

*Embracing Encouraging Empowering*



St. Francis Episcopal Church  
College Station, TX

# **A Future For St. Francis** **A Stewardship Of Hope**

Stewardship Booklet for 2010

## **A FUTURE FOR ST. FRANCIS A Stewardship of Hope**

Grace and Peace to you.

2010 will be an immensely important year for this faith community. Having become a parish of the Diocese in 2009, we now are called to cast a vision about our future – a vision so bold we cannot possibly accomplish it on our own – a vision which all would agree is only possible by God’s grace. I am calling us to such a vision.

*We are the people God has called to create the St. Francis which is yet to be* – a parish knitted together in worship and vigorous in growth - dynamically modeling to the world a culture of mission and outreach through creative and innovative ministry. We can use these 6 acres of God’s creation to create opportunities to explore the theology of creation and a deeper understanding of its use and care. With God’s help, our parish can become a “point of light” – known throughout the world. *I believe we are just now poised to enter into the very ministries which God has intended for us since our very beginning.*

We are the people called to offer prayers and voices towards the development of a compelling narrative about who we are and what work God is calling us to – and that is exactly what we will be doing in 2010 – through the leadership of a gifted Vestry and some outside resources.

Prepared by our Past, Energetic in our Present, we are Excited about our Future – we live in God’s economy, and *we must be bold and faithful in our dreams.*

Fr. John Williams+  
Rector

## **Pause for Prayer**

As you consider A Future for St. Francis and your willingness and ability to commit to that future, remember our parish and offer a prayer:

*Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful with the fire of your love. Send forth your spirit and we shall be created and you shall renew the face of the earth. Amen*

\*\*\*\*\*

## **2010**

Uncertainty seems to be a mark of our times. In many ways, fear is the commodity of common trade in our culture. And yet as Christians, we are called to trade in a different commodity. Our commodity of common trade is Hope – because we live and move and have our being in God’s economy.

And so, every single one of us at St. Francis is invited into a

### **Stewardship of Hope.**

We seek this year not simply to plan for how we can grow or how we can build a new building but something more. We seek this year to develop a Vision for how we can be used of God to transform our entire property – all 6 acres - into a dynamic center of ministry - a multi-faceted gem reflective of the Kingdom of God and its values. We do want to start the imagining of a worship space which reflects our Franciscan heritage, but we also want to dream about Outreach ministry, we want to dream about drawing on the rich resources of our academic community to establish ourselves as a place that takes seriously a theology of Creation, we want to dream about developing our community as one which embraces the treasure of the Poor, we want to dream about how as a faith community we can lead in the awareness of the Stewardship of the Environment.....we want to dream dreams.

**In 2010, our dreams will be shared and we will develop a strategic plan for our next 10 years.**

**Every person and every family will be invited to give voice and prayer to our goals.**

**Every pledge is a commitment to**

**A Future for St. Francis**

## WHAT IS STEWARDSHIP ?

At its most basic, it's how we care for the gifts we have received from God. Stewardship is the wise and faithful use of our resources – our time, talents and treasure – all of which we believe have come to us from God. Stewardship is about community – everybody belonging to this wonderful St. Francis Family. It's a kind of personal thanksgiving to God for all the gifts God has given us. In this Booklet, we are focusing on 'treasure' or committing to financially support God's work at St. Francis through pledging. At other times of the year we emphasize opportunities for stewardship in terms of our time and talents.

### **Does my pledge really matter?**

It most certainly does. Unlike some churches, we do not have any endowment to fall back on in times of need. In the past three years, because we give away 20% of our income through the Missionary Asking and Outreach, we usually start each new year with a zero balance!! Not a good business model, but then, we are not a business. We are people seeking to be the hands and feet of Jesus... bearing witness to the values of the Kingdom of God. St. Francis will maintain its rich and valued ministry in this community only through the giving of persons like you – we rely on everybody.

### **What is Proportional Giving?**

It is simply committing to give a specific percentage of your income to St. Francis. While 10% (the Biblical tithe) of income is the goal, we recognize that you may not feel called or equipped to tithe right now and Proportional Giving allows you to systematically work towards the tithe goal by starting at a lower percentage and increasing by 1% or more each year.

***For 2008, our average pledge was \$3.367*** – that gives you an idea of the level of sacrificial giving which has made it possible for us to be a parish. Such giving is reflective of a deep spirituality within our community.

And now.....

## Think

Think about your relationship with God.  
Think about what St. Francis means to you.  
Then consider these questions:

- Does my pledge mirror my spiritual growth in my walk with Jesus?
- Is the amount of money I pledge representative of the importance of *God* in my life?
- Is the amount of money I pledge representative of the importance of *St. Francis* in my life?
- Am I just a 'consumer' of what St. Francis offers or am I living up to the expectations of being a member of this community?

## Pray

Pray for God's guidance – this is a ***spiritual*** decision – be open to God's promptings.  
God sometimes calls us to give more than we may feel is logical or comfortable!

One person put it like this: “ It is an anomaly of modern life that many find giving to be a burden. Such people have omitted a preliminary giving ....if one first gives oneself to Christ, all other giving is easy.”

## Stretch

Stretch (like so many others have done) beyond your comfort zone. ***It's not the amount of money you pledge; it's the commitment to give sacrificially to God's work.*** The Bible repeatedly tells us that God richly blesses those who make a prayerful commitment to give faithfully and sacrificially of their treasure and our experience reinforces that.

## Three Easy Steps to Compute the Amount of Your 2010 Pledge

**1** Write down the amount of your anticipated 2010 income.

If you don't know how much your 2010 income will be, make a guess or start with your 2009 income. Don't worry too much about this number. If your circumstances dramatically change, you can always adjust the amount of your pledge.

**2** Pick a percentage.

Are you new to the idea of Proportional Giving? You may want to start by using the **Stewardship Giving Calculator** at StFrancisOnline.org. At the Home page, pick the **Stewardship** link at the top. Then find the Stewardship Giving Calculator link. If you've been giving proportionally for a while, take last year's percentage and try adding 1% or more – or simply turn it over to God in prayer and settle on the percentage you feel called to give.

**3** Calculate.

This is your pledge to St. Francis for 2010. If you want to pay weekly, divide the total pledge by 52. If you wish to pay twice monthly in line with your paycheck, divide by 24, if monthly, divide by 12. Or again, let the online calculator do the work on the Stewardship page of the website. (StFrancisOnline.org)

*How do you feel about the amount?*

*Is it in proportion to the importance of God in your life?*

*Is it in proportion to the importance of St. Francis in your life?*

## **Closing thoughts from your Rector**

St. Francis is perhaps the most spiritually dynamic faith community of which I have ever been a part. I often tell people - "St. Francis brings its heart to worship." Out of that "lifting up our hearts" to God flows a spirituality that embraces, encourages, and empowers. A spirituality reflective of a Stewardship of Hope.

I yearn for that transformative love of God to be shared more widely. I yearn for more people to know God's embracing, encouraging, empowering love. I yearn for more people to join us in this Dance of Faith. More people to be Fools for Christ. More people to learn about the Franciscan way of living and loving and dying. More people to share more gifts to do more outreach to more powerfully live into the promises of the Kingdom of God.

Not more money. More of God. Not more power. More God.

We need every household to make A Future for St. Francis a reality.

Please make a pledge.

Please make a spiritual commitment.

Think. Pray. Stretch.

Be brave. Don't be afraid. Take some risk. Jesus did.

In the name of Christ, I love you.

Fr. John+  
Rector

*Embracing Encouraging Empowering*



**A Future for St. Francis**

A Stewardship of Hope  
Grounded in Faith  
Expressing Charity