

Hello, St. John's Church family and friends - my name is Mike Roman. I am on the church's Stewardship Committee, and I have been a member of St. John's Episcopal Church since 1983. Over these past years, attending worship services, being in the music program and doing the work of the church on various committees has been a significant source of meaning and satisfaction for me. Over this past month, the way we do these activities has changed markedly, but what we are doing has not! The building at the corner of Buffalo and Cayuga Streets has been and will be a great place to gather, and is a useful tool, but it is just a building. When the Bible mentions "the church," it is talking about the people—the body of Christ—who have received the Holy Spirit and are sent out into the world to love and serve God. We, the people of St. John's, are the capital-C Church.

You've heard it said that the four devoted and capable staff members of St. John's still need their paychecks and the bills haven't stopped coming to St. John's, and that our continued contributions are needed as much now as they ever were. This is all as true as it ever was, but there are benefits to looking at our budget through an accountant's lens, AND through the lens of mission. WHY is money spent on salaries and upkeep of the building?

The National Church and our Diocese organize their budgets around the Five Marks of Mission: to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom, to teach, baptize and nurture new believers, to respond to human need by loving service, to seek to transform unjust structures of society, and to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth. Our budget supports both new and existing areas of ministry in the church, not only here in Ithaca, but also in the Diocese of Central New York and the National Church; ministries such as Loaves and Fishes, Laundry Love, Kitchen Cupboard, Family Christmas Gifts, and much more! The areas of ministry that require people to be in close physical proximity (like worshipping together in the Nave) have been suspended until the COVID-19 crisis passes, but we are coming up with new, creative and safe ways to continue doing many of our ministries! The ministries your time, talent, and money support are set forth in:

- the Fledgling (emailed weekly)
- our website (<https://stohnsithaca.org>)
- our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/stjohnsithaca/>)
- the Diocesan website (<https://cnyepiscopal.org/ministries/>)
- and the National Church website (<https://episcopalchurch.org/ministries/>)

URLs for the four websites mentioned will be posted at the end of the video.

Thank you very much for your continuing generosity - you recognize that God has blessed you with time, talent, and abilities that can be fruitful for God's work among us. You can be very confident that your giving is making a real difference in people's lives in this church and in our communities; your continued financial gifts will support the ministries done by and at St. John's, the Diocese, and the National Church. Your support is greatly appreciated, truly encouraging, never taken for granted and will help our Church (with a capital-C) to move forward. Let's honor God with our stewardship, and continue working to usher in God's Kingdom in which everyone has enough!

I will conclude with some good news regarding new federal tax benefits included in the CARES Act recently enacted into federal law. Beginning in 2020, individuals can deduct \$300 in charitable contributions from their gross income even if they do not itemize their deductions, and there is no longer a cap on charitable deductions for taxpayers who do itemize. Donors who itemize may deduct cash charitable contributions up to 100% of their income on their taxes. The CARES Act also eliminates required minimum distributions (or RMDs) from many retirement plans in 2020 - under the CARES Act it is still possible for donors who are 70½ or over to contribute up to \$100,000 directly to a charity without paying tax on the distribution.