

In Touch

A Seasonal Newsletter
from the Stewardship Committee

Third Presbyterian Church, Rochester, New York

A Year of Sowing What does this mean with respect to our Church?

It could mean:

By Worship on Sunday and Wednesday, we are sowing seeds of spiritual growth and nurture.

By teaching Sunday School we are sowing seeds of faithfulness in the future of the Church – those kids will grow up to be good members of congregations somewhere and “spread the word.”

By working with new Moms and their babies from at-risk populations, we are sowing the seeds that will help them grow into responsible parents and healthy children.

By providing Junior and Youth Choirs, we are sowing the seeds for a love of music which will stay with the kids for the rest of their lives.

By serving homeless families for a week, we are sowing seeds of hope. We share ideas and suggestions with the families which will enable them to have a better chance of a good life down the road.

By listening to hungry people in Dining Room Ministry, we are learning more about their lives, and sowing seeds of generosity which will live on in those we serve.



We Shall Come Rejoicing:

Sowing Faithfully,

Harvesting Abundantly

**Third Presbyterian Church
Stewardship 2016**

Fall 2015

By tutoring children in City Schools, we are sowing seeds of education. These children could have a more successful, happy life because of the extra help we are providing.

By building houses through Habitat for Humanity and in New Orleans, we are sowing seeds of security, homeownership and hope for a brighter future.

By visiting the sick and the homebound, we are sowing seeds of fellowship and friendship that help erase the loneliness of our own members.

By learning more about the Bible and spirituality, we are sowing seeds of contentment and spiritual growth for our members and friends of this church.

By experiences with people of other faiths, we are sowing the seeds of inclusiveness, tolerance and peace.

These are all good reasons to give generously to our Stewardship effort this year. Stewardship Sunday is November 15. Your gift can be small or large or in-between – we simply ask that you participate in supporting the Church in this way.



Greetings from the Third Church Stewardship Committee!

You may or may not have noticed, but we have been meeting all year, working to spotlight all the ways in which your pledge dollars support the different ways in which our church and its members strive to be God's hands in the world. In this new "Year of Sowing," we have the opportunity to sow and grow our resources to really make a difference in the lives of our members, in the lives of the community around us, and in the lives of God's children in all corners of the world.

"Make a Difference"

Does that sound somewhat familiar?

A bit of history: a year ago in the Fall of 2014, one of our committee members summed up the situation: "This Year is Different." A significant deficit loomed, each year fewer members pledged, and several supportive members had either passed away or moved. What to do? We prayed for guidance, talked with each other about our love for this church and concern about its future, and came to the realization that we need to share this concern with you. And that's what we did.



We told the story to you and you responded.

For the first time in many years, the number of pledges for 2015 exceeded that of the year before. An anonymous donor made a \$104,000 gift to cover the deficit if necessary. Pledges are still being received this fall, with the expectation that by the end of the year, we will come close to or reach the 2015 budgeted pledge goal. Not only that, but it was necessary to use only about one-half of the generous gift to balance the budget, leaving the rest to use as needed in another year.

Indeed: This Year Is Different!

But now we are at a crossroads. Can we continue to support our church at this critical level? As Christians, we believe that everything that we own is a gift from God. Financial gifts to our church make it possible to sustain our community of faith to reach out as a church to show God's love to the world around us. A 3% average increase over last year in pledge dollars would make it even more possible to reach our budgeted pledge goal for 2016 and to support and expand our ministries.

If you pledged last year, we ask you to continue your pledge support this year and to raise the amount if possible.

If you have never pledged, please consider making a pledge this year. Remember: a pledge is an estimate of giving or a statement of intent. It can be changed, increased or decreased during the year as financial situations change. But pledging is a way to show your gratitude to God, and provide the best way for the church to plan for its ministries. Again, please consider a pledge for 2016.

Some more thoughts on Pledging 2016

Why Pledge? Why not just put money in the offering plate each Sunday?

Contributions every Sunday and offerings throughout the year are important ways to praise God and to support the church's mission. But, only a few of us actually attend church every single Sunday!

Both approaches to giving to the church are ways of indicating our understanding that all that we have has been given to us by God and as a way of expressing our gratitude for all we have been given. Our financial gifts to our church help to make it possible to reach out to God's children whose lives are a struggle, both here and around the world.

But, again the question: Why Pledge?

Recently, a member of the Stewardship Committee was asked why he buys a season ticket to GEVA each year. He responded that if he only buys single tickets and attends occasional plays, that inertia often will take over and he will end up not attending plays that he really would have enjoyed. The Season Ticket is a planning tool, both budget-wise and calendar wise. A Pledge is also a planning tool. In addition to expressing gratitude to God, it is the best way to make sure that our household budget supports work that demonstrates our faith and our priorities.

Last year, pledge income made up about 62% of the Third Church budget. Contributions, endowment income, fund-raising, fees for church space and other one-time gifts such as memorials made up the rest of the budget. But pledge support is the largest and most dependable source of income for the church.

As you think about pledging this year, please consider the following statement, written three years ago but speaking to us today.

"Pledging allows both you and the church to make intentional decisions about finances and financial giving. When you plan ahead for your giving, you make conscious choices about spending your money in ways that reflect your faith and values. Receiving your pledge allows the Session and Trustees, our church's governing boards, to do for our church's community what you do for your own household; that is, to plan wisely for the use of the church's resources in support of the church itself and ministry to which God has called us."

We hope that most people will pledge during the Stewardship season and we hope that most people will prayerfully consider raising their pledge. However, pledges may be made throughout the year. Pledges can be changed, increased or lowered at any time, depending on your circumstances. Payment can be made weekly, monthly, quarterly or yearly via cash, checks, donation of stock or electronic fund transfer (EFT).

Thank you for all you do, and for your constant support of our church.



“An Invitation to Sow”

Preliminary 2016 Budget

2016 Budget for 2015 In Touch

<u>INCOME</u>	<u>Preliminary 2016</u>
Pledges, Contributions, Gifts & Grants (Pledge goal, \$931,500)	\$ 980,020
Endowment Income	\$ 327,000
Rent: Day Care & 34 Meigs	\$ 39,000
Fund Raising	\$ 58,400
Miscellaneous Income	<u>\$ 6,025</u>
Total Income	\$ 1,410,445
<u>EXPENSE</u>	
Personnel	\$ 898,806
Outreach --PC (U.S.A.)	\$ 80,000
Outreach-- Third Church programs	\$ 115,770
Worship, Music & Arts	\$ 38,610
Faith Development	\$ 14,240
Boards & Committees	\$ 5,580
Office & Finance	\$ 75,879
Membership/Fellowship	\$ 6,015
Building Maintenance & Utilities	\$ 190,100
Support to Presbytery (per capita)	\$ 36,535
Fund Raising	<u>\$ 30,000</u>
Total Expense	\$ 1,491,535
Projected Deficit	\$ (81,090)

Stewardship Sunday is November 15

Yours in faith from the Stewardship Committee—

Bill Coons (chair), Carol Coons, Jeanne Fisher, Bill Jones, Susan Melech, Kathy Schumacher, Jim Stewart, John Wilkinson, (staff)