

In Touch

An Occasional Newsletter
from the Stewardship Committee



Seeking the Light

Third Presbyterian Church, Rochester, New York

July 2005, Vol. 1, No. 1

What does Stewardship mean to you?

"Stewardship is part of our lives as Christians. It is integral to our worship. Stewardship reminds us that we are stewards of God's gifts during our lifetime and the gifts we are given are to be used to further God's purposes."

Doug Phillips

Stewardship asks me to support the work of my church and its mission financially, to contribute to the costs of maintaining and growing our church, to respond faithfully to the trust given us by our church family, and to accept responsibility for "dues" for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). It is an opportunity for me to give of my time, talents, dollars to an organization that I trust and believe in as well as an opportunity for me to say "thank you, Third Church."

Lea Theuer

What stewardship means to me: responsibility, ownership, a sense of privilege.

Beth Adams

Why A Stewardship Newsletter?

Too often, stewardship is a "once a year" event. In churches all over the United States, congregations are approached by letter, or visit, or phone call, and asked to contribute their dollars to support the church's ministry and mission. But the rest of the year is often silent about stewardship. Some members may even feel that they are ignored except during the stewardship campaign.

With this newsletter, we on the Stewardship Committee want to begin a process of encouraging our congregation to think about stewardship all year long. As communication is often a key to success in any human venture, we are committing ourselves to enhanced communications about stewardship. Hence the title "In Touch." We'll keep

you up to date on church pledging and finances. In addition, we'll use the newsletter to help us think about the whole concept of giving to support God's work, well before anyone is asked to contribute or pledge. In the next few months we plan to look at our giving from many aspects, and we welcome your reactions and questions.

The Stewardship Committee

Bill Bay

Carol Coons

John Malach

Sue Melech

Doug Phillips

Dick Shellman

Fred Smith

P.S. Thanks to members of the Session, Trustees and Deacons for sharing their insights on the meaning of stewardship.

An Attitude of Gratitude

Stewardship: What do you think of when you see that word? Most of us think of being asked to make a financial commitment for the coming year. At some level, however, we are aware that stewardship is more than money. Stewardship is how we live out our calling as followers of Christ. The dictionary defines a steward as a care-taker. Stewardship is the recognition that we are not owners of anything we have, but rather caretakers of God's gifts to us. Stewardship is our response to God's love and care. Stewardship is what we do after we say that we believe.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)—

These will focus on pledging as a part of stewardship. Our next issue will focus more directly on budget and finances.

Why Should I Pledge?

Our church is supported by both pledges and contributions. Not all churches ask their members to pledge: they survive from week to week, relying on contributions in the offering plate, or more extensively on other forms of fund-raising. However, it is very difficult to plan for our program, facility and staff when the amount of money available is not known. Simply stated, making a pledge each year makes it possible to plan and budget for the church's programs, upkeep, salaries and mission. It is a commitment made to God, and a sign of trust in God to provide the income over the year to fulfill that pledge.

Does My Pledge Matter?

Yes! Absolutely! Our planning is supported by the gifts of everybody. And regardless of the amount of the pledge, pledging is one tangible way to respond to God's love by supporting the mission of the church.

Is Stewardship Strictly a Financial Decision?

Along with monetary pledges and contributions, your gifts of time and talent are a vital part of our stewardship process. There are many ways you can make such gifts: supporting our youth ministry by teaching Sunday School, serving as an usher or greeter at Sunday worship, and supporting the work of one of our many Outreach committees are just a few examples.

What Is a Pledge?

A pledge is a formal annual financial commitment to Third Church. Pledges come in varying amounts. Pledges are paid weekly, monthly, annually. Some pay their pledges by stock transfer or in other ways. The essence of a pledge is the commitment to support our financial planning.

We seek pledges in late fall. Pledges may be paid at any time during the following calendar year. Quarterly reminders and a statement of the balance of your pledge are sent each quarter by the church office. It is still not too late to pledge for 2005.

What Is a Contribution?

A few church members prefer not to pledge, but do make regular financial contributions to the church. Though pledges are helpful in the planning process, we certainly respect the choice to support the church through contributions.

What About Per Capita?

Per capita is the amount per member that the church is assessed by our presbytery to support the ministry of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Our presbytery per capita for 2005 is \$22.64 per member, a total of \$30,971.52. For 2005, 325 members have pledged \$7,540 to underwrite this expense. Thus far, \$5,071 of that commitment has been paid. You may still make a contribution toward our per capita costs.

How Much, or How Little, May I Pledge?

Pledging is a personal act of faith. Some members pledge a percentage of their income and even "tithes" (10%). Everyone should think about it. Pray about it. Commit to it!

Why Do You Pledge?

The church needs to know what it can count on in terms of financial support from its members. So we pledge an amount that the church can count on from us. We know that maintaining an outstanding program staff, a large and serviceable complex of buildings, and a solid program is totally reliant on the financial support of church members, including us.

Kathy Schumacher

Fran and I pledge financially because we can. We pledge with our efforts and concerns because we have found we have always received more than we give. We encourage others to take an active role in the church's program/outreach regardless of financial or personal circumstances, because we have seen that some of the most faithful stewards are those that sometimes feel they have the least to give. We are called to work in community. We can best respond to Christ's call together!

George Gotcsik

I pledge because that is part of my commitment as a member of the congregation and part of my commitment to portion some of my resources to help others.

Ruth Fleischmann-Colgan

Why I pledge - to support the mission of Third Church across the spectrum.... from the most visible events to the daily, mundane activities that keep things moving along!

Bethany Rague

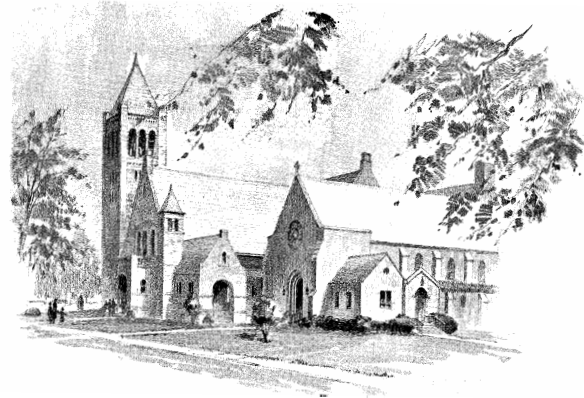
WHAT IF I CANNOT FULFILL MY PLEDGE?

Our financial situations change from year to year. Please contact Carol Foster in the Finance Office (cfoster@thirdpresbyterian.org or 271-6537, ext. 111) with any updates. These conversations remain confidential.

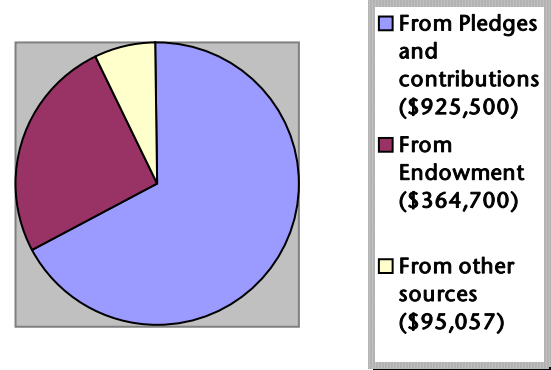
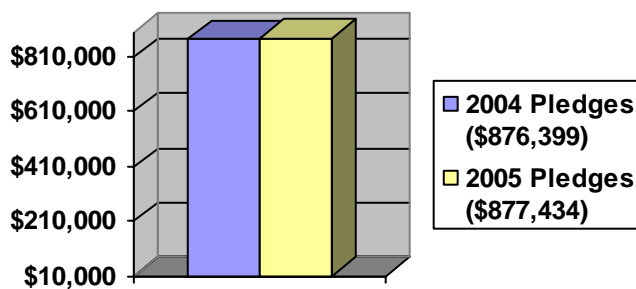
Facts and Figures

PLEDGE UPDATE

In 2005, Third Church added 44 new pledges for a total of 532 pledging households (individuals and families) for 2005. Our current pledges for 2005 total \$877,434. This amount is \$17,500 less than the total pledge budget of \$895,000 for 2005. There is still room for new or increased pledges this year.



HOW YOUR PLEDGE SUPPORTS OUR BUDGET—Annual budgeted income is \$1,385,297.



The next "In Touch" will focus on how your pledges are allocated to support the church's ministry and mission.

PLEDGING PROFILE

- 532 households (individuals and families) out of approximately 1000 households pledged \$877,434 for 2005. How much more we would be able to do if a greater percentage of our households pledged—at a variety of levels!
- Our average pledge is \$1649, up 6% from 2004.
- In 2005, 245 pledgers increased their pledge, 184 maintained the same pledge, and 59 decreased their pledge. We received 44 new pledges.

Amount of Pledge	Number	Total
\$ 0-99	20	980
\$ 100-499	127	34,838
\$ 500-999	128	83,893
\$ 1000-1499	75	88,576
\$ 1500-1999	49	82,292
\$ 2000-2499	39	84,267
\$ 2500-2999	17	45,816
\$ 3000-3499	14	43,260
\$ 3500-3999	7	25,313
\$ 4000-4999	15	66,344
\$ 5000-10,000	35	230,996
\$ 10,000 and above	6	90,859
Total	532	\$877,434



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Final Thoughts. . .

Stewardship is my way of making a difference.
Jennifer Held

Stewardship means to me supporting my church with as many of the gifts the good Lord has given me as I can.
Camille Clayton

The Bible tells us that the church is God's primary way of working in the world. Therefore I want to contribute both financially and with volunteer service for the effective ministry of His church so that It can accomplish God's purposes and I can feel connected.
Joan Fisher

I pledge because those who have the financial responsibility of the church need to know what they can expect from financial support of members to meet the demands of expenses involved in ongoing operations of the church. It is my personal statement of commitment to the support of the church and its mission.
Rob White

Touchstone Texts

Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.
—Matthew 25:23

Now as we have many parts in one body, and all the parts do not have the same function, in the same way we who are many are one body in Christ and individually members of one another.
—Romans 12:4-5

*Treasure too you have entrusted,
gain through powers your grace conferred;
Ours to use for home and kindred,
and to spread the gospel word.
Open wide our hands, in sharing,
as we heed Christ's ageless call,
Healing, teaching, and reclaiming,
serving you by loving all.*
—Robert L. Edwards