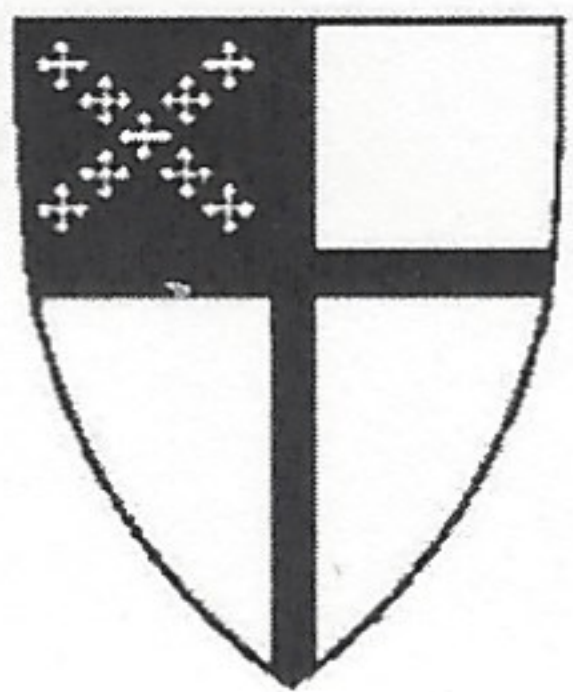
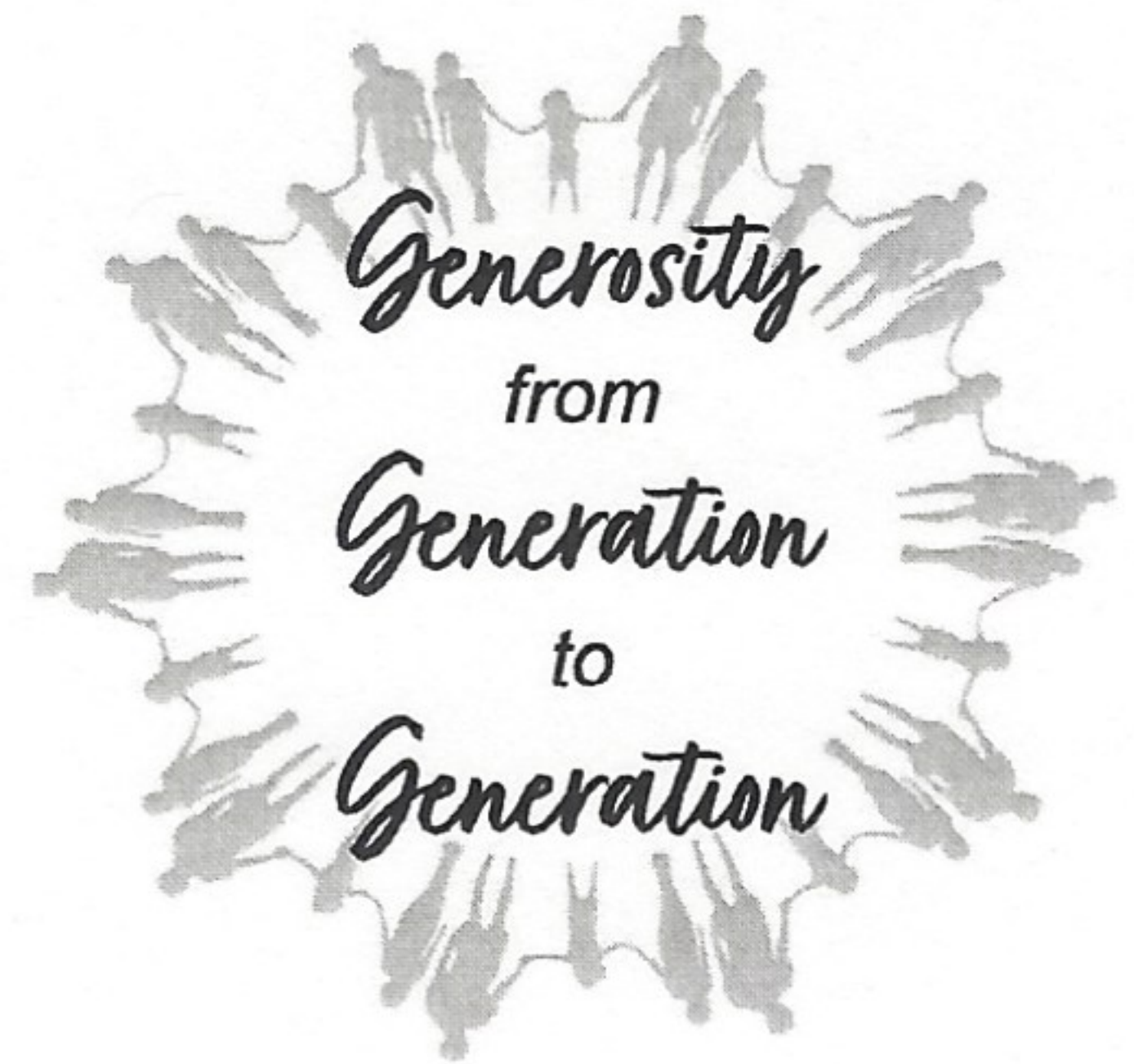




Saint Stephen's Parish

Park Square ▪ 67 East Street ▪ Pittsfield, Massachusetts 01201

OUR MISSION is to be the heart and hands of Christ: nourishing people, transforming lives.



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

We are approaching this year's pledge campaign with hearts grounded in gratitude for all you do as a member of St. Stephen's. Whether you worship in person or at home; whether you volunteer or pray for our volunteers; and whether you pledge or give what you can when you can, we are grateful!

We are also grateful for the legacy gifts that have been made to St. Stephen's by past generations of generous givers. Many of these legacy gifts are now part of our parish's endowment, which has been invested to provide additional income to support our budget, which enables our mission as a parish.

In addition to gratitude, we are approaching this year's pledge campaign with our minds focused on several facts that we feel are important for everyone to know as we all consider our pledges for 2026.

- Some of the facts are sobering, as they point to an increasing reliance of withdrawals from our endowment to balance the budget. These withdrawals shrink our investment base, which has a negative impact on our investment income.
- Some of the facts reflect demographic changes within our parish, which in turn reflect demographic changes in church attendance across the country. Simply put, we need to invite others to join us at St. Stephen's, especially young families who are seeking a church home!
- And still other facts give us insights into important questions we all need to ask ourselves as we consider our financial commitments, our volunteering, and our efforts to grow the parish.

As a Stewardship team, we appreciate that this year's pledge season follows a spring and a summer when we made two additional "asks." Your generosity resulted in restoring \$30,000 back to the budget – funds which had been used to make repairs to the boiler and our very grand piano.

It is because we recognize that when we ask, you answer, that we ask you to consider increasing the amount of your pledge by 10% this year. If we all were able to do so, collectively, we'd increase pledge income by about \$20,000, which would help to reduce our budget deficit, while helping to preserve our investment base: the funds in our endowment.

The enclosed FAQ has been created to provide a deeper look at our parish trends, as well as to provide more information about why every single pledge and gift means so much to St. Stephen's.

You will also find a pledge card and volunteer form which will be gratefully received on the weekend of November 22/23, or any Sunday beforehand. These may also be mailed using the enclosed envelope, or online giving can be adjusted by contacting Sarah Morrison, parish administrator.

If you have any questions about pledging or the enclosed information, please let us know.

With thanks,

Your Stewardship Team:

Susan LeBourdais, Jim Alden, Josie Ellis, John Garinther, Leah Luczynski, Craig Smith, Al Symonds, and
The Rev. Dr. Nina Pooley