

leap of faith




St. Columba's Annual Pledge Campaign 2023

Some years ago a wise priest was seeking to discern next steps for the church he was serving. He took time away and went to Calcutta to work with Mother Teresa at "the house of the dying." When he met Mother Teresa, he asked her to pray for him. "What do you want me to pray for?" she asked. "Clarity. Pray that I have clarity." "No," Mother Teresa answered, "I will not do that. Clarity is the last thing you are clinging to and must let go of." "But," said he, "you always seem to have clarity." Mother Teresa laughed and said, "I have never had clarity; I have had trust. I will pray that you trust God."

When I heard this story in a sermon this summer, I could literally feel my prayer and attention shifting; something opened up inside of me. Especially during these past few years of disruption and change, I have longed for a little clarity when taking our next steps.

This brochure is designed to offer some clarity: about St. Columba's vision and mission for the coming year; our priorities and ministries. Please take a look. You may have some clarity too: about the place of St. Columba's in your life, your intentions to be generous, and about your own budget and financial capacity. When I make a gift, I've found that clarity goes only so far. Each year I seek to stretch in giving – not because I have greater clarity, but because I seek greater trust in God. Giving generously, lavishly is an act of trust; it is a spiritual practice and it's good for our souls. I pray that you trust God. Join me: take a leap of faith! Make a wildly generous pledge born of your desire for trust. You'll be glad you did.

Peace! Ledlie



**"Have you believed because
you have seen me?
Blessed are those who
have not seen and
yet have come to believe."**

John 20:29

As the world emerges from the pandemic, St. Columba's continues to be a place for spiritual nourishment, formation, and service to our community and beyond. While many churches struggled with closed doors and scaled back activities in an uncertain future, St. Columba's took a leap of faith and focused on our Strategic Plan and mission to Live God's Love.

Online streaming of our services, formation and music offerings has become a critical component of our offerings here at St. Columba's. Each week, upwards of 200 people tune in to worship and participate in formation online. Our live-streamed forum series and mid-week formation offerings are now vastly more accessible than ever. Distance, immobility, busy commutes, cancelled babysitters, and business trips no longer stand between us and those who wish to deepen their faith.

New outreach partnerships were founded and bold new initiatives were introduced. Ministries emerged in response to our challenge to end family homelessness, such as the Friendship Place Lunch Program, Housing Up Mentoring Program, Afghan Refugee Ministry, Advocacy Council, and Anti-racism Task-Force, and partnerships developed with Washington Interfaith Network and Housing Up.

Our Wee Worship service continues to grow, as new families discover us online, by invitation from a friend, or through our redesigned website, sidewalk signs and more.

Our Children's Sunday morning formation evolved to meet the needs of our children during this time, and with strong lay leadership and creativity, it continues to thrive.


Our Youth met regularly, for formation, fellowship and service. Beloved traditions such as the J2A Pilgrimage and St. Columba's Appalachia Project (SCAP) resumed.

Our music program remains strong. Choristers join us in person and online for rehearsals and participate live in our Sunday worship, and our audience has grown. Where a typical, in-person concert would host 100-200 audience members, we now see attendance of upwards of 500 viewing households.

And with our newly installed front terrace and labyrinth, we are opening our hearts with an accessible "on-ramp" for our neighborhood and beyond. Our new terrace will host worship, formation, and fellowship for any and all. All are welcome, whoever you are, wherever you are on your journey of faith, you are welcome here.

As we emerge into this new world, after two years of dealing with the pandemic, there is often speculation of how church will change or what the new "baseline" will be. We believe this is a moment to be bold - to take action to achieve what we believe our church can be, and should be.

Together, we take a leap of faith.



“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen”

Hebrews 11:1

What leaps of faith has St. Columba's taken?



You have to go into it understanding that you don't know everything, you are not an expert on any of these issues. Seeking understanding. Seeking the beloved community... What twists and turns that it takes is not necessarily clear, so you need to take a leap of faith and trust that people will end up in a better place, and we'll be larger for having undergone this work.
Peter Lynch
St. Columba's Anti-Racism Taskforce

"There are so few opportunities for us to have a very direct, very intense, very tangible opportunity to practice service to our brothers and sisters in need. And SCAP is that - in its purest essence - an opportunity for people to show up, lay everything else aside, and give everything they have for a week to help build and rebuild lives... All the while, you may be giving, but the ways in which you are also receiving God's love is amazing. It's a very unique and very rare opportunity."

Chip Somodevilla
Adult leader with St. Columba's Appalachia Project (SCAP)



"Remember the old rhyme, "Here's the church, here's the steeple, open the doors and see all the people"? I feel like that's what we're called to do - to turn the church inside out. It's a way for the community to see our faith as it's expressing itself, and to experience that in their own way, too. "

Elizabeth Vaden
Working with Washington Interfaith Network, and St. Columba's Advocacy Council



"I had support from my mom and a ton of support from the parish too... the Sunday after the march, when [the Rev.] David Griswold said, Hey, it was great that Adam organized this group! ... that really gave me a boost of energy that made me feel like, I could do this again with the parish! It makes me feel very empowered that I have people's support."

Adam Krepps, age 11, with support from his mother Kathleen, organized a group from St. Columba's to participate in "art activism", bringing them together in June of 2022 to create posters and screen prints



Dear Fellow Parishioners

By adapting and more than just a few leaps of faith, St. Columba's has survived and thrived through the recent challenging and uncertain times.

We continued to worship, learn, and serve others together. Bold initiatives like our goal to end family homelessness in DC by 2030, the overwhelming parish support for our Refugee Response Ministry and all our outreach ministries demonstrate our response to God's call to embrace the world. We invested in updated technology to provide and expand access to our worship and educational programs while we were unable to physically be together. Even as we are again worshipping in person, we have an entire online community practicing our faith together.

These investments in our infrastructure and our mission to Live God's Love have been successful but also require our increased support. Pledges are the largest source of income for St. Columba's and are essential for the vitality of the church. Pledges account for roughly 80% of the revenue in our budget. Like everyone, we are feeling the pressure of increasing costs. The current annual budget of \$3,400,950 million supports our ministries, pays staff and clergy, maintains our building, and allows us to respond to challenging times.

Your generous pledge is essential to fulfilling our mission.

We are indeed a church on a mission to Live God's Love, with many hearts and minds and hands and feet, together we are working to make a difference. We are Living God's Love here at St. C's and in the wider community where the need is great and where there is so much more to do.

We want to take a spiritual journey together; to experience the peace, the joy, and the community of St. Columba's....A Leap of Faith together.

With gratitude,

Abigail Goman
Senior Warden

Sara Glenn
Junior Warden

**“For I am convinced that
neither death, nor life, nor
angels, nor principalities, nor
things present, nor things to
come, nor powers, nor height,
nor depth, nor any other
created thing, will be able to
separate us from the love of
God, which is in Christ Jesus
our Lord”**

Romans 8:38-39

