



St. Luke's East Hampton

Reflections from Fr. Ben

July 30, 2026

One of the first questions newcomers ask is “How do I become a member of the church?” First of all, you need to know that you don’t need to be a member – and you don’t need to be Episcopalian – to attend worship, receive communion, and participate in the life of this congregation. No matter who you are, where you come from, or where you are in your spiritual journey, you are welcome here. You, of course, are welcome to take the next step and actually join. The traditional way to do this is to request a letter of transfer from a former congregation to St. Luke’s. The most concrete way to become a member is by pledging time, talent and treasure to the congregation and thereby making St. Luke’s mission your own. I am always surprised at the number of people who call St. Luke’s their home yet haven’t yet taken this step. You don’t have to live here all year round to pledge. Many pledge in two different places! You also don’t have to give up your roots or identity to be part of our community. You can become a pledging member of St. Luke’s even if you are Catholic or Baptist or whatever – and are most welcome to receive communion without changing your denominational affiliation. Of course, those who wish to become part of the Episcopal Church are welcome to do so through the service of Confirmation or Reaffirmation, done when the bishop makes his visit here. If you are interested in any of these options, let me know!

The Episcopal Church defines a member as someone who is faithful in corporate worship... and has been faithful in working, praying, and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God.” This is not a small expectation. The Episcopal Church sets the tithe – 10% of time, talent and treasure – as the minimal standard for giving. Any amount is welcome and I recognize that for many (including myself!), 10% is an aspirational goal. My bigger hope is for 100% participation – at any level - of everyone who calls St. Luke’s their home. (To pledge, [click here](#).)

It’s not just about money. If you work 50 hours a week, a tithe would be 5 hours of volunteer time. You may be thinking, “That’s a lot!” It is. Just think about how much building of the Kingdom we could do if everyone tithed. Churches tend to focus so much on buildings and budgets but those things aren’t the end goal. They simply provide the framework and foundation on which Kingdom work can begin. People who pledge will tell you that they receive much more than they give. They get that the way they give and the way they live reflect their relationship with God. They feel differently because they have made God’s mission their own. That’s what the Episcopal Church’s definition of membership is trying to get at. That’s what the Kingdom that Jesus came to proclaim - the Kingdom for which we are called to work, pray and give – is all about.