

## PRAYER FOR JOYFUL GENEROSITY

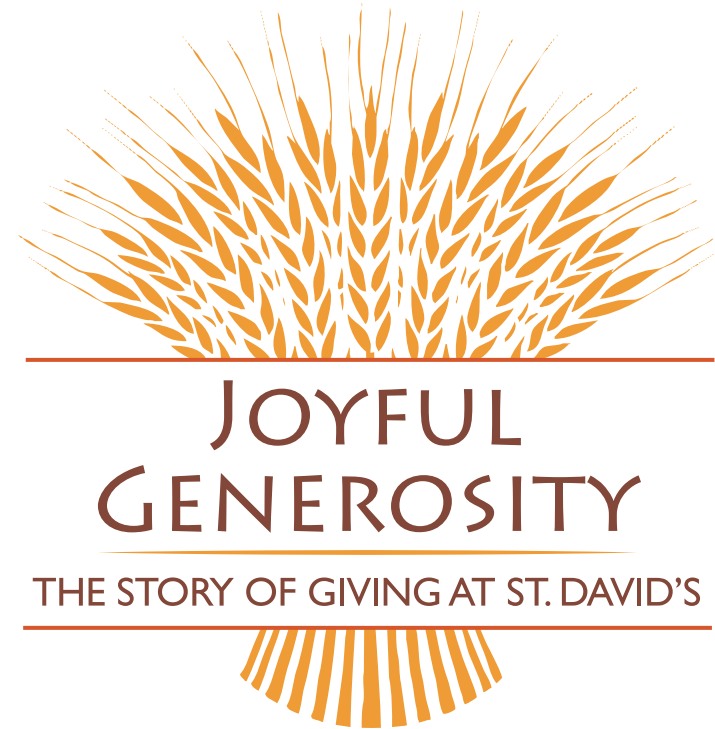
God of abundant grace, you demonstrated extravagant generosity when you freely gave your Son, Jesus Christ to set us free.

Free us now from obstacles both external and internal that we may grow in our love for you and in our desire to return from our abundance.

Make us passionate, enthusiastic, and joyous givers who make a difference in the world for the sake of Christ.

May we and those who witness our love for you - by word and action - be transformed as, in your Name, we transform the world.

**ST. DAVID'S**  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
301 E 8th Street, Austin, TX 78701  
512.610.3500 † [www.stdave.org](http://www.stdave.org)



**A**n important component of the pledge campaign for 2014 has been sharing stories from fellow parishioners as to why they support St. David's. In this booklet you will find a collection of these stories. Hopefully their responses will inspire you on your own path to giving.

## PLEDGE CAMPAIGN CO-CHAIRS

**Britton Gregory**

**Lowell Keig**

**Frana Keith**

**Janet Sawyer**

## STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR

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If you have not yet pledged, please pick up a pledge card in the foyer or the pews, go to the “Support Us” section at [www.stdave.org](http://www.stdave.org), or use the giving kiosk in the foyer. For questions, contact Lara Lowman, Director of Stewardship, at [stewardship@stdave.org](mailto:stewardship@stdave.org).

## HANNAH MILLER

I give because St. David’s is my church. As members, it is our church, and the vibrancy and longevity of this community is our responsibility.

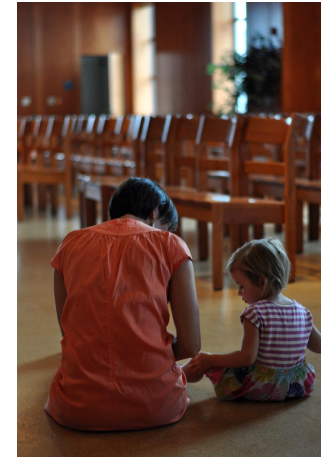
I give because I am a seeker of God, hungry for spiritual nourishment. Each week I am fed by worship, music, and the Eucharist in the beautiful historic Sanctuary. I want our physical church buildings to be well preserved and cared for. I want our music and educational programs to flourish. I want to better support our hardworking clergy.

I give because I am a wife, and in the midst of the busyness of life, it is rare that my husband and I have the opportunity to sit in silence together, hands clasped. Each week I leave church feeling more connected to him, as we connect to the divine source of our love for one another.

I give because I am a mother, and I want my three-year-old daughter to know God and to be a part of a Christian community. Each week I witness her absorbing the power of liturgy, prayer, song, and storytelling to bind us together as a community and bring us closer to God. Children learn so much from watching us, and I want my daughter to continue to have a front-row seat to what I think is the best show of the week in Austin. I want our children’s ministries to continue to grow and feed my daughter and all the children of this parish.

I give because I believe in the dignity and worth of all human beings and that we are all brothers and sisters in Christ. As a downtown urban parish, St. David’s stands as a beacon of God’s hope for humanity in its radical hospitality to all our neighbors, from the homeless we serve at the Trinity Center to Austin’s business community served in Holy Grounds and by Chef Ray’s lovingly prepared meals. I support the expansion of our outreach programs, and I want to see our church continue to be a gathering place for the greater Austin community.

I give because St. David’s is a place where I encounter God, where I am encouraged to wrestle with God, and where my heart, my mind, and my life are transformed by God. I cannot imagine my life without St. David’s. For all these things, I am joyful and grateful.



At this point Mary Vano gently suggested that it MIGHT be time to move our membership. Yep, that's right, we pledged before we were even members of the church.

We attend Saint David's because it's downtown "In the heart of downtown Austin since . . ." We moved back to my home state and to Austin to be IN Austin—to be a part of it. We're at Saint David's because it is ideally situated to help homeless neighbors and SXSW tourists and folks who work at the Federal Building across the street. We're happy that outreach at Saint David's seems to be becoming even more deliberate with more people putting their bodies as well as their monies on the line through Bridge Builders and a tighter partnership with Trinity Center. We want a church that actively participates in the world around it. And this requires resources—both temporal and fiscal.

I believe that it's the church's main role to be a conduit of human resources to its community and the world—"Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart." These words are said (in some form or fashion) following the Eucharist somewhere shortly after "may we become what we receive." We want for our church (the building and the body) to help others, but we go there for ourselves—to equip ourselves to be better members of the body out in the world. As it turns out, we're not the bears in this story. We sample journey groups and theology on tap (or Holy Happy Hour . . . whatever) and Sunday school and EFM and choirs and men's and women's and kid's groups and communion, always communion, like some mad Goldilocks so that we may better walk the path of our faith in the world. We need Go-oo-od. We offer up ourselves, our bodies, our resources both temporal and fiscal, so that we may better serve. The money we give becomes the upkeep of the space for the renewing of our bodies and minds as well as being a shelter in cold weather for neighbors in downtown; it becomes the time the church staff spends in equipping us for ministry by ministering to us and to others.

Goldilocks broke the chairs and ate the porridge and fell asleep. We break the bread and eat it and find rest and then break apart as the body to go into the world. And that is why we give . . . to offer up what we have to be further nourished to go into the world and serve as God wills that we may all live (happily) ever after.

*The problems that surround us will always be overwhelming, our resources will always be insufficient, but God tells us to offer them anyway.*

*Do what you can do; give what you can give—even if it seems ridiculously insufficient.*

Br. David Vryhof  
Society of Saint John the Evangelist

## WHY WE GIVE TO ST. DAVID'S

### GENE SHEPHERD

Our family gives because God has been abundantly generous with his gifts - our family, friends and health at the top of the list - and we need to be constantly looking for opportunities to acknowledge His gifts. Further, it is our duty as Christians to share what He has shared with us! Selfishly, these gifts that we make always end up enhancing our walk with God and Jesus in ways that, most of the time, we never anticipate. When we as a family discuss God's gifts, I am always somewhat embarrassed that we are not doing more; we are constantly battling to overcome our materialistic tendencies!

### ANN CLARKE

I give to make a difference; to help create a positive change in my community and throughout the world.

I see it as "paying forward" for what I have received. I understand it as scripture. I do it out of habit; I have done it all my life. I get more than I give, always.

## MARY CLARKE

*From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.*

Luke 12:48

St. David's community exemplifies this verse. From the wonderfully versatile and beautiful campus to the large vibrant community, St. David's is alive with Christ's presence. I know, I felt it the moment I walked in. Our church community has been blessed with much and because of that much is expected. St. David's rises each and every day to meet that challenge and is looking ahead to meeting the growing challenges of the future.

Our church offers so many avenues for spiritual growth from worship, to study, to finding God in the quiet of centering prayer. We take care of our community through pastoral care and just being there for a friend. We also take that compassion and send it out to the local community and abroad. Our worship and music inspire the heavens to join in. We are even known to color a little outside the lines, proclaiming Christ through murals and sidewalk ashes. We stand squarely on our traditions while finding new and innovative ways of showing how Christ inspires us.

So, why do I give? My stewardship journey came with a still small voice while sitting in church on a Sunday morning while prayerfully asking God's direction. My decision to tithe came from God's inspiration and my ability to maintain this commitment over the past two years has come from God's assurance that He would take care of me. I give to keep the bell ringing; that the world will know we are here, on this hill, and that all are welcome. Please take a moment to sit quietly and listen for God's still small voice and give as generously as you are led to do. Let us together keep the bells of St. David's Church ringing.

## JOY PHILPOTT

### St. David and the Three(Four) Bears



The Philpott story of being at Saint David's is different from most that I've heard. Over and over I've heard people say "We walked in and we felt at home immediately." I'm so very glad for that; it was NOT my experience.

Ben and Winn and I wound up visiting Saint David's because Ben interviewed David Boyd about the ordination of Gene Robinson in 2003. At the same time David was interviewing Ben and found out that we were a young Episcopal family without a church home in Austin. He lured us in to try the family service—where we could be with a toddler and her sippy cup and general toddler antics in the Bethell family service.

In this "Three Bears" story, the church was TOO BIG (for the mama bear, anyway). There are three times as many folks on the roll at Saint David's as there are on the population sign in my home town. Everyone seemed so affluent, so together—even in the family service in Bethell Hall. In that service alone there were more people than attended our tiny church that we'd left in Birmingham.

So we lurked about the church, showing up sporadically. We still use the Advent wreath we made there in 2003.

In 2004 we welcomed Tate; Ben and Winn attended that Christmas Eve service without Tate and me—and brought home Chinese food following the service. And with a toddler and an infant we stayed home most Sundays—until the not-so-baby bear declared loudly in a song improvised for the neighborhood to hear "I need God; I need Go-oo-od."

And thus, we were back in Bethell.

Was it 2007 when we finally stopped lurking and plugged in? I don't remember exactly—I just know that both girls were old enough to enjoy being in Sunday school—so Ben and I had time to go to the newcomer class. And I responded to a call in Looking Ahead for someone to help with youth Sunday school. And because there's a pretty strong public radio ethos at our house and because we didn't want to be Goldilocks and sample everything without giving anything back, we pledged.

## JAMES A. PRENTICE

I am awed when I think of our historic “beacon on the hill” sanctuary—being built 160 years ago when Austin had only about 1,000 citizens—the 1850 U.S. Census records Austin at 629 people, and by 1860, the population had grown to 3,494. The stewardship of so few parishioners to build for future generations a permanent and beautiful tribute to God’s beneficence testifies to the now trite phrase “pay it forward.” But pay it forward they did, and that has been true of all subsequent generations who have worshipped in and loved their, and now our, historic church.

Running a physical plant that covers a city block and houses God’s programs and cares for the spiritual needs of His people and reaches out to its neighbors downtown requires us all to contribute regularly and as responsibly as we do for the maintenance of our own homes. The needs of St. David’s Church reoccur as regularly as our own utility bills and property tax statements.



I ask every parishioner to assess honestly what St. David’s means to his or her family’s life and to consider how large their commitment must be to assure its operation for another year. Then I ask my fellow parishioners to pledge an amount commensurate with that evaluation to assure the continued operation of St. David’s in 2014. But I ask more of us all.

**PAY IT FORWARD!** St. David’s Episcopal Church is a senior citizen of Austin, and like other seniors, the physical plant we enjoy must be monitored and maintained so that there will still be our beautiful “beacon on the hill” in another 160 years. I, therefore, ask each of us to be the same kind of stewards of God’s treasure as were those pioneers of 1853 and as were those who enlarged the sanctuary and added the pipe organ 100 years ago and as were those who built Sumners Hall and the education wing under it 50 years ago and as were those who built Bethell Hall, Crail Hall and Trinity Center 15 years ago. Those who came before us “paid it forward,” and now so must we!

## ROSE ANN DUNCAN-CHARNLEY

In a world where Christianity has dug quite a hole for itself, either through scandals, or through beating people over the head with dogma that excludes so many, St. David’s is a safe haven in the storm that life often is.



My experience here is that anyone who comes with an open heart, even if that heart experiences doubts and conflicts of belief, is welcomed. More than welcomed; invited to play, to laugh, to contribute. And that what we all want: a way to make a difference, to find family, to create community.

At St. David’s that community can be Trinity Center, Cafe Divine, the Women’s Group and countless other small groups where we find support and the opportunity to support others.

I love that St. David’s is used up. Every day, used in ways I’ve never known a church to be used, even if it means we have to be mindful of who is using and how they are using. I think the risks are far outweighed by the blessings of having an open available sanctuary, and I don’t just mean the Historic Sanctuary, I mean from the Labyrinth to back corners of all the worship spaces.

I love that folks find joy in morning tacos, in Thursday lunch around a big table; that folks find us through receptions and rehearsal dinners, child care, through Morning Pray and Compline.

I love that those folks go out into their lives richer, fuller, more able to deal with their storms because we are here, doing what we do, sharing what we have.

I wish I could win the lottery, there’s so much more we could do! Kitchen plumbing...but that’s another story...

## ALISON RIEMERSMA



Many of you are aware of our faithful brother Juan. He is always in Sunday services and weekly morning prayer. He is the backbone of the intercessory prayer group, calling me to task when I think I'm "too busy" to make it that day. What you may not be aware of is the depth of his generosity.

Vestry members are called upon to model good giving practices. But let's be honest. I pay my pledge sometime within the month it is due, if not always at the very first of the

month. Things come up. And let's be even more honest; like many, I rarely have cash to put in the plate. But Juan always does. Always. I sit next to him and whatever he has in his pocket, he either puts some or all of it in. A few weeks ago I was ushering and after he put his coins in, the plate was passed for several pews before anyone else put anything in. A few of us caught eyes, knowing what we were seeing and what it meant. I nearly cried, it was so humbling.

When I think things are tight, I am reminded that I have never gone over budget because of paying my pledge or sending that \$20 to Episcopal Relief when the request came for the umpteenth time. I know that I am blessed, and the only response I can think of is to keep giving.

## BRITTON GREGORY

Among other reasons, I give because it is freeing -- because in giving, I'm reminding myself of what is really important, of Why I'm Here, and in doing so, I free myself from fear, anxiety, and worry.

## MICHAEL DAVIS

I have trained and worked my entire life in engineering—highly technical, analytical, focused always on the costs versus the value of the results. My training would not typically be considered as a basis for cheerful giving. Studying stewardship has changed that over the years.

Stewardship focuses on our giving of time, talent, and treasure in gratitude for the generous gifts given us by God—our first fruits in return to God for God's provision to us. It is all that we do with all that we have—have been given by God—all of the time.

My wife and I have been financial proportionate givers for well over 25 years, and we continue on that path toward the tithe. This has been part of my spiritual discipline ever since I became involved in the stewardship work in our faith. I commend it as both education and growth for that in which we believe.

I have been touched by Christ regularly in the kindness of others and in learning from other generous, kind people in the world who have given knowledge and learning freely. I want to share in the same way by giving of my time and ability to support

the work of St. David's as a positive example of God's love in the world. As a newcomer, I have been deeply impressed by the impact our parish has now and has had in our city. Much of this is thanks to the commitment and vision of earlier generations. I feel called to contribute to ensure that this activity and commitment continues for many more generations. Our legacy is one of memories and examples remaining when we are gone. I cannot "repay" the gifts given me over my life, but I can try to emulate such generosity in how I live to try to provide an example to others. My actions, including my financial generosity, are one part of the structure to provide for the future to boldly demonstrate the beliefs we share in our faith.

We share this road and spiritual inspiration. We happily make our financial stewardship commitment, and also plan for its regular growth for the future life of St. David's and its leadership.

*"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."*

*-Winston Churchill*