

Evolving Ministries



*Stewarding our Resources
at Saint Bartholomew's
Livermore*

Isaiah 52:7

*⁷ How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of the messenger who announces peace,
who brings good news,
who announces salvation,
who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.”*

Isaiah 61:1

*The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;*



Matthew 9: The Harvest Is Great, the Laborers Few

³⁵ Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. ³⁶ When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷ Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; ³⁸ therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

We tell our stories in many ways . . .

Just as each Sunday we come together to hear and digest the sacred stories of our tradition -- in the Hebrew Scriptures, the Epistles and the good news of the Gospel --we also share, throughout the week, the sacred stories of our lives and ministries. We hear about lives changed by generosity and fellowship, and we tell about how our own lives were transformed by Jesus' love and acceptance shown to us by those at St. Bartholomew's and throughout our Diocese.



These stories continue to grow and evolve, even as we transform as individuals and as a community. Our Big Heart Garden, planted one year ago, has taken root and is now feeding people at our food pantry and wellness center. We have welcomed new members and new ministries, and said goodbye to others. And our stories continue on toward the future.

During last year's Stewardship Campaign, your committee spent time listening deeply to your stories - you told us about your moments of engagement, your contributions to ministry, and your dreams for our future. Here is some of what we learned:

Throughout the Congregation, although individual stories and dreams are as unique as our members, there were **four areas that stood out as priorities** for nearly everyone. They are:



- ❖ Growing a large and flourishing congregation
- ❖ Developing a vibrant music program
- ❖ Offering stimulating youth programs
- ❖ Caring for our neighbors

Achieving these goals is consistent with our call through the Gospel. John's Gospel tells us that Jesus said, "I came so that you could have life abundantly". Let us go forward and claim that promise! And to do so, we must devote additional resources to our ministries.



Your vestry, in responding mindfully to your goals, is proposing that we add the following resources to our 2014 budget:

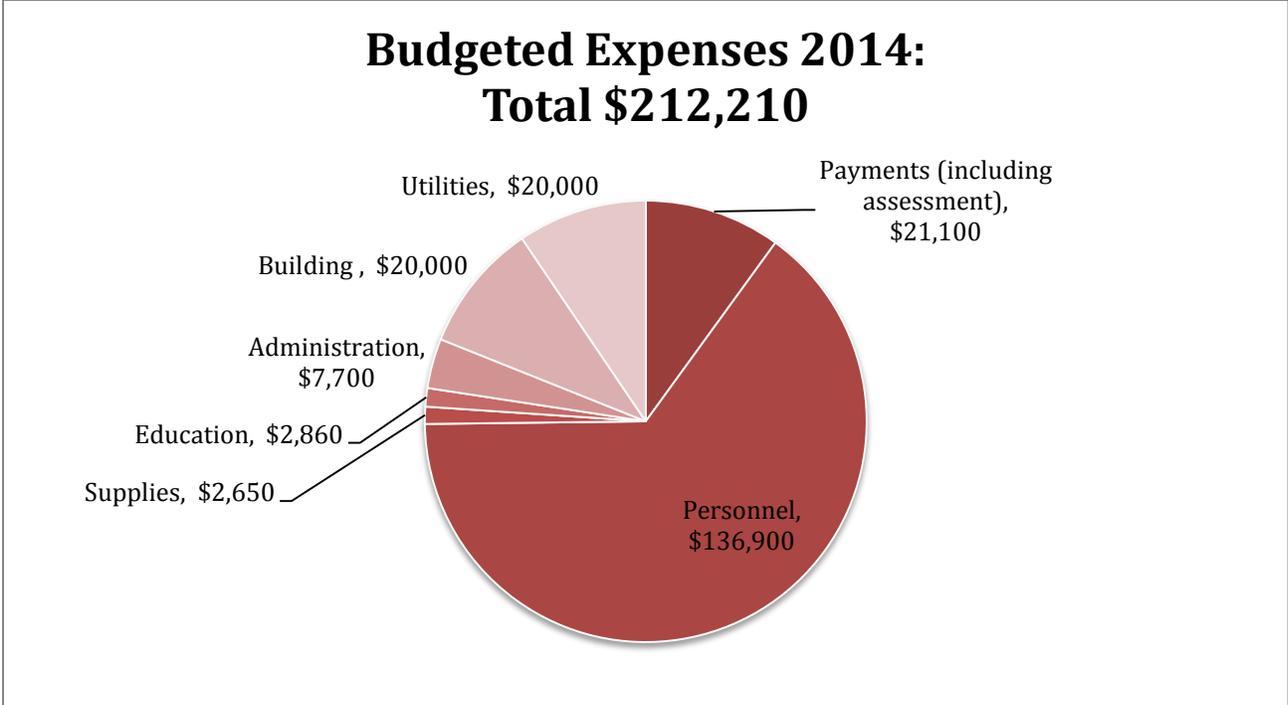
- A paid, part-time administrator
- Additional funding for paid musicians
- Increased budget for cleaning services
- Financial support for our Deacon
- A childcare provider for our family service
- Increasing our youth and education budgets

We believe that adding these modest and vital resources will give us the foundation we need to achieve our ministry goals. These additions will require a budget of **\$212,000, an 18% increase over last year.** *Our budget has only grown by 20% over the past 19 years, while the national inflation rate for that same period of time is 57%. This increase will put us more in line with the cost of doing ministry today.*

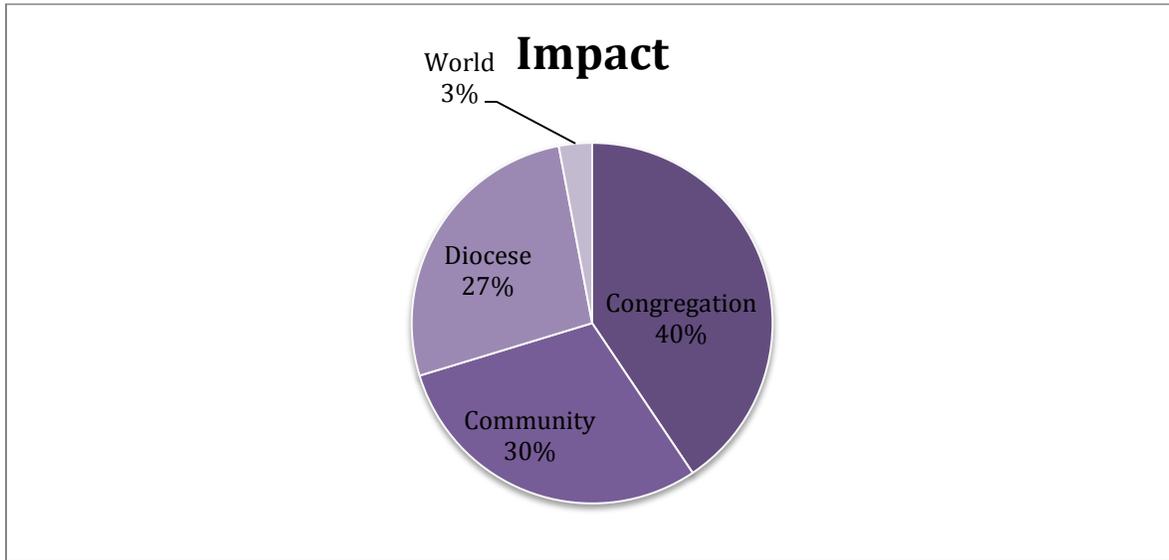
Here is how our 2014 budget will look in terms of the services we can provide:



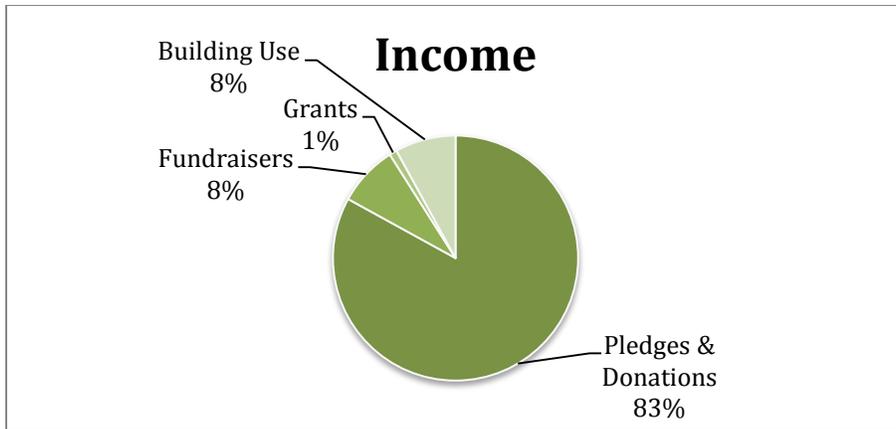
We can also look at those figures simply in terms of capital – salaries, utilities, operations, etc.



Looking at it this way does not fully tell our story; we'd like our budget to tell the story of our ministry, of the lives we change and God's work that we are doing in our congregation, Community and Diocese. Here's how that might look:



Naturally, we will need to raise income in order to achieve these budget goals. Over the past year, we have increased our efforts in raising funds other than through congregational donations. During 2012/13, we received two grants - one from the Episcopal Charities Action Network, and one from the San Francisco Foundation - in order to enhance our impact on the community through services and activities, such as our Big Heart Wellness Center network, and our production of *Noye's Fludde*. We have also held several fundraisers for our operational expenses. Still, these fundraisers can only account for a portion of our budget. This is how our income breaks down:



Out of approximately 75 households at St. Bartholomew's, currently only 57 households actively pledge, contributing an average of \$2,208 each year toward our budget. **If all of these 75 households were to pledge and contribute \$2,133 in 2014, or \$177 per month, we would reach our ministry goals.** *That figure is similar to what many families pay for their monthly cable bill. Consider: are the services that St. Bart's gives to you, your family, our congregation, our community and the Diocese, worth that kind of monthly expense? Does your cable provider feed your neighbors?*

Remember, these figures work only if *each and every household contributes* this year. Some households will be able to give more, and some will give less, but by pledging, you are providing services not only for yourself, but for our entire congregation, our community and our diocese. We all contribute to our healthy, growing ecosystem, which in turns nourishes us.



One of the things that makes St. Bart's special is our high level of *participation*. Our parochial report submitted to the Diocese for 2012 showed an "ASA" (average Sunday attendance) of 79; this represents 49% of our total membership of 161 Episcopalians. Even though our total membership numbers about half of what we were in the 1980's and 90's , our percentage of *attendance* among those members is *twice* what it was during that period. In other words: *our membership is small but growing, and more people are involved!*



If we'd like our *membership to grow*, we need that great participation to extend into financial support. The more of us who support our church with our treasure, as well as our time and talents, the greater services we can offer to our community, and the more people will want to join us! This is a mindset of abundance, and not scarcity. It requires bold faith and a belief in the power of Jesus Christ to do things beyond our imagination.



On October 19, we invite you to join us for an abundant feast together to celebrate all of our gifts, our talents, our treasures, and how they have been transforming lives at St. Bartholomew's. Then, starting October 20, we will ask you to make your pledge to support St. Bart's for the coming year.

Please prayerfully consider how God may be calling you into greater ministry, greater generosity, and greater blessing!

With thanks, in Christ's hospitality,

Your Stewardship Commission:

Stephen Weber, Chair

Carol Purcell

Abigail Plemmons

Vern Phillips

David Ruzicka

Mother Joyce

If you have any questions about the budget, please see a Warden or Vestry Member.

If you'd like information on how to increase or begin your pledge with St. Bart's, please see Abigail Plemmons, our Treasurer.

October 12, 2013

My Beloved Community,

Can it be that a year has passed since our last celebration of Stewardship together (my first one with you!) and nearly 18 months since I joined you in ministry? It is true what they say: time flies when you are having fun. *And* working hard. We have certainly been doing all of that, and more.

Wherever I am in our Diocese, or in speaking with my colleagues around the country, I talk so proudly about you all, and of what God is able to accomplish here. In such a short time we have produced such creative ministries: ones that have deepened our connection and service to one another and our community. Whether we are gathered for our Second Annual Dickens' Faire (in a couple of months), or attending a gardening class with Wellness Center clients at our ever growing Big Heart Garden; whether we are singing around the Eucharistic Table or sharing stories at Evening Prayer and Sacred Brew, God's Spirit is moving here at St. Bartholomew's, Livermore.

During this past year, I have listened to you: individually and as a parish, telling cherished stories of the past, balancing energies in our present, and imagining miracles for our future. I have heard you. And I see a great, great potential in you, in us, a potential that just needs a few more ingredients to unleash. That is why, with your hard-working Vestry and Stewardship Commission, I am asking you to prayerfully consider supporting an increased budget for St. Barts in the year ahead.

I believe in my heart that with a paid, part-time administrator, along with the continued service of our new Deacon, Kathy Bradford, and by adding resources to our youth and music ministries, as well as to some basic building upkeep, we will see our numbers grow, and our ministries flourish. Like the story we will tell on October 19, at our Harvest Meal, *Stone Soup*, when each and every person adds their best to the stew, it can truly nourish everyone. What's more, it is delicious!

Please join me in gratitude, in hope and in optimism. Follow God's Spirit to our future.

Faithfully,
Mother Joyce

1 Peter 4:10

Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.

