



Spiritual Journey of Giving - Mary Grybeck

I've been attending St. Bart's for about three years. I first joined the community after a contemplative retreat; I started coming to the centering prayer group and about five months later, began attending services, and after about a year, became a confirmed Episcopalian.

I started pledging when I began attending regularly; I imagine for a number of reasons. My mother pledged to her church when I was growing up, so it is something I saw first by example. I have worked at youth-serving nonprofits for many years now, so I know from the other side how meaningful funding is – especially reliable funding – is to achieving a mission. In nonprofits, there is a major push toward “reducing overhead” – never funding anything but direct program work. While I see the importance of always focusing on the mission, I also have experienced how safe working spaces, fair and living wages and funds that keep

nonprofits from living hand to mouth are really important to creating the kind of world I feel called to help create.

Because of that, it's pretty natural for me to want to pledge to contribute to a community I love and that has loved me. I am grateful for Amerson House that hosts the centering prayer group; for Christen, the youth ministry team, and the space of Wardens' Hall where I get to explore faith together with teens; for singing at Taize in the chapel; for guidance, wisdom and companionship from Bev when I am grappling with a challenge; and for sharing a special church service at Camp Mikell with our new rector Angela. There are many other ministries that I cannot participate in directly, but still can support more generally with funding. I know that my pledge, along with those of so many other community members, is one of many important ingredients that our community needs to thrive.

About five years ago, I learned about charitable giving accounts which help me give more strategically (from a tax perspective) and more generously. Sometimes when money feels tight, it can be a challenge to write check after check for smaller amounts; I found my heart was more open when funds are allocated ahead of time. In addition, the account helps me plan my long term giving better. I prepared for a life change in 2018, living very simply on a low income this year, but having the giving account helped to ensure I could happily and generously continue contributing to St. Bart's.

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