

The Orthodox Church of St. Matthew

Pledge / Stewardship Questions and Answers

WHEN DOES THE NEW PLEDGE YEAR BEGIN?

You begin fulfilling your stewardship pledge commitment on January 1st of the coming year. While it is a tradition with the Orthodox Church calendar which begins in September of each year, our parish fiscal year runs from January 1st to December 31st.

HOW MUCH SHOULD I GIVE?

Your stewardship commitment will be whatever you want it to be, what your heart and conscience tells you to make it. Please remember as you make your financial commitment, the parish was responsible to contribute a Diocesan assessment of \$180 per member over 18 years of age to support the work of the OCA's Central Administration and the Diocese. Thus, for a couple, the first \$360 of their offering goes directly to fulfill our "first fruits" obligation to the Diocese.

WHAT GUIDE CAN I USE TO DETERMINE MY GIVING?

Each person and family should determine their own guide for giving. In the Bible, it says that we should set aside our "first-fruits", i.e., our offering to God should be the first portion we set aside, not what remains. Some useful methods of giving people employ are: (1) Giving by proportion: For example, they give one hour's salary per week for the Church, or \$1.00 per week for every \$1,000 of annual income. (2) Others set aside a percentage of their income such as: 3%,5%,7%, 10%, etc. Pledge commitments should be prayerfully considered and realistic.

IS IT NECESSARY FOR ME TO SUBMIT A NEW PLEDGE FORM EACH YEAR? WHY?

The goal in submitting a new pledge form each year is for each of us to review our commitment to support the work of the Lord through his Church, this parish family, in accordance with our personal commitment to our Lord and his Church, our conscience, and our ability. It also provides you the opportunity to update your family and contact information. However, the annual submission of your stewardship commitment form is not necessary to be considered a voting member in the parish. Once submitted, the pledge form will remain in effect on an annual basis unless changed by the member, or parish membership has been rescinded as a result of failing to meet membership requirements as defined in the parish by-laws.

IS MY STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT KEPT IN CONFIDENCE?

All pledges and the amounts are handled in STRICT CONFIDENCE; only the Parish Treasurer and Pledge Secretary receive your pledge information.

IF I SEE THAT I WILL BE UNABLE TO FULFILL MY PLEDGE COMMITMENT, AM I ABLE TO CHANGE IT?

Yes. If for some reason you are unable to fulfill your stewardship pledge commitment for the year, all you need to do is to submit a revised pledge indicating the new amount of your offering. This may be done at any time during the year.

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IN WHAT INTERVAL SHALL I FULFILL MY STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT TO THE CHURCH?

You may fulfill your commitment in the manner which suites you best. Most members make their contributions on a weekly or monthly basis while others do so quarterly, semiannually, or annually. Please note weekly or monthly offerings help to maintain a more even cash flow. Annual offerings are preferred early in the year to help cover church expenses throughout the year.

WHAT WILL MY STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT COVER?

It represents your annual financial commitment to your parish as well as to the support the work of the Orthodox Church in America and the Archdiocese of Washington. Your donations cover the costs to own and maintain the church facility; mortgage, utilities, maintenance, taxes, insurance, grounds, cleaning & supplies. It also covers clergy salary and related liturgical expenses. Finally, it covers our share of funding the Diocese and OCA obligations.

WHO IS INCLUDED IN MY STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT?

The pledge form includes the Orthodox husband and wife and children under 18. Self-supporting family members over 18 years of age need to complete their own stewardship commitment form. Family participation in the stewardship program allows each Orthodox spouse to vote and seek election to the Council of Stewards as provided in the parish by-laws.

WHAT IF I AM SEEKING TO JOIN THE CHURCH AFTER THE CHURCH YEAR HAS BEGUN?

You may complete a pledge form for the current year at any time during the year as a means toward fulfilling the requirement of a fully participating and voting member of our parish family. Your pledge commitment will be the amount you are pledging for remaining portion of the year.

HOW DO I SUBMIT MY PLEDGE FORM?

To make a pledge online, go to <https://www.stmatthewoca.org/stewardship>. Download and complete the pledge form and email it to pledge@stmatthewoca.org. Additionally, hard copies of the form are available in the Narthex. You may enclose a completed pledge form in an envelope, address it to "Pledge Secretary", then place it in the offering basket at Liturgy or mail it to the church (PO Box) address. You will then receive a packet of pledge envelopes in which to place your offerings.

HOW WILL MY STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT OFFERING BE COLLECTED?

Normally, you may put your offering in your pledge envelope and place it the collection basket at Liturgy on Sundays. Additionally, you can go to online to stmatthewoca.org/donate to see the instructions on how to donate conveniently by credit card, mail or direct deposit from your bank

WHAT DOES ST. PAUL SAY ABOUT STEWARDSHIP?

"He who sows (gives) sparingly will also reap (receive) sparingly, and he who sows (gives) generously will also reap (receive) generously. Each one should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful (willing) giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work." - 2 Corinthians 9:6-8