



Episcopal Diocese of Washington

Episcopal Church House, Mount Saint Alban, Washington, DC 20016-5094

December 6, 2011

As most of your congregations are now in the midst of stewardship season and budget decisions for the coming year, let me share my preliminary thoughts on diocesan ministries and invite your prayerful consideration of your congregation's level of financial giving to the diocese for 2012.

First, let me say how grateful I am that parish giving to the diocese is voluntary. I come from a diocese where each congregation is mandated to give a significant percentage of its resources to the diocese.

Several years ago, we struggled to reduce that mandate to 11% for small congregations and 14% for larger ones. Such mandates, in my experience, do not inspire cheerful giving. As your bishop, I find myself asking, what will?

I believe the answer begins with thoughtful, compassionate and effective stewardship of our diocesan resources. A gentleman recently shared with me the opinion that there are several actions a leader can take to set the tone of an organization: resource allocation; hiring decisions; the questions a leader asks and (a close corollary) how a leader spends his or her time.

To that end, my goals for 2012 are to focus diocesan financial resources in support of our core ministries, assure that our diocesan staff is aligned to clearly serve our priorities, and listen carefully to the will of God as discerned collectively among us. In time, I pray we will see the fruit of such focused stewardship in the renewal of our congregations and core ministries and that this, in turn, will inspire our congregations to give 10% of their Normal Operating Income to the diocese. I will present my initial proposals for these changes at Diocesan Convention in January.

As you make your stewardship decisions as individuals and congregations, know that I hold you in prayer in these challenging financial times. May we all be worthy of the gifts entrusted to our care.

A pledge form accompanies this letter. To facilitate our planning and preparation for diocesan convention, we request that you make every effort to return your commitment, if at all possible, by January 13, 2012.

Thank you for all that you are doing and giving in faithfulness to Christ. I am honored to be your bishop.

Faithfully,
Best wishes for the Advent/Christmas pilgrimage.

The Rt. Rev. Mariann Edgar Budde, D.Min.
Bishop of Washington