

UBUNTU

I AM BECAUSE WE ARE

Dear fellow member of St. Clements,

I think most of you would agree that 2025 is proving to be a year of many challenges. For me, personally, one of the challenges is, as a member of your Vestry, being asked to lead St. Clement's pledge campaign. After some prayer and reflection, and bearing in mind the recent sermon on Luke 12:34 ("Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"), I have settled on the following two-pronged approach for this initial letter: a brief snapshot of activities and use of your pledge in 2025, and outlining, briefly, our hopes and plans for 2026.

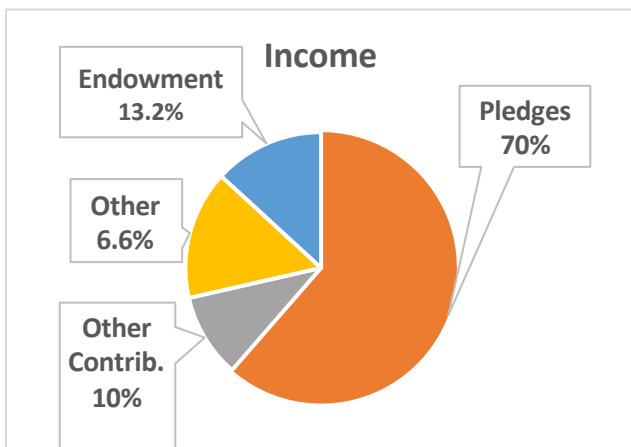
A Brief Snapshot

As you have no doubt noticed, we are experiencing modest growth after a definite pandemic setback. It seems each Sunday we welcome one or two newcomers, and the first (in a long time) newcomer orientation and welcome evening was a great success this past August. There has also been an increase in baptisms, and first communicants, along with various activities involving folks from our immediate neighborhood,

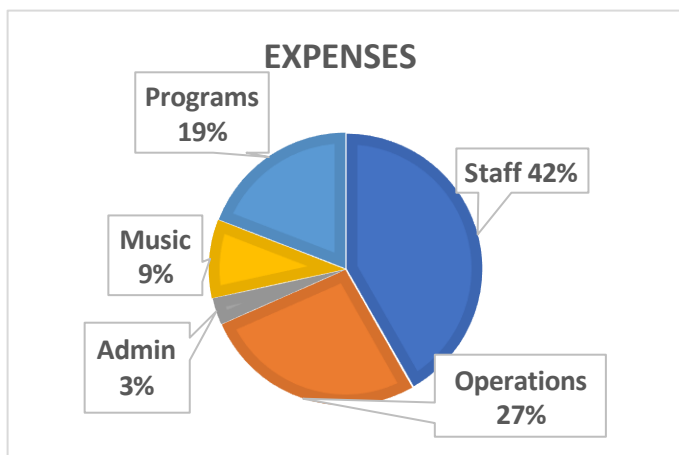
Just a few of the important accomplishments so far in 2025 are as follows:

We have

- Provided a cost-of-living increase for clergy and staff
- Expanded help to the homeless - "Comfort from the Cold"
- Sent volunteers to the FAM warehouse and boutique
- Expanded support for Laundry Love
- Participated generously in the diocesan relief for fire victims
- Sent a work crew to support Habitat for Humanity
- Added Fr. Ryan as a half-time clergy staff person to support Fr. Patrick
- Expanded the number of covenant groups



Financing the growth of St. Clement's service to its members and the wider community is primarily possible by parishioners giving money which, of course, involves each one of us. As this diagram indicates, pledge income is the largest source of income for St. Clements. Consequently, it becomes either the engine that enables St. Clement's growth and outreach, or a braking system that throttles us. While pledges may vary from year to year depending on individual circumstances, the primary importance of pledged contributions does not change.



Expenses tend to be related to staff, day to day operations, and outreach, both locally and further afield. In recent years, however, the church made some capital investments reflecting our commitment to the "Care of Creation" and fiscal responsibility. These include our new, beautiful drought tolerant landscape, solar panels and battery, and eliminating costly disposable paper products at our coffee hours. We are already experiencing lowered costs for water, electricity, and trash service as a result.

Looking Forward

As 2026 approaches, we anticipate meeting the needs of the unhoused, low-income families and our hardworking immigrants (who already struggle) will be a challenge. Internally, providing cost-of-living increases, continuing with critical facility repairs and expanding adult and youth education opportunities all make the need for financial commitments even greater.

In closing, I would like to add a personal note. Over our several years of marriage, Hilary and I have (we believe) grown in our understanding of what tithes and offerings mean. At first, we perhaps saw our giving as transactional - we were benefitting from adult education, the faithful preaching of the Gospel, and a Sunday School for our children. However, as we began to take on responsibilities, giving of our time and abilities, we realized we became members of a community committed, under God's grace and guidance, to working together to bring His love and peace to a hurting and needy world. Being a member of such a community was the real treasure we gained by pledging our time, talents and money and that is where our heart is.

As a community, between now and November 2, when the campaign ends, may God encourage you to discover how to best pledge your time, talent and money, so that you and St Clement's participation in His ministry of unity, love and reconciliation may flourish.

Serving our Lord together,

Francis Viscount

PS The enclosed pledge card can also be filled out online at our website: SCbythesea.org

Ubuntu - Ubuntu, an African concept meaning "*I am because we are*," reflects a deep commitment to community, compassion, interconnectedness, and healthy interdependence. This concept, when wedded to our belief in a loving God who draws us together in unity as the Church, the mystical body of Christ here on earth.

