On January 24, the Episcopal Church celebrates the feast day of Florence Li Tim-Oi on the eve of the anniversary of her ordination. Florence, being ordained in 1944, amidst injustice, intolerance, and war, is remembered as the first woman in the Anglican Communion to be ordained.

The clergy of St. Paul’s strives to live up to her legacy of perseverance and persistence. From 1958 to 1974, all churches in China were closed. Kept from her flock, Florence struggled immensely until that time passed. Today, we too mourn our lost connections. We travel this road together, but at times, it’s as if we are traveling alone. But like Florence, we are never truly alone when we are part of something bigger. Something life-changing, and life-giving.

We are together when the Rev. Nancy Vaders organizes virtual food drives, when the Rev. Darby Everhard crafts our online liturgy, when the Rev. Sara Ardrey-Graves preaches about wailing frogs on Facebook Live, and when the Rev. Lauren Villemuer-Drenth leads children in online chapel services.

That is what it means to build the kingdom of God. When we come together despite hardship, global strife, or pandemic to share God’s good news, we cannot be alone. It is what drove Florence Li Tim-Oi, it is what drives our clergy, and it is why we pledge at St. Paul’s.
Man many at St. Paul’s know that on January 25, the Episcopal Church commemorates the Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle. What people may not know is that on the next day, January 26, we commemorate Timothy, Titus, and Silas, Companions of Saint Paul. These were the people who supported Paul. The Episcopal organization Forward Movement describes Timothy and Titus as Gentiles who seemed “to have accepted the Christian faith at the end of a long and deep personal struggle. It was not an easy step to take.”

Transformation is messy, and it takes many shapes. Our campus was transformed in 2020 thanks to the generous parishioners who both pledged and contributed to the capital campaign. Every time a child is baptized, a person is confirmed, a couple is married, or a life is celebrated, the entire parish family is transformed because we are one community. Paul could not have changed the world, if not for his friends’ support. That is why we remember Timothy, Titus, and Silas, because Paul wasn’t alone. Your pledge helps bring us together, no matter what challenges we face. It means we can worship, learn, feed, and promote justice. You are part of the saints among us.

The prayer for Timothy, Titus, and Silas reads: Just and merciful God, in every generation you raise up prophets, teachers and witnesses to summon the world to honor and praise your holy Name: We thank you for sending Timothy, Titus and Silas, whose gifts built up your Church by the power of the Holy Spirit. Grant that we too may be living stones built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ our Savior; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. Amen.
Each fall, St. Paul’s asks every parishioner to make a financial commitment to support the ongoing ministries of the church during the coming year. If you are new to the church or about to make your first-ever pledge, we hope these questions and answers will be helpful.

**What is a pledge?** Your pledge is your heartfelt, documented financial commitment to support St. Paul’s ministries and programs in the year ahead.

**Why not simply make non-pledge contributions?** Pledges provide the Vestry with an estimate of expected income essential to the preparation of the church’s annual budget. St. Paul’s simply cannot operate and thrive without a reasonable estimate of its financial resources. Your pledge reinforces the importance of God and St. Paul’s in your life.

**How much should I pledge?** Your pledge is a personal decision between God, you, and your family. It should be grounded in your faith, love, and commitment to God’s work through St. Paul’s. It requires reflection, prayer, and priority.

**Is my pledge confidential?** Yes. Pledges are kept confidential.

**How do I submit my pledge?** You can mail in the pledge card included or go to the St. Paul’s website and click on “Stewardship,” where there is an option to submit your pledge online.

**How can I pay my pledge?** There are several convenient ways to honor your pledge, including recurring “Tithe.ly” payments, monthly bank draft payments, personal checks using pledge envelopes, or payments of appreciated stocks and IRA payments.

**How do I set up a Tithe.ly account for make a recurring monthly payment?** Visit tithe.ly/give or download the free Tithe.ly Giving app from the Apple or Android app store to create a Tithe.ly giving account. With a Tithe.ly giving account, you can set up recurring gifts, give to multiple funds at once, manage multiple payment methods, and view your giving record at any time.

**Do you accept pre-payments for next year’s pledge?** Yes. We are glad to accept pre-payments. Please let us know on your pledge card that you plan to pay your 2021 pledge in advance.

**What if I need to update and change my pledge amount?** We understand that life’s circumstances do change, often unexpectedly. Contact the church to have your pledge amount adjusted at any time during the year.

**Want to know more?** Contact Margaret Turner, Director of Stewardship, at (336) 723-4391, ext. 1210, or mturner@stpauls-ws.org.