cares for each other when someone is experiencing illness or loss. Being a part of the Saint Anne's community has made me feel known, loved, appreciated, included and welcomed. I think everyone I know could benefit from feeling that way.

It is such a gift to be among such a talented group of people who model the generosity and loving spirit of God. As I am still learning the personalities and traditions of this parish, I have been amazed by the number of creative and fun events that you all put together each year, and am inspired by the collaboration and friendships that I've witnessed. I hope that as we kick off this new programmatic year, you feel energized to use the many talents God has given you to the benefit of our community and of each other, and that you consider inviting your friends to join in the fun. I can't wait to see all that we do together this year.

WITH OUT LIPS, AND IN OUR LIVES
The Reverend Edith W. Woodling
September 22, 2023

As I write this essay, the clergy of Saint Anne's have just returned from the annual Clergy Conference at Rock Eagle Conference Center. It was inspiring and life-giving to be among my colleagues and witness how we each are partners with Christ and with one another, in a multiplicity of ways, to serve God, and to carry out God's mission in the world. We were also reminded that we are partners with each of you in our parish to live out God's call to us in this particular place.

The title of the conference was "With Our Lips, and In Our Lives." Our bishop focused on Hebrews 13: 15-16 as our core text: "Through him, then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his Name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God." This passage speaks to renewal, rejoicing, and praising God for every good gift God has given us freely and sharing the gifts we have with others.

The verses from the Gospel of John quoted above reminds us that we can get distracted from the ministry we are called to by worldly preoccupations and by stress. We can spend all of our energy worrying about things we cannot control and neglect the work we are called to and can do to help build the just and loving kingdom of God on earth. Jesus reminds his disciples and those of us living and breathing today not to be anxious or troubled because there is gracious welcome and spacious room for all of us in God's mission and in God's house. God is present with us!

As our bishop noted during our conference, praise is both an antidote and the medicine for many things; praise keeps us from being self-focused, prideful, and anxious; praise and rejoicing restores our hope and makes us more self-aware. Praise softens all our divisions and centers us in God's compassionate love, enabling us to worship joyfully and serve compassionately. As the bishop asked of us, what words of joyful praise are on your lips? What is our congregation praising God for in this time of renewal?

I am grateful and praising God today for His mercy in giving me renewed strength and purpose as I enter the decade of my 70's! Every day is a joy to witness a new creation and is a constant surprise as I see anew the richness of our faith tradition and hear God's ever-constant call. This call invites me each day to serve in God's Church and in Christ's ministry of love, reconciliation, and renewal. I also rejoice in the renewed vibrancy of this parish and in the presence of the Risen Christ in our midst at Saint Anne's.

For 10 years, I served as the chaplain for the students, the parents, and the faculty and staff of Saint Martin's Episcopal School. Every Monday for those ten years, in both of the two division chapel services, we would begin with Psalm 118: 24, "This is the day that the Lord had made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." There is nothing sweeter still to me than hearing and remembering these words on the lips of our children. These words are a daily orientation towards praise and thanksgiving, a turning to God for strength and renewal. These words remind us to rejoice and be glad in each and every day, celebrating God and God's Creation.

As you read this essay, I will be heading to Green Bough House of Prayer, a spiritual retreat center in Adrian, Georgia, where I am an associate. There, I will pray and praise God in the midst of another religious community. I will carry you in my heart and in my prayers as I go and return to you soon, strengthened and renewed, to rejoice once again with you at Saint Anne's.

IT TAKES A VILLAGE!
Elizabeth Zuccherro, Vestry Member
September 24, 2023

I never fully understood the gravity of the phrase, "it takes a village," until I became a mother, and I never understood how impactful a village could be until I came to Saint Anne's.

Maybe it was divine intervention, but our first Sunday at Saint Anne's was Consecration Sunday. Our son, Winn, was just a couple months old. Like most new parents, AJ and I had our fair share of sleepless nights. We were new to parenting and had just become exhausted from constant worry over all the sounds that a baby could make. Then came one Sunday morning. AJ and I were up at the crack of dawn, which had become our norm. We were making jokes with one other about how our appearances were starting to resemble something out of *Night of the Living Dead*. They were the kind of jokes where you are laughing but also crying a little on the inside because you know deep down that the punchline is partially true. One that day, AJ made a suggestion, that seemed crazy at the time. In the wee morning hours he said, "Do you want to try out a new church today? Winn was fairly new to the world, and I had not really taken him anywhere. I had many thoughts swirling through my mind at his proposal. Perhaps it was one zombie joke too many, but I ultimately agreed. Something needed to change and finding a church to support our brand-new family seemed like a great place to start.

As I walked up the front steps of Saint Anne's with a huge diaper bag on one arm and a baby clutched the other, I said "Lord, please let this work out." And it did! Winn was immediately at home. The organ music in the processional calmed his cries in a way that no amount of rocking ever had. He settled in a comfortable lull as his eyes gazed at the colors of the stained glass. He fell into a peaceful sleep while receiving his first blessing at the communion rail. After the service, our family was invited to stay for lunch. AJ and I had been subsisting on take-out, and a freshly prepared meal was a welcome gift. Many loving arms passed our sleeping Winn around the Parish Hall. As I finally had my two arms back to myself, I quickly abandoned all my fears of germs and new babies. I was invited to join the EWC Chapter for Mothers and had started exchanging phone numbers with ladies in that group. When I finally glanced over at my sweet husband who was happier than a woodpecker in a lumber pile with his plate of drumsticks, I knew that we finally found our village, and what a remarkable village it has been!

All three of our children have since been baptized at Saint Anne's. We continue to be humbled by the ways in which this community has embraced our growing family. It has been an honor to serve on the vestry, join in fellowship with ECW, to teach Children's Sunday School, and become deeply involved with POLO (Parents of Little Ones). My husband has found his place in the parish cooking food for the annual Mardi Gras Party, joining the men's book club, and volunteering in the AV booth on Sundays. Our children are flourishing in their spiritual growth through Sunday School, Children's Chapel, Choir, POLO fellowship, and Vacation Bible School. They have also had the wonderful opportunity to be a part of the Day School, which is just about the happiest place on earth and where the educators and staff have poured into our children beyond expectation.

As you can see, it all started on a Consecration Sunday. Perhaps it was just God's humor and planning that I would be selected to talk about stewardship and what it means to our family. When asked why we give to Saint Anne's Church and why we make pledging a priority, the answer is rather simple. It makes our village stronger. We are a stronger family because of our Saint Anne's family. We pledge out of an overwhelming sense of gratitude and thanksgiving for this place, its people, and its ministries. We are proud of what our Saint Anne's represents – a welcoming

community that inspires all to live up to Jesus's way of love. Finally, we pledge so that our message of love and invitation is carried forward to the next generation and so that we can do our part in caring for and cultivating our future parish family.

CONSECRATION
Ben Jordan, Senior Warden
September 28, 2023

As the summer heat in Atlanta starts to fade, we turn our attention to stewardship. In recent weeks we have read inspiring articles from Hannah and Edith, and on Sunday Elizabeth Zucchero gave a wonderful account of what St. Anne's means to her family. We will hear more from our fellow parishioners in the coming weeks as we build toward Consecration Sunday on October 22. (Kate Grosvenor is presenting on October 15th for the youth).

The theme for this year's Stewardship campaign comes from the Gospel of John: In My Father's House There Are Many Rooms. This theme recognizes St. Anne's as our spiritual home – as a physical structure with many rooms, yes, but also the place at which, and through which, we live our spiritual lives. Surely, this is a fitting theme for St. Anne's.

From a physical standpoint, our beautiful campus sits on 13.5 acres of land with over 49,000 square feet of building space. We utilize this space, and the many rooms within, to live our faith.

In the Nave, we gather to worship, pray, grieve and celebrate the Eucharist.

In the Parish Hall we gather for Parish Life activities which at St. Anne's must include food and fellowship

In the Commons Room, and in our refurbished Library, we meet for Formation, study, and quiet reflection.

In the Day School, and in our new Children's Chapel, we nurture and teach our children.

In the Terrace, we care for and support our Super Seniors.

But the impact of St. Anne's extends well beyond the walls of our physical campus. Through Outreach ministries, we support a multitude of local causes and organizations, including Urban Recipe, Church of the Common Ground (the Church Without Walls!) and Agape – just to name a few. And through Pastoral Care, we minister to those in our community who do not or cannot attend services but who do need our care.

What does that have to do with stewardship? This home of ours, with its many rooms, missions, and ministries, requires maintenance. It requires our attention. And it requires that we dedicate a portion of our time, talents, and resources to its preservation and to its continued growth.

With our annual campaign underway, soon you will receive a packet in the mail from our Stewardship Chair, Bill Bost. It will include a Stair Step Chart showing last year's giving and a pledge card for the upcoming 2024 year. Then, on Sunday, October 22, Consecration Sunday, we welcome our guest preacher Brian Sullivan and bring our pledge cards to the altar. The day will be capped off with a celebratory luncheon following the 10:30 AM service.

I do hope you will join my family in making a pledge for the 2024 Church Year at St. Anne's, and I would encourage you to consider "stepping up" from last year's pledge if you can.

We at St. Anne's are blessed to have our home which He has prepared for us. Let's do our part to preserve this home, with its many rooms, and to build upon its solid foundation.

UNDER ONE ROOF
KC Crewdson, Seminarian
September 29, 2023

What do we make of John 14:2? What does it mean for there to be many dwelling places in God's house? I think Edith put it so well last week when she said that it means there's room for everyone! Each of us, with our own unique gifts and stories and talents, has a place in God's house. There is a place for each of us, and Jesus is preparing it for us. What good news!

But there's another piece to this good news too, so I'd like to build on the strong foundation Edith gave us about the many dwelling places and focus on the one house. All of these rooms, all of this spaciousness, is all under one roof, God's roof. Every last one of us has a place with God where we can be our fullest selves, but we're not all living separately in our own houses. We are living together as one family under one roof.

I think Jesus is calling us here to learn how to truly be the family of God, able to all live together under one roof even as our individuality is celebrated. To be able to be in relationship with each other through our oneness in Christ, not siloed off into different camps or houses.

We have the opportunity to live into that call as a parish, as one piece of the Body of Christ. What can we do to build a community that lives under one roof? I think one way is to always keep the community as a priority in our lives, to use our gifts as individuals for the betterment of the community as a whole and not only for our own benefit. It is all too easy in our society to forget that we're all part of the same family, part of the same ecosystem. Being community focused is counter-cultural, but central to being Christian.

The perennial question for us, and especially as we begin another program year, is how are we being called to go deeper into our shared life together? Where does this family need my help and support? How can I help make sure there's a place for everyone under Saint Anne's roof like Jesus is making a place for everyone under his Father's roof? The beautiful thing about everyone being under one roof is that it means all of the myriad and varied gifts God has given us are here, ready to be put to use for God's service.

What gifts do you bring to God's house? Where and how might you be called to use them? If you aren't sure, ask a friend! We're all in this house together, so let's ask for help with discernment when we need it. The important thing is to do our best with what we've been given, to the greater glory of God, knowing that our contributions help make God's house a home for the whole family.

“In my father’s house there are many rooms……” John 14:2

The Reverend Buddy Crawford

October 13, 2023

Some of my earliest memories are from being in church, in fact I have no memories of **not** being part of a church family. Participating in Sunday school, being an acolyte, singing in the choir, and attending EYC formed me into the Christian I am today. More importantly it was the people who gave of their time and talent to lead various groups that connected me to the church. Mr. and Mrs. Allen who led Children’s Chapel and served as the Acolyte warden. Mrs. Campbell, whose bible stories intrigued me during Sunday school and gave me a love for scripture. My cousin and her husband who led our EYC programs and took us on adventures to Savannah. I am grateful for each of them and the impact they had on my life. Remembering these past experiences, I am aware that church is another place I call home and that this is not the case for everyone. I’m left wondering how we may provide a place for others in our community to create similar experiences.

Several years ago, I was asked to lead a Stewardship Campaign. The committee had already been formed, had met a few times, and had chosen the scripture passage for the campaign. When they told me the selected bible verse, I chuckled to myself. They had chosen a portion of the fourteenth chapter of John’s gospel which is very often read at funerals. As the group discussed why they had picked it, I was quickly persuaded that it was a good text. Each committee member shared how the church was an integral part of their life. It is where they learned how to be a Christian and to serve each other and the world as they plugged into different ministry areas or “rooms” in the church.

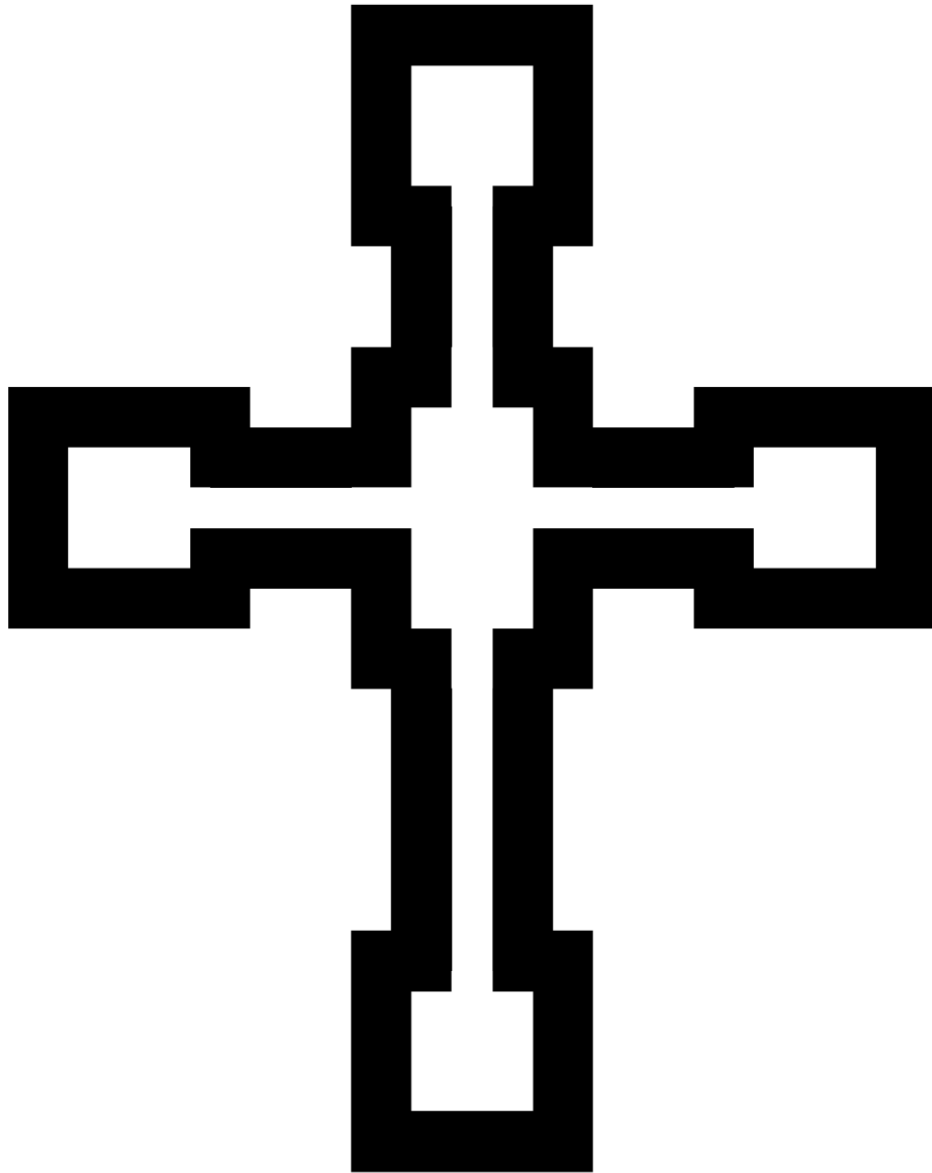
Jesus offered the image of going to prepare rooms for his disciples to comfort them as he faced his impending death. At the same time, he was forming them into a community to carry on his mission in his absence. Saint Anne’s church is part of that ongoing mission where children, youth, adults, and the “feisty seniors” our bishop talks about, can enter rooms to learn about our gifts and talents and share them with the world.

Participating in stewardship is an opportunity to commit to supporting the ministries that form us and our families into disciples of Jesus. We give of our treasure to keep the doors open, the lights on, the staff paid, to aid to those in need, and to offer the programs we enjoy and need on our faith journey. Through the gift of our resources we are building, supporting, and expanding our Father’s house.

This fall we are celebrating how Saint Anne’s is “Our Spiritual Home.” We are creating new visions of how to engage more deeply in Outreach, Worship, Prayer, Hospitality, and Community. It is exciting to be in this place of new beginnings, as a church of welcome and support for those in our community to experience God’s love.

Our work in expanding our Father’s house requires effort from each of us. The gifts of time and talent are essential components of our discipleship that go hand in hand with our treasure. Our pledges are a sign of our gratitude for all we have received and of our commitment to spread God’s love to each other and to our neighbors. Jesus said, “I go to prepare a place for you,” and stewardship is an occasion to imitate Jesus by preparing our Father’s house at Saint Anne’s.

I ask that you make your annual stewardship pledge so that the work of our parish may continue and thrive. On Sunday, October 22nd we will bless our pledges and enjoy a celebratory luncheon following the one service that morning at 10:30. Thank you for your generosity to our spiritual home.



Saint Anne's Episcopal Church

3098 Saint Anne's Lane

Atlanta, Georgia 30327-1638

404-237-5589

www.saintannes.com