



FROM THE RECTOR

Are you All In for Stewardship?

When you hear the words, "All In," what comes to mind? Maybe you think of a time when you were on a sports team and the coach invited every member of the team to circle up, put their hands in the middle and chant "All In!" Maybe it was a project, and your boss wanted all the key players to back it — to be "All In!"

Some 70 years ago, a band of about 250 Tanglewood neighbors came together, and at the invitation of a young priest named Tom Bagby, decided they were "All In" to build a new church at the edge of Houston. There was nothing more than a sage field where our Church is now. But through their hearty and full-throated commitment and sacrifice of time, talent and treasure — a Church was born.

Since that time, St. Martin's has grown in ways our forebears could have never imagined. As you walk our expansive Campus today, worship within our majestic spaces, gather for education and fellowship in classrooms, and receive care and support from our Clergy and others in pastoral support — there can only be one fitting response — *gratitude*. Gratitude for God's gifts and gratitude for those members past and present who have made what we now enjoy possible.

On behalf of the Vestry, our members – and most importantly, on behalf of our Lord — I implore you, to be **"All In"** when it comes to support the work of Jesus Christ in and through our Parish. **I ask you — today — to pray about making a financial pledge to St. Martin's for 2023.**

"All In," means just that. Consider this:

- In 2022, only about 42% of Parish households made a financial pledge to St. Martin's. What about the other 58%? If last year you were part of that 58% who didn't pledge, I ask that you switch sides for 2023. Pray, ask our Lord for guidance; join the other members of your Parish family and be **"All In."**
- We teach the principal of "tithing"— giving about 10% of what God has entrusted to your care back to His work. If you did not make a pledge in 2022, take that first step toward the tithe in 2023. If you made a pledge, but did not reach the tithe, make a decision to increase your pledge over and beyond last year's and grow your giving year-to-year until you reach it, showing in the process that you are **"All In."**
- If you pledged in 2022 and reached that Biblical goal – give thanks to God for your courageous decision – and in 2023, continue your generosity and be **"All In!"**
- If your circumstances have changed, and you find it necessary to decrease your giving, please know that it is not the "size" of one's pledge that matters. A decision born of prayer and thoughtful devotion matters far more than a "line item" in your household budget. When you pray, and when you make a decision as a fruit of that prayer, trust me, you are **"All In!"**
- Lastly, if you have younger children and teens, make a decision as a family and encourage them to make their own pledge too. It is important for every member of the household to support our Lord's work and to say, **"I am All In!"**

Here you have, in your hands, an invitation — to be like those first brave and farsighted missionaries who gathered in 1952 where St. Martin's now stands and said,

"We are All-In!"

Will you join them?

The Rev. Dr. Russell J. Levenson, Jr.
Rector