

Your Questions

1. Why has the Church decided to try and bridge our \$700,000 operating deficit for 2025 and retire the debt related to *Building for the Ages* and 5005 Woodway at the same time?
 - a. The operating deficit for 2025 is an immediate need to fund our Church's operations for the year. Additionally, as we will show below, bridging this gap is a very achievable goal if more members can pledge or give.
 - b. The debt retirement initiatives are driven both by pending principal and interest payments of \$2.0 million per year that would materially impact our annual budget, and a desire to place the Church on very solid financial footing as we welcome our 5th Rector, the Rev. Dane Boston.
2. Why should I participate?
 - a. While all gifts and pledges directly support the mission and ministries of the church, the primary motive for giving should be gratitude to God. First and foremost, giving to the Church is an act of worship in which we return a portion of God's generosity back to God. Just like the disciplines of worship and prayer, giving to God aids in our spiritual formation.
3. It seems like only large gifts make a difference. Does my gift really matter?
 - a. God's provision is different for everyone, and everyone can participate based on their personal circumstances. Every gift matters and below are some examples of how impactful greater participation from our membership could be. Currently, 100% of our Church's annual pledges come from about 30% of our member households.
 - i. If every non-pledging member household gave \$50 per month for the year, or \$600 annually, we would have approximately \$1.3 million in additional income. This would turn our current \$700,000 deficit into a surplus of approximately \$600,000 per year.
 - ii. If this monthly amount was raised to \$100 per month for the year, or \$1,200 annually, we would have approximately \$2.7 million in additional income. This would turn our current \$700,000 revenue deficit into a surplus of approximately \$2.0 million per year.
 - iii. If this monthly amount was raised to \$400, or \$4,800 annually, our annual budget would nearly double to \$26.0 million. This would allow us to fund all Church operations and retire our outstanding debt of \$12.0 million in a single year.
 - b. There is incredible power in participating, so please prayerfully consider a pledge or gift to St. Martin's if you have not done so before.

4. I thought we had 10,000 members? Why does it look like we have closer to 4,000 from the answer above?
 - a. The difference comes from individual members vs. member households. Member households may be a couple or family, who typically pledge or give together. We have over 10,000 individual baptized members of St. Martin's, and over 4,000 member households.
5. How many member households pledge to St. Martin's?
 - a. As of June 11, 2025, about 1,300 households, or about 33% of all member households have made a pledge to St. Martin's.
6. How is a gift different from a pledge?
 - a. A gift is any amount given to St. Martin's (without any prior commitment), while a pledge is a commitment by faith to give a specified amount by year-end, which allows us to budget wisely for the year and support our programs for Christian Education, Worship, Outreach, and Missions.
7. Is a gift or a pledge better?
 - a. If a pledge is possible for you, it helps the Church plan for the upcoming year. Many parishioners prefer this as it allows them to align their monthly giving with their monthly income. Corinthians 9:7 reminds us that *Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.* The way you give is less important than *participating* in giving.
8. Which is the priority, the 2025 operating budget deficit or retiring our debt?
 - a. First, we would ask you to pray for God's guidance in any giving. If you have not made a pledge or gift in 2025, we would encourage you to do so to increase the number of members participating in stewardship each year. However, if you would like to give to both, please feel free to split your pledge or gift between the two financial initiatives. All giving is greatly appreciated.
9. Why is there debt left over from the *Building for the Ages* campaign?
 - a. The *Building for the Ages* campaign was funded by generous pledges from many of our parishioners. There was a combination of gifts paid immediately and pledges which were to be paid over time, as well as some estate pledges with parishioners leaving gifts to the Church from their estates. To bridge the gap between paying for completion of the buildings and receiving some pledges and estate pledges, the Church entered into a construction loan agreement. In the interim, some situations have changed, and the construction loan is maturing. This has left the Church with about \$2.0 million of annual principal and interest payments. By fully retiring the \$7.1

million outstanding debt, we will not have to pay these principal and interest payments.

10. When and why did we purchase the 5005 Woodway building?

- a. The 5005 Woodway building was purchased in April 2012 after a due diligence process and approval by the Vestry. It is part of a consistent strategy the Church has had to protect the frontage along Woodway. The building was purchased with a considerable down payment and an agreement to continue paying the remaining balance from the tenant lease payments. In 2020, the number of tenants decreased due to the Covid pandemic, but tenants have since increased and we currently have approximately 80% occupancy at the building. Once we retire the existing \$4.9 million of debt, the building should produce an annual profit for the Church.

11. I already give to St. Martin's through Abundant (the online giving system), but I would like to increase my giving this to support the campaign. How do I do this?

- a. You have 2 options:
 - i. **Option 1:** Login into your Abundant account and alter your existing gift to the new amount you would like to give. You will select your fund (General Fund/Stewardship or *Built for the Ages*). If you wish to give to both campaigns, you can select "Additional Funds" and enter an amount to give to each fund.
 - ii. **Option 2:** Add a second gift (recurring or one-time) in Abundant, in addition to your existing gift.
 - iii. If you encounter any issues, Debbie Hutchison will help you navigate this process. She can be reached at dhutchison@smec.org or 713-985-3803.

12. I already give to St. Martin's via check, and I don't use the Abundant system. How do I increase my giving for this year? Can I just send in a check?

- a. It is helpful for budgeting purposes for us to know if you are increasing a pledge. Please contact Debbie Hutchison to help you adjust your current pledge. She will also add any check funds received to your giving for the year. You may elect to add this to your pledge or leave it as a non-pledged donation. Debbie can be reached at dhutchison@smec.org or 713-985-3803.

13. What is the Vestry of St. Martin's?

- a. Each year 5 parishioners are elected by their fellow parishioners to serve a 3-year term on the Vestry, or the elected leadership body of the Church. Thus, at any time there are 15 members on the Vestry. The Vestry works with the

Clergy and Staff of the Church to monitor the Church's operations and make key decisions related to the Church related primarily to property, missions, finances, and operations. Any parishioner can nominate a Vestry candidate through a confidential process. Candidates must be confirmed members in good standing. The members of the Vestry are listed on the website at <https://www.stmartinsepiscopal.org/who-we-are/vestry/>. Information on how to nominate members for the Vestry and timing for nominations is included at the bottom of this webpage.