WHY WE PLEDGE TO CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION:

MEDITATIONS FROM LEADERS OF THE PARISH

CHURCH of the ASCENSION
giving in thanks
Why I Pledge to Church of the Ascension
by Charlie Cole

Giving is vitally important to support this church. Without the generous donations Ascension receives from its parishioners, it would not survive. Unlike some other religious institutions, Christian churches do not charge admission. As we look at the Old Testament, a tithe was expected of everyone. Furthermore, Jesus comments on giving in the New Testament:

As he looked up, Jesus saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. ’I tell you the truth,’ he said, ’this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.’ (Luke 21: 1-4)

To me, this shows that the amount is not important. What is important is to give from the heart.

Why I Pledge to Church of the Ascension
by Cynthia Shannon

I have pledged to Church of the Ascension in numerous ways over the 17 years since my family and I have been members. There have been those times when I was able to give more in monetary terms and times when I was able to give more of my time and talent.

I believe that in a church the size of ours it takes effort on everyone’s part to keep the church functioning, growing and vibrant. We must collectively pledge both monetarily and with our time and talent so that Ascension can be a continual spiritual part of our lives and the lives of others.

By pledging to Ascension, I am helping to maintain the annual operating budget and giving back to the church that has provided me and my family spiritual growth and comfort during difficult times in our lives.
Why I Pledge to Church of the Ascension  
by Davis Butler

Faith and the Episcopal Church have been a major part of my life since birth. I grew up in Texas attending an Episcopal school and the church associated with the school. Since moving to Colorado, I have been a member of two different Episcopal churches. I learned early on the concept of pledging and have participated since. Simply put, pledging is something I have always done.

To go deeper into my heart and thoughts, I believe (without doubt) that Judeo-Christian faith plays an incredible role in one’s life. It is our responsibility as humans to encourage others to become one of this faith. Pledging provides the infrastructure for us to participate and encourage a life in faith.

In summary, I pledge because of my love of God, my belief in Christ and the importance I feel faith brings to our society.

Why I Pledge to Church of the Ascension  
by Don Rollins

My initial reason for pledging was to commit my support to this church which has brought a sense of peace and beauty in my life through its ministry and music.

The more I have attended Ascension, however, the more I appreciate the cost of providing this necessary comfort and inspiration in my life; therefore, I pledge because monetary support is necessary for Ascension to be here.

Beyond the monetary pledge, I have found it easy to commit more time, talents and extra financial support for special needs of the church property or programs, but the basic pledge is truly necessary just to keep the doors open.

I have discovered new friends, neighbors, a great sense of community and continue to enjoy both musical and spiritual growth which seems to be increasing with deeper commitment to the church which occurs by pledging not only money but also time and talents.

Having grown up in a strong Christian home and having been involved with church activities throughout my school years, I took for granted the support of the church by others. Now I realize that I must do my turn and help provide a pledge so this spiritual support for both personal and family growth will be here for others in the future.
**Why I Pledge to Church of the Ascension**  
*by Doris Kimbrough*

I am what’s called a “cradle Episcopalian,” which means that I was born into the Episcopal church. I also grew up going to a school that, although not officially affiliated with the church, used the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer and Hymnal in daily chapel services. During my 20’s and 30’s my life got busy with school, marriage and raising children, and attending church was not a priority for me. Then in 2005 my beloved Aunt Cynthia died. At her memorial service, I realized that I missed worshiping with others and I missed the rituals that I had grown up with. At Ascension I’ve found a spiritual peace and comfort that has sustained me through the subsequent losses of other family and friends. My Ascension “family” accepts me unconditionally, laughs at my jokes, and makes me feel loved and appreciated. I have come to depend upon that, and pledging and fulfilling my pledge helps ensure that Ascension will sustain and grow.

**Why I Pledge to Church of the Ascension**  
*by Meredith Grubbs*

Like most of you, I spend a sizable chunk of my resources fulfilling obligations to my employer, neighbors, family, and friends. After these demands are satisfied (if they are ever satisfied), it can feel like there is not much left to give.

I like to think that filling out a pledge card forces a “time out” in my life, allowing me to reassess what I have and how I am putting it to use. Does my allocation of resources reflect my values? Am I investing in things that really matter? Am I giving begrudgingly or with a cheerful heart? These are some of the questions I ask myself when I give.
Why I Pledge to Church of the Ascension
by Hazel Stevens Price

This year I will make my first actual pledge to the Stewardship Campaign of the Church of the Ascension. Don’t misunderstand, I have contributed regularly to the church but until recently I did not understand the importance of predictable pledged income to our financial security. I did not realize that our church’s budget is built on the foundation of pledges we offer.

In my early years as a member of the church, the amount I donated was entirely random. Believing I was providing for the life of the church, I sent an annual donation at the end of the year. Then one day I asked Bill Dorn how he decided how much to pledge, and his response opened my heart in a new way. He told me that he had prayed about his pledge and that was how he determined what he should give to Church of the Ascension.

I now have a totally different approach to the stewardship campaign. After prayer and contemplation I soon will make my first pledge. I will make a pledge because this parish and its wonderful parishioners play a very important part in my life. Along with God, Church of the Ascension has strengthened my faith, provided me joy and beauty and, in small and big ways, made my life richer. That is worth more than I can pledge, but this year I will contribute in a thoughtful and intentional way.

Please join me in generously pledging during this stewardship campaign. Together, each of us can make this special parish the strong, vibrant community that we all value.
Why I Pledge to Church of the Ascension
by Ann Collier

When I first joined Church of the Ascension as a young adult, I hadn't ever considered contributing to my church. New to Denver, without a family legacy or community obliging me to contribute, I assumed that more established parishioners would sustain the church financially. As I benefited from Ascension's vibrant community and the Gospel message I heard preached on Sunday mornings, I took for granted that the church would continue to grow stronger in the 21st century. What I overlooked was that our great church, from the sanctuary’s beautiful details to our history of strong leadership, had been sustained only through the faithful stewardship of parishioners in the past. If I looked carefully enough, I could see their names engraved in the stained glass windows of the sanctuary.

Through the search process last year, I realized for the first time that my contribution could make a difference. During an uncertain time, I was asked to volunteer my time on the search committee to help the church find a new leader. As I watched our fellow parishioners lead a discerning search, shaped by each person's individual insights and gifts, I realized that our collective greatness was the result of each one of our individual contributions. The church of the future would not arrive as if by autopilot, but as a result of individual acts of charity and thoughtfulness.

The more I’ve given, whether in volunteer time or money, the more I’ve received. I’ve made deep friendships—in fact, Ascension is one of the only places where I’ve found inter-generational relationships in Denver. The community here has become a family nurturing my spiritual growth and supporting me each week. I am now at home in the place that embodies for me the love, reconciliation, unity, and peace of Christ.
A Pledge Is a Commitment!
by Ann Dykes

So what’s so important about a commitment? Almost every good experience, relationship or achievement in our lives begins with a commitment—a commitment to a dream, to a goal, and to a plan to make it happen. In fact, we are on the giving and receiving end of commitments every day of our lives—parent to child, husband or wife to each other in marriage, to friends, to teammates, to jobs, to business obligations, to personal goals, to country, to God, and to Christ—just to name a few. Commitments require forethought, planning, and discipline; some more so than others, but in almost every case we expect those commitments will shape and enrich our lives and the lives of others.

For many of us, our earliest memories and understanding of love and security arose from the commitment made to us by our parents and our families. Their commitment gave us the confidence and support to grow, to spread our wings and to follow our dreams. We knew they were there for us. A pledge to Ascension is no different. A pledge is the commitment that provides the day-to-day support that every family needs and allows the Ascension family to dream, to plan, and to move forward with orderly confidence. Without a commitment, a pledge, from each of us, the Ascension family will be trying to move forward without knowing whether it has the financial support to achieve those plans and dreams. A pledge from each of us gives Ascension the confidence to spread its wings to the future.

So—my family’s pledge to Ascension is our way of saying, “We are here for you, Ascension. You can rely on us. We will support you by a commitment of our time, our talents, and yes, our financial support.” Our pledge is our commitment to Ascension, to our parish family, and to God’s plan for us as a community of faith.
Why I Pledge to Church of the Ascension
by Lisa Neal

Dear Ascension Family,

If you asked me 5 years ago why we contributed to Ascension, my answer would have been very different than it is today. Back then, we donated primarily because we believed it was an obligation. We are all supposed to support the church, right? Today, we contribute to Ascension because we want to help maintain and build this wonderful church and community that has become an immeasurably important part of our family, spiritual, and social lives.

A lot has happened in 5 years. First of all, our kids have gotten older. As our kids have grown spirituality, the church community and religious education have become more important priorities in our family life. We are so excited about the commitment that Ascension has made to strengthen the youth and children’s ministries. Second, the economy has had a major impact on our ability to support charitable organizations. Like all of you, we have had to take a closer look at the organizations that we support and focus on those that are truly important to us. Not only have we continued to support Ascension, but we have increased the level of our support. Finally, I have become a member of the vestry. Prior to being on the vestry, I didn’t realize that it is our contributions that literally keep the doors open at Ascension. The stewardship campaign and your pledged and donated dollars pay for everything we value at Ascension, from the rector and staff’s salaries to church programs and electric bills.

The past year has been full of challenges both inside and outside of the Ascension community. I am so proud of what we have been able to accomplish, and I am extremely for what lies ahead. Thank you for your past and continued support!
Why I Pledge to Church of the Ascension
by Suzy Whittemore

Call me oblivious, call me naïve, but until I became a vestry member and learned about the inner workings of the church, it never occurred to me that a church runs just like any other business. It has bills to pay and salaries to meet, and it requires a steady and dependable income to cover those expenses.

I always took the church as a place of refuge, comfort, peace and love, and I was happy to donate hours of help; i.e., cleaning up the undercroft, sprucing up the grounds, putting my 2 cents in the garage sale, thinking that was sufficient. Little did I know that I could and would be called to do much more to contribute to Ascension.

Today, we all have the opportunity to do much more, to commit to our new rector and make a written pledge to Ascension. By doing so, we are assured that our church, this community, this family of friends, remains a viable one that we want to see thrive. By making this commitment, no matter how small, we are enabling this church to run effectively.

Several years ago, I made my first financial pledge knowing that this was the least I could do to be assured that this special, wonderful place would be maintained.

Why I Pledge to Church of the Ascension
by Tison Cory

I inherited a world of fruit trees
because my ancestors planted for me.
So I to will plant for my children

(Talmud Ta’avit 23A)

I am always deeply moved by the above poem, as it reminds me of the sacrifices that were made by my family during my childhood and of all the blessings that I was willingly given and took without regard. Now as an adult, it is my time to pay that debt—not to those who gave and are now dead and gone—but to those who cannot pay or those who do not understand what they have received, as I once did not understand. This is the work that I have to do to honor those who came before.
Years ago as a young family we attended church regularly and always placed money in the collection plate. While the parish we attended had an annual pledge campaign, we did not participate because in our minds we were already giving regularly and generously to the parish.

One Sunday the rector shared with us in his sermon the difference between giving and pledging. He summed it up in one word: commitment. While we were regular in our giving, we had never really considered why we gave, what the church does with the money we give, and how much to give. His sermon inspired us to take a serious look at our finances and the importance of God in our lives. As a result, we made a financial commitment to the parish.

Over the years we have felt very blessed to have the opportunity to support God’s work in each of the parishes we have attended, by providing our committed financial support. We have found that by giving a pledge, we have become much more interested in how the parish uses pledged income to do God’s work, thus providing us a great deal of satisfaction.
Why We Pledge to Church of the Ascension  
by Cora Neslin

A number of years ago I was talking to a former Ascension interim rector, Reverend Sarah Balcomb, about a talk I was to give on tithing. Sarah gave me a visual lesson on tithing that I have never forgotten. She pulled out an apple and took a bite. This bite was for the mortgage payment, she said. She took another bite. This bite was for the car payment. Bite three was for food. Bite four was for utilities, and on it went until only the apple core was left. Sarah said that many people gave to the church out of what was left of the apple core. Did this seem right when God has so richly blessed us? We make a commitment to pay for everything else in our lives. Shouldn’t we make a commitment to give back to God through the church by giving our first fruits?

We memorialize this commitment through our pledge to the church. This creates a tangible bond between us and the congregation. It also lets our leadership know what they can count on as they make budgetary decisions for all of us. Everything we have belongs to God, and we are stewards of His goods. Our stewardship extends not only to returning a portion of these goods to the Church, but also to participating actively in the annual pledge drive.

I encourage you to take that first bite of the apple for God and join me in making a pledge to our dear congregation.

Why I Pledge to Church of the Ascension  
Peace, Mary Ruth Schaumberg

Buzz and I discussed early in our marriage the Biblical teaching that God asks His people to give Him tithes and offerings. We decided to follow that imperative. Even when I was a little girl I remember I always gave back to God some of what I had, whether it was the occasional allowance or later my babysitting earnings. That’s what my whole family did. When I was an adult I realized that I give to God by giving to the Church because the Church is God’s love, God’s hands in this world. So in response to what God has blessed me with financially, I give back to God through giving to Ascension.


**Why I Pledge to Church of the Ascension**

**by Mark Hohlen**

**Without God we are without. Without what? Everything!**

This big round ball we live on. The fascinating network of cells that is the earthly home of our soul. The talents that individualize us and allow us to better serve the brotherhood of man. And from these blessings come the ability to create and gather the material things that tend to draw so much of our daily focus.

We get so incredibly wrapped up in a life of acquisition that it can stifle our ability to take a step back and recognize at the basic level just how any of this is possible. In prayer I often find myself thanking God for the blessings in my life: the love of my family, the roof over our head, the opportunities placed before us to earn a living and support ourselves. But at the most basic level we have so much more to be thankful for. So much that you begin to question, “How can I ever give back or be thankful enough to feel I’ve measured up to the blessings laid before me?”

You can’t match God’s gifts. By giving unselfishly of your time, your talents, and your means...YOU ARE THE GIFT.

“Let my life be proof of your love—let my gifts be proof of my thanks.”

*Give generously to him and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to.* (Deuteronomy 15:10)