Dear Congregation,

Thank you for your prayerful consideration of our annual stewardship campaign. This is an important time for our church as we line up our expected contributions with our aspirations. As the congregation reflects on our search for a pastor, the Transition Team/Search Committee, Cabinet and Trustees are working to understand the appropriate balance between church needs, fiscal sustainability and strategic growth. A few highlights:

- We have committed to living in a balanced budget, as well as continuing to stay within a maximum yearly withdrawal of 4% or less from our endowment fund as income;
- the pastoral search gives the congregation the need to re-evaluate the tasks and responsibilities that they believe will fulfill its identity and vision; and
- based on the needs of the congregation, the Transition/Search Team, Cabinet and Trustees believe we should continue to assess and evolve in how to meet these needs, maximizing the church budget while remaining sustainable.

Participation in the stewardship campaign is critical to fulfilling our vision. If we don’t reach the needed contributions in our campaign, we’ll need to prioritize the programs/activities/events/missions based on what we can afford.

In order to properly plan for the congregation’s identity and vision, we are inviting the congregation to voice their opinions on what makes the church, and what we value as we move forward.

- Your input helps ensure we have a cohesive approach in satisfying our vision.
- Furthermore, it is important for the congregation to understand that maintaining a realistic budget in light of the new pastor may lead to tough decisions including staffing and prioritization of activities.

How will we do this?

- the Transition Team has continued to collect data and build on last year’s visioning work;
- the Cabinet will begin asking committees for specific feedback concerning: core values and priorities within the committee, potential scenarios (e.g. changes in priorities, vision, how to engage the congregation in its growth, breakdown between staff and volunteer time, etc.); and
- the Trustees have been evaluating different scenarios regarding expected church income, pastor salary ranges and impacts on the sustainability of the budget and future growth.

These activities aim to provide information for the congregation for the Nov. 24th budget so that the members of the congregation can make informed decisions on the pastoral and church direction. To maximize congregation participation, several events are scheduled to allow for discussion and guidance to the Transition/Search Team, Cabinet and Trustees:

- Oct. 27th – Celebration Luncheon for gratitude and reflection: thankful for the gifts we’ve received and reflect on the vision of the church
- Congregational input opportunities after worship – we invite you to join us at one or more dates
  - Nov. 3rd
  - Nov 10th
  - Nov. 17th – Additional if needed
- Nov. 24th – Budget meeting after church
We look forward to hearing your input about the priorities for you in this congregation. Rev. Sue discussed in the last Stewardship letter about how we look for a sense of home; a place and a way that ignites the spirit, comforts pain, and is a community who believes in extravagant welcome. How can we be bold and generous givers to best position our church as this place and way? How can we do this through our time, talents and treasures? We ask for your prayers along this path, and your joyous participation in the rich community of this church in discerning where we are called to go, and in creating this place for each other.

Respectfully,

Board of Trustees,

Brenda Lord, Brett Borglund, Dave Smith, Jack Glennon, Nick Perron