



The Episcopal Church in Arkansas

Being Good Stewards of our Financial Gifts in 2012

Dear members of vestries and clergy:

If you have ever listened to me talk about stewardship, you know that I say the main reason we give away significant amounts of our money is because it changes who we are. We learn through giving what it is like to be set free from being held captive by money. And freedom is what much of the Christian message is about.

What is true for individuals is also true for parishes and missions. Our local congregations are changed as we give to support the work of the larger church. We are no longer held captive by money, and we know that we are helping to grow this tangible sign of the body of Christ that we call the church.

The good news is that growth *is* taking place. Due to the hard work of so many people, Arkansas was one of eight dioceses in the Episcopal Church in 2010 that grew in attendance (91 dioceses instead saw declines). It happened in part because you supported the work of this office as we faced training and deployment challenges, you supported work among young adults and youth, and you supported the often taken-for-granted functions of communication and relationship-building, in addition to your hard work in your own local setting.

I am asking that we all continue this important work. Here is how. First, **please make the decision that you will share 10% of your expected 2012 congregational income toward support of the diocesan budget.** You set an example for your own congregation when you state that you will so share the money that you receive. Your congregational tithe is how you make certain, for example, that Jason Alexander can continue to visit congregations and work with you on development. And that you continue to receive a weekly Communiqué with stories about what is happening around the diocese. And that Randall Curtis will be able to oversee the work among young people. And that we support the work of the larger Episcopal Church throughout the world.

This 10% is the minimum that any congregation should do. **I also ask that we further work for specific programs through Sharing Our Bounty.** Choose from among the programs below, and support them with additional pledges.

1. Youth and Young Adults

In 2011 we had the largest number of youth attend the Episcopal Youth Event of any diocese in the Episcopal Church. We have extremely active conferences at

Camp Mitchell. And this year we had our first retreat designed specifically for young adults. With your support in 2012 this sort of good work can continue.

2. Leadership Training

In 2010 and 2011 we sent several lay people and members of the clergy to learn more about developing their congregations at the Cooperative College for Congregational Development in Mississippi. We are now ready to send candidates for positions as bi-vocational priests to the Iona School in Texas for training prior to ordination so that they can serve smaller congregations. Your help makes this sort of training possible.

3. Latino Ministries

We now have services in Spanish in at least three congregations, and more churches are interested in this vital ministry. You can help provide leadership, Books of Common Prayer, and opportunities for Spanish-speaking people to participate more fully in our church's life.

4. Support of the Larger Episcopal Church

As part of our diocesan budget, we send 10% of all our revenues to the work of the larger Episcopal Church, money that is used, for example, to support the presiding bishop, to provide resources for a variety of ministries, and to support our missionary efforts, both in the U.S. and overseas. Your support will help us give money that goes toward the full amount that the larger church asks of this diocese.

5. Camp Mitchell

For many people in the church in Arkansas, Camp Mitchell is the primary place where they connect with other Episcopalians outside their own congregation. Our children camp there, our clergy gather there, and Cursillo takes place there. Your support keeps buildings up to date and pays for important staff positions.

I urge you to be generous in the pledge from your own congregation's budget. With your support, we will continue to find powerful ways to spread good news to so many people in Arkansas and beyond. Please complete the enclosed pledge statement, listing your tithe for 2012 (10% of your expected 2012 income) and your additional pledges toward the various Sharing Our Bounty programs. When we work together, some amazing hopes will become realities, and we can continue to grow the Episcopal Church in Arkansas.

With every best wish I remain

Faithfully yours,



Larry R. Benfield
Bishop

Commitment to the Diocesan Operating Budget and Sharing our Bounty 2012

_____ Church in _____, Ark.

ANNUAL TITHE FOR THE BASIC WORK OF THE CHURCH

2012 expected operating income \$ _____ X 10% = 2012 tithe \$ _____

Tithe paid to the Diocese of Arkansas at \$ _____ each month

RESTRICTED PLEDGES FOR SPECIAL PROGRAMS BEYOND THE TITHE

Please select a payment schedule for special programs:

<u>Monthly</u>	<u>Quarterly</u>	<u>Other</u>		<u>Annual Pledge</u>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Youth and Young Adults	\$ _____
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Leadership Training	\$ _____
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Latino Ministries	\$ _____
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	The Larger Episcopal Church	\$ _____
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Camp Mitchell	\$ _____

Total pledges to the diocese for special programs beyond the tithe \$ _____

Annual total of your diocesan commitment and Sharing Our Bounty pledges \$ _____

Signed by Priest or Warden _____ **Date** _____

Thank you for your support of the work of the church in Arkansas and beyond. Your restricted gifts beyond the tithe will be apportioned as you have directed on this pledge form.

Please remember that the diocesan budget needs to be approved by executive council in mid-January. We ask that you return this form at your earliest convenience, keeping a copy for your records.

Mail or fax this form to: Diocese of Arkansas 2012 Commitments
P.O. Box 164668
Little Rock, AR 72216-4668
Fax 501-372-2147

Checks should be made to the Diocese of Arkansas and mailed to the address above. Thank you.