THE COVENANT GUIDELINE

The guidelines establish a minimum level of proportional giving of 10% for parishes with annual operating income less than $150,000 and a minimum level for parishes with annual income greater than $150,000 of 15%. These guidelines were adopted by the Diocesan Council and affirmed by our Diocesan Convention in 2000. The standing resolution of the diocesan convention calls for this calculation to be based on the “unrestricted and undesignated income of each parish.”

In determining these guidelines, the diocese sought to strike a balance between the need to adequately fund our responsibilities as a diocese while recognizing the pressures on parishes for staff and programs. With this in mind, the guidelines encourage parishes not currently funding the minimum to adopt a plan with regular increases to bring the parish to the minimum level in five years.

PROPORTIONAL GIVING

The covenant contributed to the diocese is expressed as a percentage rather than a dollar amount. This is intentional to mirror the stewardship standard that calls for our pledges to represent a proportion of our income. The remarkable story of Jesus’ comment to his disciples regarding the gift of the widow in the temple and the witness throughout Scripture to proportional giving provides the Scriptural foundation for this approach.

However, the practicalities of budgeting and managing the gifts well require that the proportion or percentage be converted into a dollar amount. This calculation is, obviously, an estimate, but is necessary. It is for this reason that we ask parishioners to estimate their pledge in dollars but stress the importance of beginning with a percentage of income. The system for funding our shared mission and ministry is the same. Each parish is asked to think first of their gift as a proportion of income and then to convert that figure into an estimate reported in dollars.