

Stewardship Sunday #2 – October 25th

Once again we are honoured to represent to you the 2010 Stewardship Campaign at St. Catherine's...

When we spoke two weeks ago we described what St. Catherine's has meant to us and to our family over the past 20 years. We told you how this place and this community have given us roots and wings, and the opportunity to provide roots and wings to the youth that we've worked with in the Church School and Youth Groups for many years. And we closed by asking you to reflect on what St. Catherine's has meant to **you** and to **your** family.

Today we want to talk about what this Parish of St. Catherine's means to the wider community. All that we accomplish within and outside this building is truly remarkable!

When we speak of stewardship, we speak of time, talent and treasure...Many volunteers give their time and talent within the church to facilitate and enhance our worship...the altar guild, liturgical artists, choir members and musicians, readers, servers, greeters, administrators and sidespeople.

Youth have the opportunity to participate in our services as servers, readers and choir members, and can also take advantage of junior and senior youth groups and Sunday school, sometimes involving spectacular theatrical productions!

For seniors we provide Friendship Circle teas, drivers, and afternoon eucharists, and monthly services at Evergreen House.

Many others are involved in fellowship, outreach and/ or fundraising through our men's and women's groups, supper club, hospitality committee, parish guild, and initiatives such as the Thanksgiving Dinner, the Time and Talent Auction, the Cake Walk, and the upcoming Outreach Festival.

Outreach projects that St. Catherine's supports financially include the Primates World Relief and Development Fund, Refugee Sponsorship, Mission to Seafarers, Medic Malawi, the women's safe house "Qimaavik" and Christmas Hampers.

Community Groups that count on sharing this space with us include...St. Catherine's Preschool, Cleveland Daycare, Camp Artaban, the Special Olympics Rhythmic Gymnastics Team, Girl Guides, Pathfinders, Scouts, North Shore Disability Resource Centre (a social kitchen for mentally handicapped people), Capilano University Music School, a Korean Drum Group, the Vancouver Fiddle Orchestra, the Delbrook Garden Club, Judo and Badminton Groups.....and more.

Our purpose in naming St. Catherine's ministries is that it can often seem like we are struggling to maintain our building and barely keeping our heads above water with fixed expenses like insurance, utilities and salaries, but we must remember all the wonderful things that we accomplish with the resources we have. St. Catherine's is a vital hub of this community, a place of worship that is providing roots and wings for not just our own congregation but also for the many others we touch through our stewardship of this place and its people.

But we can't continue to do all this without your time, your talents and your treasure. Each year we seek pledges from the congregation to help us support all that we do. Pledge forms have been mailed out and if you haven't received yours yet, you will very soon. Your financial pledges are the backbone of our budget, and the basis upon which your Parish Council makes key decisions about what ministries we can and cannot support in the coming year.

As many of you know from this year's vestry meeting and financial updates, St. Catherine's has been running a deficit this year where expenses have exceeded income by a substantial amount. Various initiatives have been implemented to address and hopefully mitigate the 2009 deficit, but as we all should know we simply cannot continue operate beyond our means. Your pledges can't carry the full load in 2010, St. Catherine's will have to reduce some expenditures and seek to improve other sources of income, but at the same time your stewardship pledges play the pivotal role of demonstrating our communal commitment to the ministries of St Catherine's and ensure we have a solid foundation for our Parish.

In consultation with our financial wizards and taking into account our fixed costs, ministries and other sources of income, we believe that a pledge total from the congregation of \$200,000 is required to ensure we don't run an operating deficit in 2010. The good news is that this is just 15% more than was pledged last year. The challenge is that we are seeking these pledges from fewer parishioners, and that this would just support the status quo, not giving us the extra we need to grow our outreach and our ministries or to retire the 2009 deficit.

If you look at the annual report at the last few vestry meetings you'll see that pledges tend to cluster around some common numbers, typically \$100, \$200 or \$300 per month, or \$25, \$50 or \$75 per week. Other figures show that year after year it is a relatively small portion of our congregation who provide the greatest share of donations.

Your giving has been generous and steady, but as shown by our deficit has not been enough. This year, we are asking that you consider whether you can step up to a new level of support in your pledge, or maybe consider pledging for the first time. In doing so you may want to take advantage of some of the options your pledge gives you to "double up" the benefits of your giving, in addition to the charitable tax credits you'll receive at tax time. You can use the PAD (automatic deduction) system to evenly spread your support over the year, or you can put your pledge on a credit card and collect reward points like air miles, or you can even designate your pledge to St. Catherine's as part of your United Way contribution at work. I'm sure our envelope secretary Brian Wooding would be open to any creative suggestions you might want to make.

In closing, we've asked you to reflect on all that St. Catherine's means to you and to your community...**we** believe it is a good news story, a story full of potential and with much to be grateful for. We're asking you to join us in striving to reach our pledge goal of \$200,000 for the work of this Parish in 2010. Together we can build a solid financial foundation so that St. Catherine's can continue to provide roots and wings for our community of faith.