

Questions and Answers regarding the new pledge system for St. Stanislaus Cathedral

1. Why the change?

The current dues method is not working to support the membership or financial needs of our parish. Economic times and people's lives change – they or a spouse lose their job, health issues arise, they lose a loved one, they move to a fixed income – and can't pay their dues. How do you expect someone in these positions to get caught up? They don't, and so they become inactive or leave our church.

At our current membership level, the average amount needed to sustain a robust church is \$1,325 per adult member (not per household). So we can either increase the dues, or find a way to increase the membership so that number is lowered per individual. It does however take money \$\$ to heat the church, put the lights on, repair the leaky roof, set up the Christmas trees, get the Easter flowers on the altar, purchase the Sunday school materials, and make sure there are coffee and doughnuts every Sunday.

This proposal is to make our parish a more *OPEN* and *INVITING* church, where we *WELCOME ALL PEOPLE*, new and old, to become *ACTIVE* members of St. Stanislaus PNCC.

2. What is the minimum pledge?

- a. There is no minimum pledge.
- b. Anyone who makes a pledge will be considered a registered Parish member of St. Stanislaus Cathedral - who will be able to participate and serve in church organizations (except the parish committee) and have a voice at parish meetings, but no vote.
- c. When a member contributes \$200 they will be considered a "national" member - at which time our parish will become responsible for national and diocesan responsibilities. Anyone who becomes a national member can serve on the parish committee, have a vote in parish meetings and qualify as a delegate to either the Diocesan or National Synod.

3. How much should I pledge?

Your pledge amount is like an investment in your spiritual community. Consider the importance of church in your life. St. Stanislaus exists solely on the generosity of its members; all of us share in keeping our spiritual home sound, secure and influential in the community. What value do you ascribe to teaching our children tolerance, compassion and spiritual values we agree with? To finding the sense of energy, deep meaning and belonging that our parish can provide? Is it part of your life and prioritized in your budget, or is it just there when things go wrong, or only if there's any money left at the end of the week? **Remember, no one has ever gone hungry or become poor from contributing to their church.**

Let's discuss 2 examples. If you were paying \$245 per person for dues previously, and contributed \$5 each week in envelopes, the total you normally contributed was approx \$500 (\$10/week average). You should consider pledging at least that amount for the next year. It has been stated that \$1325 is needed per individual to maintain our church – that's approx. \$25 per week. If you can pledge and contribute more, please do so. It is up to the individual to determine their ability to contribute to the church. Please take time to prioritize your church in your life.

4. I'm worried my financial situation will change this year. If this happens, can I change my pledge?

Changing financial circumstances are a fact of life and St. Stanislaus is no stranger to this concern. If your circumstances change, simply contact the church office and indicate the adjustments in your pledge (down or up)

that need to be made. This is a simple and confidential activity. If the possibility of worsening financial circumstances is a great concern to you, please pledge the minimum amount you are comfortable with rather than not pledging at all.

5. How to Make Your Pledge

- Stop by the Parish Office or the Pledge Table in the vestibule on any Sunday
- Call the church office 570-961-9231
- You can email: Parishchair@saintstanislauspncc.org
- You can download a 2016 Pledge Form at www.saintstanislauspncc.org. Simply fill out the form and drop it in the mail, or bring it to church with you any Sunday through March 15, 2016.

6. How do I pay my pledge?

We strongly encourage members to pay your pledge weekly with your envelopes. Everything you put in your weekly envelope will count toward your pledge, regardless of the organization you designate to receive those funds. This does NOT include the noted special envelopes. You can also sign up for monthly auto-pay through your checking accounts.

7. This plan sounds unfair with some people not contributing as much as others?

This plan is based on each individual's ability to contribute. Some are more fortunate than others and have the ability to contribute more. Others may not have the financial means, but shouldn't be shunned from our parish. In the past, those not able to meet their financial obligations stopped attending our church and stopped contributing. We hope to gain new members with this proposal, and more importantly, gain old members back with some contribution versus no contribution.

Mark 12:38-44

He sat down opposite the treasury and observed how the crowd put money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow also came and put in two small coins worth a few cents. Calling his disciples to himself, he said to them, "Amen, I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the other contributors to the treasury. For they have all contributed from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood."

8. When will this plan begin?

If passed successfully by the parish congregation at a meeting to be held January 10th, 2016, the new plan will be retroactive to January 1, 2016

9. Is there a deadline to pledge?

For 2016, the deadline to pledge is March 15. In future years, the deadline will be December 1st of the prior year. So for 2017, the deadline to pledge will be Dec. 1, 2016. This allows the parish committee to plan a budget for the following year. Your pledge is for the calendar year Jan. 1 – Dec 31, every year.

10. What if I don't want to make a pledge?

You are not required to make a pledge and even then, can contribute financially to the church as you determine. However, not making a pledge will cost you the right to vote at parish meetings, to possibly be buried in the parish cemetery, to receive discounts for use of parish facilities and to hold officer positions within organizations of the parish.

11. What if I don't meet my pledge?

Everyone is urged to try their best to meet the pledge they have set forth, but sometimes lives change and we understand. People will not be penalized for not meeting their pledge and will be encouraged to pledge again the following year to support the efforts of our/their parish.

12. Who can I call if I still have questions?

For more information about pledging, please contact any parish committee member in the church office - all pledge conversations and voice mail messages are kept strictly confidential.