

St. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church of Merrimack Valley

Stewardship Program “A Way of Life”

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Stewardship?

Stewardship is an expression of gratitude and thankfulness for the blessings of life that come from God. It is love shared and love returned. A life lived in gratitude is a life lived in love.

What is the meaning of the theme Stewardship, A Way of Life?

The act of Stewardship giving is based on faith—faith that the act of giving repeated regularly will increase our awareness of the presence of God in our lives and how much we have received from him. Giving regularly *as a way of life*, innately does the following: Stewardship reduces our attachment to material things. We learn that by giving away something we “have” really does not diminish us at all. Our needs continue to be met by God. Also, our willingness to give impacts our willingness to receive. We must be willing to give in order to be open to receiving. And God is giving to us every moment - so our willingness to give enhances our ability to accept God’s gifts.

Is there a minimum stewardship gift amount required to be considered part of the Stewardship Program?

No. Each member, parishioner, and friend of St. Gregory is encouraged to give proportionate to their means and from their heart.

Do I have to give my Stewardship Gift amount all at once?

No. Individuals are more than welcome to give annually. However, their gift can be spread out to be given quarterly, monthly, or even weekly.

Are other churches in the Prelacy instituting a Stewardship Program?

Yes. There are other Prelacy churches as well as many other churches currently instituting a Stewardship or other similar program.

Does the Stewardship Program replace St. Gregory’s current practice of collecting dues each year?

No, the Stewardship Program does not replace the current membership dues policy or amount at this time. Membership dues are still part of the Prelacy bylaws and determine a member's ability to vote at the General Meeting. However, the long term goal depending on the success of the Stewardship Program, is that current dues can be reduced as more and more people partake in the Stewardship Program with more regular giving over the course of the year.

Will the Stewardship Program only be available to current St. Gregory church members?

No. Although St. Gregory members are the primary target audience of our Stewardship Program, we are also encouraging all parishioners, and friends of St. Gregory to become involved in our Stewardship Program.

What is expected of the Stewardship Program?

The ongoing Stewardship Program evaluation efforts will assess factors that include the proportion of donors who make a gift and the effects of this initiative on encouraging involvement in the church's operations. Ultimately, the goal is for as many people as possible to participate with a pledge regardless of the amount, and in proportion with each individual's means.

Why is partaking in the Stewardship Program important?

Pledging yourself to any spiritual practice increases the likelihood that you will actually do it. Beginning in 2023, we ask you to commit to the practice of giving. We're most concerned with your commitment to this practice and less concerned with how much you give. Additionally, the Board of Trustees does its best to operate the church on a sound financial basis, and knowing what the church can expect in income enhances the Board's ability to plan responsibly.

How is the Stewardship Program different from general donations or even past appeals?

General donations to St. Gregory typically can fall under the category of in lieu of flowers, donations to specific capital improvements, etc. and are not recurring - that is they are one time donations only. While the appeal had the option of being recurring it was primarily also one time donations as well and specifically geared to helping the church navigate some budget shortfalls in the past due to the gas leak, COVID, etc. The Stewardship Program seeks to establish for our parishioners a practice of giving throughout the year, and is rooted in the faith that as God provides for us, we give back.

Where will the funds from the Stewardship go?

Each year a church budget is created that supports the operation and the mission of the church. As the Stewardship program progresses, it is our hope that funds from Stewardship go toward not only the operation of the church but also some new initiatives being discussed by the Board of Trustees.

Is my stewardship defined only by the money I give to the church?

Absolutely not. Time and service given to others is a critical component of stewardship. Although the financial gifts are critical, it is also clear that our church can't function without the gifts of time and service.

