



Spiritual Journey through Giving: Sarah Dupont

My name is Sarah Dupont and I have been attending St. Bart's for five years—ever since I moved to Atlanta to go to Emory for medical school. At first, I waited to pledge because I used to think that I was “excused” from this discipline since I was in school and on “such a tight budget.” I reasoned that I donated my time to social justice ministries, so I didn't need to share my other resources. But it occurred to me one day that I “pledged” to other things all the time—yoga studios, music subscriptions, Netflix—and that where I spent my money every month was an expression of what I valued. At that point I resolved to start pledging *something* every month as a spiritual discipline and as a reminder to myself that my church community was more important to me than my Netflix account. When I graduated school and started crafting a monthly budget I made sure to include a regular pledge to St. Bart's. That pledge is an expression of how much I value the community, the mission, and the programs at St. Bart's. And I was surprised to discover how proud that has made me feel. I feel more like a real member of the St. Bart's community and I am proud to contribute to the day-to-day needs of our church. So I encourage you, if you are also considering pledging for the first time (especially young adults out there!), even starting small just to get in the practice, is worth it.



Spiritual Journey through Giving: Olivia Brantley

My name is Olivia Brantley and I have been a member of St. Bartholomew's for 21 years and I am a cradle Episcopalian. I grew up downtown at St. Luke's and some of my strongest memories about giving and my overall love for the church come from there. From the tenderness of having a giving box to slip coins into as a young child to the tenderness of helping serve homeless people in the soup-kitchen, I would say a deep sense of giving and gratitude have always been a part of my spiritual formation.

In terms of my choosing to actively pledge to St. Bart's, I would say that two distinct memories propelled me to commit to tithing: the first memory was during a stewardship drive at St. Bart's about two years after I had joined the church and Duncan Curl got up to speak about his family's giving. He said that they had started off humbly but gradually made it goal to consciously tithe a full 10% of their family's income. He said quite simply that the more he gave of himself, the more he seemed to receive in return.

The second memory came as I drove home from church that day I heard Duncan speak. I remembered an Easter Sunday afternoon that my mother drove me & my twin sister down to St. Luke's to pick up our big sister from a youth group event. The parking lot was empty and that part of downtown Atlanta was fairly seedy in the mid-70's. In any regard, I remember feeling very afraid when a rough looking homeless man approached our car and softly knocked on the window. And as my mother rolled down the window and gently smiled at him, he said "Ma'am, I don't mean to frighten you and your little girls. I am just a little hungry." So my mother opened up her purse and handed him the last few dollars that she had and he quietly thanked us and walked away. I remember frantically yelling at my mother, "Why'd you do that? Why did you give him everything that we have?" And my mother softly smiled at me and said, "Because I want you to remember that there will

always be others who are less fortunate than we are – and because I want you to remember that God cares for us all."

I started formally pledging to the church that year Duncan Curl spoke and I had the grace to recall a memory that moved me to tears. I was moved to tears at the wisdom and profound love my mother modeled for us that day – I was moved to tears thinking of Christ approaching our car dressed as a hungry & homeless man – and I was moved to tears of gratitude for this place that I call my church home. It gives me peace and a deep sense of connection to know that however humble my monthly pledge is, it still helps to keep this community going. I hope if you find a deep sense of belonging and connectedness here at the church that you, too, will consider giving. Thank you.