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6 January 2019

*The Feast of the Epiphany*

Dear Atonement family,

I am writing to you on behalf of the vestry and parish leadership to ask you to prayerfully consider contributing to the Atonement Epiphany Appeal.

There is much about the life of Atonement that is flourishing right now. We are growing in weekly attendance, in volunteers, in new ministries and guilds, and in the number of families with children. We had 16 new members make a pledge this year. These are all signs of a healthy, growing parish – this is good news!

At the same time, we are still in a position of transition. Over the past few years, several faithful families have moved away; while this kind of ebb and flow is normal for any church, this year we are seeing the financial impact of these losses. While we are tremendously grateful to all of you who have already pledged, we are currently looking at a \$70,000 shortfall over a \$600,000 draft budget. While we fully anticipate that our numbers will continue to grow in the coming year, we cannot ask the congregation to fund a deficit budget of this proportion at our annual meeting on 27 January.

In response to this situation, we are asking you to prayerfully consider making an additional gift to Atonement this year. You can do this in one of three ways:

- You can make a pledge if you have not yet made one.
- You can increase the amount of your pledge for 2019.
- You can make a one-time gift to support the operating budget in 2019.

The draft 2019 budget is not substantially greater than those of past years. The new guilds we have added do not increase our bottom line, and the budget includes no new large expenditures. This draft budget simply reflects the costs of maintaining our current pattern of life, including worship, outreach, music, and formation, as well as the staff that supports these ministries. The executive committee, which includes me, wardens Tim Miller and Margaret Sullivan, and treasurer Mike Trumbold, has carefully adjusted this budget by trimming expenditures where possible, accepting a two-year grant to fund our new office employee, and beginning to put the interest from our endowment to work. *Over 90% of our budget is funded directly by your pledges*, and there are no outside funds or reserve accounts available to cover this kind of deficit. This is why we are coming back to you, the people of Atonement, to ask for your help.

We know that these decisions are highly personal and that each of you will respond to this appeal differently. Our profound hope is that everyone who calls Atonement home – whether you’ve been a member here for fifty years or just started coming to weekday Masses – will contribute something to this appeal. We are hoping that all of us, as the Body of Christ in this place, will be guided by the Holy Spirit to mutually claim full and joyful ownership of our Gospel life.

Enclosed with this letter is a special form for this Epiphany appeal. We are asking that you fill this out and return it no later than Sunday, January 20. You can also contribute to this appeal online, looking for “Epiphany Appeal” under “Giving” on the Atonement website at [www.atonementchicago.org](http://www.atonementchicago.org).

We are blessed, you and I, to be a part of such a holy community. I hope that you will pray for Atonement in this time that we might continue to be a place of abundance – abundant grace, abundant beauty, abundant compassion and healing, and the abundant love and peace that comes from Jesus Christ.

Thank you for your presence, your service, your giving, and your prayers.

Yours in Christ,



(The Rev’d) Erika L. Takacs, SCP  
Rector

You are invited to the forum “Giving as Gift” on 13 January at 10:00 in the gym.  
Join Mother Erika and Mother Joy to share your thoughts on the deep questions of stewardship.

*Why do we give?*

*How does God ask us to give?*

*How do we think and pray about our giving?*

*How does our giving serve the Church, the world, and even ourselves?*