



October 25, 2023

Stewardship: Past, **Present** and Future

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." – *Hebrews 13:8*

Stewardship is an invitation to participate in the work of God's Spirit at Everybody's Church.

In worship, we have heard from FPC members about their enthusiasm for some of the ministries to which we are called as Everybody's Church. Stewardship can be thought of as sharing our Presence, Participation, Prayer, and Pledging – or time, treasure, and talents – to support the ministries of Christ's church.

The Finance and Stewardship Committee along with Session has begun the budgeting process. Recognizing that the pandemic and economy have impacted our society, we share the following to highlight where we have been and where we are, while leaning into the promise that God's gracious presence is with us *yesterday, today, and forever*. Below you will see net membership, congregational giving (both pledge and non-pledge combined), budgeted expenses and percent of expenses covered by our giving from 2020 until today:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Membership</u>	<u>Congregational Giving</u>	<u>Budgeted Expenses</u>	<u>% paid by Giving</u>
2020	818	\$1,049,000	\$1,252,000	84%
2021	809	\$1,018,000	\$1,307,000	77%
2022	809	\$927,000	\$1,425,000	65%
2023	702	\$880,000	\$1,311,000	67%* (projected results)

Over the past four years declining membership coupled with inflation has increased our reliance upon our First Fund allotments and government COVID grants to make up budget shortfalls. We recognize that these numbers might seem alarming; however, as God's people, we are not without hope, which is why we share the above numbers for information purposes only.

We believe God is up to good things and will provide what we need in just the right time as we continue to follow the one who *is the same yesterday, today, and forever*. Session committee chairs are submitting their financial hopes and dreams for Session approval in January in preparation for the congregation's annual meeting. We are creating our "dream budget" – where do we see God calling and leading us in the yet-to-be-written future.

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Our stewardship response is called a pledge, which is a prayerfully discerned and gratitude-filled response to God's good gifts and presence in our lives which *is the same yesterday, today, and forever*. We will dedicate our 2024 pledges on November 12. We understand there may be many reasons it might be difficult to make a pledge, though please keep in mind that a pledge empowers us to plan and provide vibrant ministries as we follow God's lead together. We encourage all FPC members to prayerfully consider how they will increase their support for the ministries and missions of Everybody's Church.

In Service to Christ,  
FPC Finance and Stewardship Committee