

# GROWING IN FAITH, BUILDING COMMUNITY, GIVING JOYFULLY

Dear Friends,

What a wonderful time to be at St. Mary's! Our church is vibrant and growing. Throughout the week—not just on Sundays—our buildings and grounds hum with people of all ages who are here to worship, to learn, to serve, and to simply be together.

As we enter the fall, high school students are planning a mission trip, men and women of all ages are committing to new Bible and book studies, and our enthusiastic greeters are making sure that all who join us know that they are welcome. Our Fellowship Committee and Pastoral Care teams, which are open to all who want to participate, continue to make sure that we tend to each other in good times and bad. A renewed focus on outreach ministries includes more opportunities for hands-on involvement with our outreach partners and a commitment to taking St. Mary's out into the world.

Much of the excitement that we're now experiencing stems from the discernment process which we went through together in the spring. We focused on five areas of our common life—fellowship, outreach, spiritual formation and education, stewardship, and worship—and the discoveries of that discernment process continue to guide us as we head into an exciting future. Part of the discernment process included a recognition that we want to be stronger stewards of the talent, time, and treasure that God has given all of us to strengthen St. Mary's now and for the future.

We hope that this booklet will give you a greater understanding of how we can all be stronger stewards of our talent, time, and treasure. We also hope that it will inspire you to think about how much more we can be and do in the future with what God has given each of us, and how much that will both strengthen us as a community in Christ and empower us to share Christ's love in the world.

As you read this booklet and as you pray about your pledge afterward, please contemplate what is known as proportionate giving. It can be a profound, even life-changing, spiritual exercise: if God is the source of all that we have and has entrusted it to us, what is our responsibility to give back? What percentage of our income reflects the gratitude that we feel for God's many blessings in our lives? 3%? 5%? 10%? More? Please prayerfully consider what difference each of us can make in the life of St. Mary's here and in the world.

We have so much to celebrate. Thank you, and thanks be to God!

Gratefully,



**The Rev. Louise Browner Blanchard**  
Rector, St. Mary's Episcopal Church

