

Talia Stroud:

Hello, we're Scott and Talia Stroud, and we're proud to be a part of the St. Luke's community.

After moving to Austin to take jobs at the University of Texas, we bought our first home and moved to the area in 2009.

We realized that for the first time in our lives, we were living somewhere without a date when we'd have to move.

So we looked to make this our home and to be part of the community and found St. Luke's.

This church is an important part of our lives and the community.

Personally, this church and the sermons and rituals have helped us to celebrate the good times and make it through the not-so-good times.

We remember when we had our first child and Reverend Parker came to our house to say a blessing over our daughter, Clara. As anyone who has had kids knows, those first few weeks are major adjustment and Parker's kind gesture left us with a sense of calm.

During the pandemic, we created a pod school here at the church with the Collins family and several others, so that our kids wouldn't fall behind.

Our daughter Clara is part of the River Place Student Theater that practices here each week.

The children's programming here at the church is helping our kids learn about our faith and is helping us raise them to have a strong moral foundation.

Beyond the personal effect the church has on our lives, this church makes a difference in the community. From packing up and donating backpacks to kids in need, covering the rent for a family down on their luck, visiting the sick in the hospital, and taking mission trips in Texas and beyond, bringing Christ's mission to the world is part of what this church does.

And we're seeing something very special happening here. Now that we are in a post-pandemic normal, and under the leadership of Reverend Kathy, we are seeing more and more families making St. Luke's part of their community. We are seeing more people get involved in the very meaningful work that the church does.

Scott Stroud:

And during this season of the church's "Bless it forward" campaign, we're here to ask you to get involved.

Think about it like taking care of your home. No one is solely responsible for a home, but if all the members chip in, things flourish.

For me, St. Luke's is my first real church home. I was baptized here by Father Parker on Good Friday in 2014. No one has to bear all of the church's burdens, but it does not thrive if we all

don't do something meaningful to reflect how important St. Luke's is for each of us. That's how we can take care of our church home.

One way to do so is to make a financial commitment. There is no pot of Episcopal gold that Rev. Kathy can rummage through in the back. We are the church, and it will not thrive without our participation, energy, and yes, financial support. The mission work that the church does, the building upkeep, the AC, staff salaries – the vast majority of these funds come from our pledges. Any contribution you're able to make is an investment in the work that this church can do for everyone in this room and for the greater community.

Beyond a financial pledge, we ask you to think about the many other ways to support the church's work, from volunteering for service opportunities to acting as a greeter to signing with the incredible choir to helping with upkeep. We are proud to serve as co-chairs for this committee and we're happy to answer any questions you might have – or to get you answers if we don't know. Even more, we're proud to invite you to join us in supporting this incredible community. Thank you.