

Casting our Crowns

Annual Stewardship Campaign

Dear Members and Friends of Holy Trinity Anglican Church,

Every year, we ask our parishioners and friends to kindly estimate their giving for the coming year. The purpose is two-fold. First, the Gospel calls us to be faithful stewards of God's gifts. Second, it is necessary that our parish plan a ministry budget for the new year. This year, for the second year in a row, the Vestry and I have asked Vestryman Andy Figueroa to lead our efforts for the planned giving campaign which we are calling "Casting our Crowns." Andy has written a series of helpful articles intended to inform us about the salient issues we ought to consider when contemplating the Gospel call to give for the Kingdom of God.

May God continue to bless us all at Holy Trinity Church.

Fr. Brad Cunningham+
Rector, Holy Trinity Anglican Church
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Counting the Cost: Money Talk

11/16/2014 Andy Figueroa

Jesus said, *"Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'"* (Luke 14:27-30, ESV)

Jesus' illustration gives credibility to the wisdom of counting the cost of a project before committing to it. Holy Trinity parish is our continuing project. Every year, the vestry engages in *counting the cost* for the upcoming year. The treasurer, in consultation with the vestry, projects expenses in meaningful categories based on current expenses and other known factors. Adjustments are then made based on anticipated income projected primarily from the good faith estimates provided by you during this season's stewardship in-gathering.

Last year, we received cards from 44 households estimating their 2014 tithes and offerings to be \$162,762. Both numbers are very large in the history of our parish. This directly led to preparing a decently balanced 2014 operating budget without extraordinary acts of faith or smoke and mirrors.

We count 55 households who may return cards with their 2015 estimated tithes and offerings.

This will be the foundation for next year's operating budget. The faith that you show now in *Casting your Crowns*, will encourage the faith of the vestry as they manage our parish finances.

The financial state of the parish is very good. My analysis of the first nine months of 2014 leads me to project end of year total Tithes and Offerings of \$184,000 and total Operating Expenses of \$167,000. It's too early to count this surplus as a bird-in-the-hand, but if it plays out that way, it will decently offset our deficit finances of 2013. Although our need-lists and wish-lists are long, any spending of apparent surplus operating income will be judiciously managed by the vestry.

If we can count on more, we can do more for the Kingdom of God. Your participation in the in-gathering will help the vestry effectively manage the budget and be the best stewards of your gift. And, if you cast your card early, by Sunday, November 16, you will save the parish the expense of sending you a card in the mail.

The Apostle Paul wrote, *The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.* (2 Corinthians 9:6-8, ESV)

You will find a copy of this article at <http://2chronicles36.org/>