



# *Saint Vasilios Greek Orthodox*

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**Stephen S. Kalivas**  
**Stewardship Chairman**

Friday, November 11th 2011

Dear Parishioners,

I am writing to you as the newly appointed chairman of the Stewardship committee. After serving many years on the parish council, both as a member and as the president, as well as the chairman of the centennial committee, I thought that my service to St. Vasilios was completed. When I was asked to assume the heavy responsibility of Stewardship chairman, therefore, my first inclination was to decline and allow others to also serve. But as I thought about this request, I also realized that it was very difficult for me to decline the call of my church and to turn my gaze from the very real needs that it must meet. I acknowledge before all that God has blessed me richly. I cannot forget those blessings nor can I decline the responsibility that I have to respond in kind. For these reasons, I accepted the task of leading the **2012 Stewardship** appeal of St. Vasilios Church.

Aside from these very personal reasons, I also accepted the responsibility for another reason. That reason, simply put, is my confidence in each of you. Over the years of my service to the church I have learned firsthand that we are a generous people. No church survives for over a century without the generous and sacrificial support of its members. In the past, whenever we have needed to meet even extraordinary expenses, our congregation has responded with great generosity of spirit. This was true in good economic times as well as in bad. Even in the most dire circumstances of the Great Depression, the church did not falter; the sacrificial giving of its members sustained and upheld it. Now that the mantle of responsibility has been laid on our shoulders, we can do no less than our forefathers of blessed memory. Our resources are much greater than theirs, and our response must reflect that undeniable fact. As we each ponder and consider our personal gift to the church, I ask you to be mindful of St Paul's admonition to the Christians living in Rome, to whom he wrote, "None of us lives as his own Master, and none of us dies as his own Master. While we live we are responsible to the Lord, and when we die, we die as His servants...Let us remember, therefore, that every one of us shall give an account of himself before God."

Together with other Stewardship materials, I felt it would be helpful to answer some often-asked questions, and confront some common misconceptions about our support for the church.

## WHAT IS STEWARDSHIP?

Stewardship is a system of proportional giving to the church in which each member examines his/her conscience and offers his/her support in accordance with his/her individual means and circumstances. This system is fair because it acknowledges the reality that the pensioned widow and the prosperous business owner do not have the same resources at their disposal. One has more; the other has less. To ask them both to support the church equally as we did under the old "dues" system is terribly unfair. It burdens the pensioner unbearably and discounts the generosity of those who are more prosperous. With Stewardship, therefore, we do not give in accordance with an artificially set amount, but rather in accordance with our true ability to share.



## IS STEWARDSHIP JUST ABOUT MONEY?

Of course not. We do not support our church simply by mailing a check. In addition to our material resources, we also have been given time and talents. The church will never prosper without people who also donate their time and skills to the service of the parish. We can serve on boards and committees; we can volunteer to help with the bulletin mailings; we can paint and do carpentry; we can sing in the choir; we can work at the festivals and functions; we can keep the parking lots spotlessly clean and tidy. The opportunities are as endless as the talents of our people and their willingness to be involved and engaged in the life and ministries of our church.

## WHAT ABOUT THE MONEY THAT HAS BEEN GIFTED?

It is true that over the years the church has received donations and bequests that have been placed in our Scholarship Trust Fund and our Endowment Fund. But these are restricted funds and not general revenues that can be spent on current operating expenses. When a donor offers a gift for scholarships, both the civil law and common decency require us to respect and honor the donor's wishes and instructions. Money given for scholarships cannot be used to remodel our restrooms. In the case of the Endowment, money was given with the explicit promise that the principal of the gift would never be spent, but would rather be invested and the interest and income received would be used for improvements to the church such as capital improvements and new ministries. Our endowment has not yet reached the point where the income generated is enough to make a meaningful and substantive contribution to the mission of our church. The endowment will need to grow before it can make a real difference.

## CAN'T OUR BUDGET BE CUT?

Yes, it can, but the consequences would be less than positive. Many of our expenses represent fixed costs. Liability and building insurance, heat, light, water, sewage, administrative expenses, are all beyond our immediate control. What would you have the parish council cut? Would you eliminate our youth programs, close the church school, lower the thermostats in the winter and raise them in the summer to the maximum possible degree of discomfort? Would you expect one priest to successfully minister to the spiritual needs of a parish of 1000+ families? The budget is already extremely tight. As just one of many that could be chosen, we have only to look at the maintenance allocation to see the effects of deferred repairs. The church carpet is in shameful condition. The public restrooms have not been upgraded in close to 50 years. Two air conditioning compressors are inoperable and in need of replacement. The church trim needs repainting. The kitchen roof needs to be replaced. The domes are leaking like a sieve. The list goes on.

## I'M ONE PERSON. CAN I MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

History is full of individuals who, acting alone, made all the difference in the world. Your good example, multiplied by hundreds of others acting together, can be the catalyst that will revitalize the parish. Become a donor, but more important, become a disciple and apostle of God's truth by encouraging others, friends, children, brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, and godchildren to also become stewards. A positive word of encouragement, together with your own personal example of generosity, can perform miracles of change.

**A FINAL PERSONAL REFLECTION**

Stewardship Chairman is neither the task nor the position I aspired to at this time in my life. While I may not be the most qualified person for the job, I nonetheless accepted it because it pained me to see our beloved St. Vasilios parish unable to reach its full potential. I also accepted it because at the same time, I truly believe that we have it within our power to once again see St. Vasilios as a bright beacon in the Metropolis of Boston. If we put aside our petty differences, and if we embrace common goals and aspirations, we can truly be worthy of our Holy Orthodox faith.

Those of you who worked with me in the past, or know me personally, realize that I would never lend my name to this effort if I did not believe that it was truly worthy and noble, and if I did not believe that the need was truly and honestly great.

We need to **fill out and return our commitment card so that a responsible budget can be prepared for 2012.** My dear brothers and sisters, as you do so, I ask you to prayerfully consider what amount most honestly represents what you can offer, and I ask you to be mindful that the accounting of your gift will be rendered not in the church ledger books alone, but also before the judgment seat of God.

Yours in Christ,



Chairman Stewardship  
steve@stvasilios.org

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“At The Last Supper Jesus Instructed His Disciples, “I Am The Vine, You Are The Branches”

# “Abide In Me”

## 2012 SAINT VASILIOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH STEWARDSHIP

### CONFIDENTIAL PLEDGE for 2012

*Existing stewards need only indicate changes to the following information on the reverse side*

Name:

Address:

City:

State:

**In gratitude for God’s blessings I/we make the following commitment to the ministries of St. Vasilios Church:**

\$520 (\$10 weekly)    \$780 (\$15 weekly)    \$1040 (\$20 weekly)    **Other** \_\_\_\_\_

*Charge card/debit card information on reverse side*

{Opportunities of Time & Talent to follow for your Stewardship Opportunities}

