



SALEM FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

May 9, 2023

Dear Family & Friends,

Our Stewardship theme this year is "Becoming," and the question we pose is not, "What do I need to do?", but "Who do I need to Become?" Pastor Greg laid this out nicely in his April 26th letter.

Every year around this time we ask our members to think and pray about how they are going to support our church for the year (July through June) to come. Although we are a religious institution, and while we hope all of our members contribute time, talent and treasure, it is money that pays our bills. Enclosed with this letter is your pledge card for the year to come. We ask that you return it no later than Stewardship Sunday, May 21st. You can also make your pledge online at saalemfpc.org/give.

During our interim period, which coincided with the pandemic, member support of our church has been steady. Either one of these events, interim or pandemic, could have easily led to a loss of support, and both of them together were very worrisome. As we began this new time, with new pastoral leadership, things were decent and in order with our finances.

We have concerns. We are graduating more members to heaven than we are attracting new members (but we are showing definite signs of new life). High inflation is affecting all of our expenses. We know it also affects our members. Our building was moved to its current site in 1956 and requires constant repairs. Our members tend not to receive large raises, bonuses, profit-sharing and the like...because they are retired or work in the public sector.

Church leadership takes our responsibility to be good stewards of the resources entrusted to us very seriously. Both staff and Session are committed to being fiscally responsible and regularly seek out the best prices and value for our expenses. We believe that by being diligent in these practices, we can maximize the impact of the resources that we have been given and continue to do God's work in the most effective way possible.

A full inclusion community of ordinary people experiencing and embodying God's extraordinary love

We are hopeful. We have a new Pastor. We are seeing new people and children at worship! The worship options seem to be working. We had a very successful year with our warming shelter and are actively engaged in related issues in the community. We have done some good things at Richmond School with our "Mustard Seed Fund," plus we have used our time and talent to host Family Promise, partner with other local churches for youth events, welcome new members, baptize babies, celebrate worship with New Beginnings, welcome children into our building every weekday [through Little Friends Montessori], and began to facilitate conversations between local partners to care for the medically fragile in our houseless community. The list is long and these are only a few highlighted examples of how we are becoming an impact in Salem.

"From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded." Luke 12:48. This applies to many of us, and we have heard it many times. Pastor Greg, in his letter, let us know that he and Heidi are increasing their pledge 10% this year. We like leading by example and so we are doing the same. Please think and pray about this and be as generous as you can.

Thank you.

T.J. Putman & Tim Nissen
Stewardship Committee