

Dear Companions on the Way...

If you paid your 2007 taxes, you might have already received your economic stimulus check. The idea of \$600 falling into my checking account unbidden, unearned, undeserved and with no strings attached certainly gets my mind a-spinning. However, I'd like to challenge you to a deeper consideration on the receipt of this money.

In my sermon on April 12th, I suggested that how we use our money says something about who we are and what we value. I also said that even though the government would like us to spend this money to stimulate the economy, I would like us to consider where this money ends up and who really benefits. God might have a claim on us as we spend this money as well.

Consumption is not always healthy. In fact, a hundred years ago, it was the term given to a terminal disease (tuberculosis). I'm of the opinion that over-consumption is still very deadly; we as a nation are becoming increasingly obese; we are consuming more resources, especially fuel, than there is available for a sustainable future; and we fill our homes, landfills and life with stuff that does not satisfy our deepest needs. Meanwhile, one billion people are living on less than one dollar per day.

What if we were to use our economic stimulus check for good? Consider giving 100%, 10%, or even 0.7%* for the benefit of others. There are countless ministries, organizations, causes, and individuals who would benefit tremendously from a financial gift. This might be an occasion to become more aware of the Millennium Development Goals and the role the Episcopal Church is taking in encouraging its members to support them. **If all the developed nations of the world were to give 0.7% of our income, extreme poverty could be eliminated.*

I challenge you to use all or some of your economic stimulus check for good.

- Choose a recipient (or several) and make a donation.
- Fill out one of the forms we have made (*see page 3*) that lists the amount and the recipient. It will also have a space for you to indicate why you think this organization does good and/or why you want to support it. We do not ask you to indicate your name nor do we assume that the recipients have to have any connection to St. Mark's or the Episcopal Church.
- We then will keep a running public tally of the total given for good by our members.

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Companions *continued from page 1*

As you consider where to make a contribution, there are also a number of projects that St. Mark's officially supports that you might wish to support. You may make a check to St. Mark's and indicate in the memo which project or ministry you specifically wish to support (those marked with a * would qualify as Millennium Development Goal projects).

- Bob Prentice Fund (assistance for an injured single father)
- Library project for St. Paul's School in Haiti*
- Scholarship for Wilcox Roger from Haiti*
- Kamweleni High School in Kenya in memory of John-Rupert Barnes*
- Gas Vouchers to the needy
- Teresa Ogle Fund (assistance for cancer patient)
- Rector's Discretionary Fund (assistance for people with emergency needs)
- The VOA Community Shelter
- Alternative Horizons (address local domestic-violence issues)
- The VOA Safe House
- The Community Emergency Assistance Fund (partners with the Red Cross and others)
- Manna Soup Kitchen
- Habitat for Humanity
- Mary's Hope (program for survivors of abuse)
- St. Mary's of the Moonlight Episcopal Church (An Episcopal Church on the Navajo Reservation)*
- Adopt-a-Native-Elder (Mary Gutherie, a Navajo woman)*
- Colorado Haiti Project (general support)*
- Camp Ilium

- The Episcopal Relief and Development Fund*
- St. Jude's Ranch for Children
- The General Theological Seminary
- Cathy Donahoe (a medical missionary in the Dominican Republic)*
- El Hogar (an orphanage in Honduras)*

Even if you are not able to give the money away, use it to achieve a lasting benefit for yourself or your family. Perhaps paying down debt, making your car safe, or getting dental care for your kids is now possible. May God bless you in whatever way you are led to spend this money.

Shalom,



Andrew

Millenium Development Goals

Are you wondering what kind of causes you may want to support using your economic stimulus check? Consider these:

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Achieve universal primary education for children
- Promote gender equality and empower women
- Reduce child mortality
- Improve maternal health
- Combat infectious diseases such as TB, HIV/AIDS and malaria
- Ensure environmental sustainability

To learn more visit www.er-d.org, ONE.org, EAGR.org or www.episcopalchurch.org/one

Use Your
Economic
Stimulus
Check
for **GOOD!**

I donated \$ _____ to _____

I support this cause because:

Please place your completed form in the box in the Parish Hall.

Calendar of Upcoming Events at St. Mark's

May 2 St. Mark's day at Manna Soup Kitchen

May 2 Animas Music Festival concert featuring St. Mark's Choir

May 6 Mid-week faith formation and fellowship begins

June 6 St. Mark's day at Manna Soup Kitchen

July 21–23 Vacation Bible School

August 22–24 Choir Retreat

September 12–14 . . . Parish Retreat

Animas Music Festival Features St. Mark's Choir

St. Mark's Choir will perform on the Animas Music Festival concert entitled "Peace Pieces" at St. Mark's on Friday, May 2 at 7:00 p.m. The concert also features John Pennington, Cyprian Consiglio and the Animas Chamber Players. The concert is one of three comprising the Animas Music Festival. Tickets are \$12 and \$5 and are available at the Concert Hall Box Office, 247-7657, and at www.durangoconcerts.com.

Faith Formation & Fellowship Group Set to Meet

Mid-week faith formation and fellowship will begin Tuesday, May 6 at 11:00 a.m. in the Parish Hall at St. Mark's. Bring your lunch and gather with other adults for some time to connect with one another and strengthen our faith. Child care will be provided.

It's Not Too Late!

If you missed Pasta and Pops and you would still like to make a donation to benefit Bob Prentice and his family, please make out a check to St. Mark's and designate it to the Bob Prentice fund.

Women's Outreach Luncheon

Women United in Christ is starting an outreach luncheon ministry for women entitled "Transformations." The first gathering will be on Saturday, May 10 at the Community Church of the Nazarene, 1400 Hwy 172. The gathering includes a salad luncheon, worship, scripture teaching, a speaker and prayer. There is no charge. Each month, WUIC will have their luncheon program at a different church on the second Saturday of the month. If you would like to attend the May gathering, please call Cindy Kelley by May 7 at 247-0310. For more information visit www.womenunitedinchrist.org.

Ushers/Greeters Needed!

We are in need of volunteers to usher at the 10:30 service on Sundays. Duties include arriving for church about 15 minutes before the service begins, greeting people as they arrive, passing out bulletins and collecting the offering. You may serve with your spouse or you may be paired up with another usher. If there are enough ushers in the rotation you would serve about once every five to six weeks. Ushering is a great way to meet parishioners and is especially rewarding for those who enjoy offering hospitality and making people feel welcome. If you think this ministry is for you, please call Cheryl in the church office at 247-1129.

Join St. Mark's Relay for Life Team

Relay for Life, the annual event which raises money for cancer research, will be held June 20-21 at Fort Lewis College. Participate by walking on the St. Mark's team, by sponsoring walkers or purchasing luminarias or yellow bricks. Call the church office at 247-1129 to join the team or for more information.

News for Kids and Families at St. Mark's

Godly Play Needs You!

If you would be interested in helping with Godly Play for our kids next fall please contact Renee Knight at 259-6109.

Have an Idea for a Class for Kids?

We'd like to add classes for children of various ages to St. Mark's Art of Living series. Classes could be 1-1/2 to 2 hours in length and be held at the church. Ideas for topics include cooking classes for kids, craft classes, art or photography lessons. If you have a talent that you would like to share with kids, please contact Preston Knight at 769-7734.

Parents' Night Out Group Forming

Parents who are interested in forming a co-op within the Parish, please contact Preston Knight at 769-7734. The program will last for three hours on one Friday of every month, and each set of parents would volunteer to watch the group of children at the church on a rotating basis. The children will have fun eating pizza, enjoying craft projects, and a movie while their parents can have some alone time. Once a list of those interested is gathered, an organizational meeting will be held.

Vacation Bible School July 21-23

Mark your calendars for Vacation Bible School at St. Mark's! The theme for this summer will be Veggie Tales 'Pirates Who Don't Do Anything.' Children taking part in the program will learn songs, play games, make crafts, and take part in cooking activities all in reference to various Bible stories. It will be a guaranteed good time for all!

VBS is set for the morning hours on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday July 21, 22 and 23. Children from the ages of three to those entering third grade in the fall are welcome as participants in Bible school.

Older elementary and middle-school students are needed as student assistants for Bible school and will play a special role in putting on a series of one-act plays at the start of VBS each morning. Teachers are still needed as volunteers for Vacation Bible School.

If you would like to sign your child up (or their friends!) to attend, please check next month's newsletter, which will include a registration form. Registration forms will also be available soon in the Parish Hall. If you are interested in teaching or serving as a student assistant for VBS, please contact Trisha Rickey at 247-0817.

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Deadline for the next issue is May 20, 2008.
