



HOLY SPIRIT | EPISCOPAL CHURCH

130 South Sixth Street East • Missoula, MT 59801-4222 • 406.542.2167

To the People of Holy Spirit:

In our gospel stories, Jesus didn't avoid talking about money. Some of the most challenging passages, of course, deal with just this topic. If you were able to attend Holy Spirit's annual meeting on Jan. 27, you'll know that the Vestry is asking us to also talk about money and a request that all of us consider adding to our pledges in 2019. Here's why:

Our church – even with strong stewardship response that includes contributions from across our parish family – has been dipping into Vestry reserves for 15+ years to pay for annual budget shortfalls. This year the shortfall is \$51,460 of our \$487,527 budget.

Vestry reserves are bequests left to us by longtime parishioners over many years, and they operate as our financial backstop and limited seed money for new ministries. Sometimes investment yields from this fund help cover our shortfalls – in other years, like this past one, our monies are reduced when the market pulls back. We currently have about \$404,000 in this fund, and the Vestry does not want Holy Spirit to spend through this critical safety net over the next few years.


This deficit issue isn't new – what is new is a determination to try to overcome it, so our parish can move ahead with hope and confidence. In 2019, we saw good growth in the number of pledges from Holy Spirit households, which increased by 10, in pledge amounts from regular pledgers, and in the number of new people who are choosing to make Holy Spirit their church home (see Annual Report).

So we're asking that we as a community dig a little deeper, if we can. We hope you will review the attached budget information (or read more about it at holyspiritmissoula.org) and consider our hope-filled request to help fund what it actually costs to operate our church. If you have served on Vestry in recent years, you know there is literally no fat in the Holy Spirit budget. Simply put, cutting our spending to match our current annual income means deciding which staff positions should be reduced.

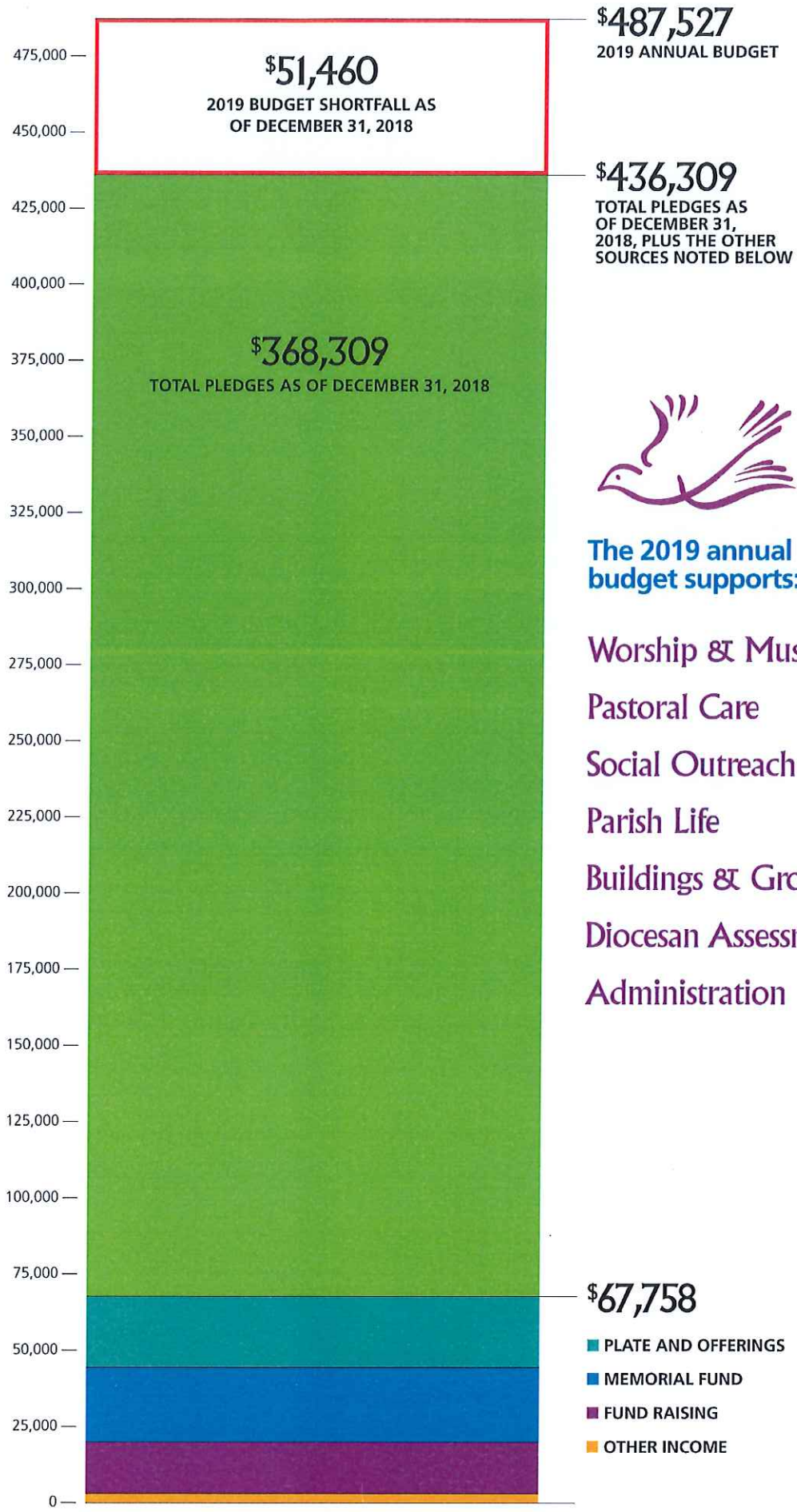
Reaching beyond our deficit is doable. If each of our 190 pledging households adds \$5.30 per week (\$275 per year), we will cover our current costs and create the exciting possibilities that come with a balanced budget. We know few things are less welcome than a request for additional money, but we hope you will join the Vestry in taking up this critical challenge to support the church that brings so much to us.

Is an added gift of \$275 possible for you? Are you able to do more? This is a sizable request, and an additional pledge is not possible for everyone. But if it is possible for you, we ask that you prayerfully consider our appeal to the Holy Spirit community. A separate pledge card for this important additional gift is enclosed – please respond if you are able by February 28, and I hope you will reach out to me, to another Vestry member or to Terri with your questions or concerns.

With God's blessings,


James H. Wiley, Senior Warden

P.S.: Please indicate only your additional pledge on the attached card. Thank you!



The 2019 annual budget supports:

- Worship & Music
- Pastoral Care
- Social Outreach
- Parish Life
- Buildings & Grounds
- Diocesan Assessment
- Administration