

## Stewardship FAQ

***Q: What is Stewardship?*** Stewardship is the personal and financial contribution parishioners make to support the operation of our Church.

***Q: What are Stewardship funds used for?*** Stewardship funds pay for the operating expenses of our Church, including essential services such as utilities, insurance, maintenance, snow removal and items such as supplies and postage. Stewardship funds also contribute to the payment of salaries for the clergy, the Church staff and cover our financial commitment to the Archdiocese. Detailed statements of our expenses are presented at the biannual General Assembly meetings.

***Q: What are the annual operating expenses of St. George for 2019?*** The budgeted expenses this year are approximately \$520,000. Like other nonprofit institutions, our Church operates on a breakeven basis, which means that 100% of revenues are used to pay 100% of the expenses.

***Q: What does this amount to on a per steward/family basis?*** Our Church has approximately 400 stewards/families. The average stewardship pledge is approximately \$600. While generous, to cover our expenses we would need \$1,300 per steward/family to cover St. George's expenses with stewardship funds.

***Q: How do the annual operating expenses of St. George get paid?*** Approximately 48% of our operating expenses get paid from Stewardship funds. The remaining funds come from fundraisers, mainly the Greek Festival, but also from candle "sales," tray collections and other donations.

***Q: Who is a MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING?*** A member in good standing is one who has been Baptized and/or Chrismated in the Greek Orthodox Church; if the person is married, it must be in the Greek Orthodox Church and if divorced, the person must be granted an ecclesiastical divorce. A member in good standing must be an active member in the Sacramental life of the Church and a Steward.

***Q: How do I become a Steward of the Parish?*** Membership in the Orthodox Church begins at baptism and continues throughout our life. We are united with Christ through the sacraments of the Church and through our faithful offering of our entire selves to Jesus Christ. Any Orthodox Christian over 18 years of age who turns in a signed stewardship commitment card, committing a portion of time, talent and treasure to the Church can become a steward.

***Q: What amount should I consider for my stewardship pledge?*** Stewardship is based on encouraging each steward/family to give according to their means. We are all called to give what we can. As noted above, the average annual cost per family to operate the Church is approximately \$1300 but any amount is welcome and appreciated.

***Q: Why is it important to complete and submit a Pledge Form?*** As you know from running your own household or business, it is important to have some idea of what you can afford to

spend in any given year. Our Parish Council tries its best to manage the financial affairs of the Church prudently and responsibly. To do so, they need to budget and to project what we expect to receive in revenues for our Parish each year. Stewardship is by far our most *reliable* source of revenue. If your personal/financial circumstances change during the year, you can decrease, increase, or don't fulfill your pledge, and no explanations are ever requested.

***Q: Is there a minimum amount to be a steward at St. George?*** There is no minimum amount of stewardship required to be a steward at St. George. We, and our contributions of our personal time, talents and treasure, are all equally welcome. In this spirit, we do not have "dues." It does not "cost" a certain amount of money to belong to the Church.

***Q: Why don't we just have dues like we used to?*** Besides the many persuasive philosophical arguments against "dues," (in the past, each steward/family was required to give a set amount each year to St. George), there is also a compelling practical argument: dues don't work. The Archdiocese has maintained statistics over many years, tracking the growth and performance of Parishes that still use "dues" compared to Parishes in the same region that have adopted a Stewardship program. Parishes that have maintained a system of dues are smaller and shrinking, and less vibrant and viable by any measure compared to Parishes that have a Stewardship system. If we want to be a growing, vibrant Parish, dues are not an option.

***Q: Can I use a credit card account to make my offerings?*** Yes, some stewards make their offerings through credit cards/debit cards or other online bank accounts (one off or recurring monthly payments).

***Q: Can I make my offerings through my job's "workplace giving campaign"?*** Check with your employer, if they have such program (i.e. United Way), and if they permit donations to be allocated to houses of worship.

***Q: If I have additional questions who can I contact?*** You can address questions to the church office staff, the Stewardship Chair, Dr. John Passalaris, or any Parish Council member. We will be happy to help you.

***Q: How can I get a Stewardship form?*** Forms can be obtained from any Parish Council member on Sunday or through the Church office during the week, and from our website, [stgeorgehamilton.com](http://stgeorgehamilton.com), under "[Our Community](#)."

***Q: Who sees how much I pledge?*** Only the Chair of the Stewardship Committee sees the pledged amounts and the office staff, who have to handle all the pledge forms and funds. **No one else.**

**We want to reiterate that all Stewardship information received is treated in the strictest confidence, at all times, and any confidentiality concerns should be directed immediately to Father Jimmy**