

Oh, the places you'll go and the things you'll do. That's a little bit of Dr. Seuss with some of my words added. The Spirit of Third Church sails on Nov. 2 on a journey, on our journey. It's an ambitious journey. In some ways, it's a journey of faith. Last week you heard about all our stops and the things we want to do at each one. But there are costs of this journey that faith alone will not cover. Each cruise ship has a purser, the money person. His or her job is to keep the ship from sinking in debt. This morning, I will speak for that person. There are lots of expenses. There are the owners. They get a share of the income. In a way, we have that. We call it our denomination. There is the crew, from the captain to those that clean the cabins and keep the engines running. There are those who cook the meals and entertain the passengers. We are lucky on our journey, as many of these volunteer their time just to be on the trip with us and enjoy its many benefits. But the rest of them expect to be paid for their services, even the purser who collects the money and pays the bills. Our engines won't run on faith. They need fuel which we have to purchase. We need to replace things that have worn out, and sometimes buy new things to keep our ship more efficient and our passengers more comfortable. We even pay to advertise our ship, hoping we will gain more passengers with its many attractions. There is one more thing that our ship does that many others do not. We give away stuff. It's kind of our charitable contribution arm. We call it outreach.

I've mentioned a whole lot of ways that the ship we call Spirit of Third Church spends money. Where do we get this money? Some folks who have journeyed on our ship in the past liked it so much that they gave us some money to assure that we continue to offer our services. We put this money away in places that made it grow over the long term. We call it endowment. We use some of this money each year to fund our trips. The greatest part of our income comes from the folks who book passage on our journey every year. You are our passengers. Currently, we are experiencing some rough seas. The value of our endowment has fallen. The economy is distressed. Some of our passengers are wondering if they can come with us this year. Some are wondering if they have to move down a deck or two. We are concerned because our ship will not go into dry dock. It still runs well, but we don't want to eliminate or shorten some of our stops. We **WILL** be sailing November 2 regardless. We need everyone on board. We even need those folks who read our brochures but haven't come with us recently, to

come on our journey this year, even if it's on the lowest deck. I haven't talked numbers. Read about those in your copy of "in Touch". Come on November 2nd with your bags packed ready to board the Spirit of Third Church. You won't be sorry.