

Greetings!

My name is Jan Genevro. I’m something of a newcomer here, so before I tell you about why I pledge, let me share with you a bit of my California homecoming story and how I found my way to St. Clement’s.

My first visit to St. Clement’s was just about 2 years ago, thanks to Karen Williams, who lives across the street from my brother and his wife. Karen invited me to join her at a service – thank you, Karen!

But St. Clement’s was already on my radar, as I explored moving back to California after 25 years on the East Coast. One of the most important characteristics I was looking for in a community was an Episcopal Church that was connected to that community and committed to living out God’s call to love our neighbors as ourselves.

I grew up in Orange County, in the Presbyterian Church. My mom was a church educator, so I participated in lots of vacation Bible schools, big youth events, and summer camps.

But as I got older, in my late teens and early adulthood, I did a lot of searching and examining of my beliefs from a new and more adult perspective. I wanted my faith and my participation in a faith community to be based on choice, rather than on an unexamined continuation of the way things had been growing up.

It was not until my 30’s that I began to contemplate joining a church again, and I was drawn to the Episcopal Church for a number of different reasons. Most importantly, I am drawn to the 3 sources of authority recognized in the Anglican Church worldwide: scripture, tradition, and reason. I believe that these 3 sources together provide a dynamic foundation for the Church to be the body of Christ in the world, doing our best to love as Christ loves us, and responding to the needs of the world around us.

It’s been about a year and a half since I settled permanently in San Clemente and one of the first things that I did was to join St. Clement’s and pledge.

My siblings and many of my friends are not churchgoers and they sometimes wonder why I feel so strongly about being a member of, and financially supporting, a faith community.

There are many things about church in general, and St. Clement's in particular, that are important to me: I've met wonderful, caring people through the Meditation Group that meets in the Church library every Monday night. I've been invited to participate in church activities and been greeted with open arms by so many of you here – interesting, loving, generous people who are full of life and so giving of themselves. I've long enjoyed sacred music and feel that St. Clement's has so much to offer in this regard (as evidenced by Larry Gates' sermon today!).

But when I talk with family and friends about belonging to a church, what I talk about is that I belong and attend because I need to worship and connect with others who are striving, as I am, to live our daily lives in compassionate service.

It's not easy to follow that path and I fail more than I succeed.

But I know that I can always find guidance and healing and words of support here, and these make it possible to go out into the world, and try again to see and serve Christ in others.

St. Clement's also has given me the opportunity to participate in and help develop the new Peace & Reconciliation Committee, with other members of the parish who inspire me with their generosity and caring.

The power and potential of St. Clement's capacity for caring are why I think it's essential to pledge to St. Clement's, both to support and sustain this community, and to empower and inspire us to take God's love out into the larger community.

I feel blessed by the opportunity to be a pledging member here and I thank you for the opportunity to share these thoughts with you.