

STEWARDSHIP MINUTE TESTIMONIAL
BRYANT MITCHELL

We, my wife Madeleine and I have been members of Immanuel for forty- four years. Fresh out of UVa Law School and freshly married, we moved to Northern Virginia for employment. We rented a townhouse in Fairlington and immediately joined Immanuel. Why Immanuel without any search for a parish? Well first, my Dad was a graduate of the Seminary and knew members of the Seminary administration and faculty and also many leaders of Immanuel he would meet at numerous diocesan gatherings. Dad served as the head priest at Trinity Episcopal Church in Charlottesville, Virginia for 18 years and 8 years as Head of Deployment for the Diocese of Michigan for his VTS classmate and former head priest at Immanuel, Bishop Coleman McGehee. Dad then "retired" to Alexandria where he taught a course at VTS and served as Priest Associate at our dear Immanuel. But the greater reason for my choosing Immanuel was its connection with the largest Episcopal learning institution. Being close to a learning institution meant that maybe Immanuel would not be too doctrinaire and stodgy, but inquisitive and always searching for spiritual perfection. And then the icing on the cake was it worshiped in two different structures with varied liturgies. I could never be bored here. I immediately became an usher after joining the church and later served on the vestry as property steward.

I have been attending Immanuel for this long because it allows me to take at least one hour each week to focus on "good". I am a commercial real estate broker and meet many people who's lives may seem focused on how to make the most money for our investors and partners. I need to focus on sharing, caring, helping others less fortunate than myself to refresh my moral and Christian beliefs. With Immanuel's extensive outreach empathy I can be a part of that giving.

Ok, it's time to cut to the chase. We human beings are social animals by nature. We function better when we work together in Jesus' Christian spirit of helping ourselves and others. Immanuel cannot serve God well with spirit only. It takes money to pay our staff so they may take care of their material needs. It takes money to support our physical plant. It takes money to contribute to our chosen charities.

So, I have been worried about some of us who just will not pledge. I was raised by two members of the All Saints club, Reverend Henry B. Mitchell and Gertrude P. Mitchell. They pledged every year despite our family financial situation. They taught me the same. Dad said you can show gratitude to God for helping you by pledging something. My only analogy is giving to the educational institutions which allowed us to gain an advantage to a better life. I have a friend who is wealthy now but was poor when attending Yale on a full scholarship. He started giving Yale \$25 per year immediately after graduation. Of course his contributions increased with his career success until one day he received a call from the Yale Foundation inviting him out to dinner. He was proud of the big ask. The point is that Yale helped him so much that he remembered every year to show his thankfulness. Immanuel and our belief in God deserve the same annual contribution and thankfulness.