



Dear First Presbyterian Friends,

After three months with the congregation as your Interim Pastor, many aspects of our life together as God's people in this place are becoming clearer. Among these is our financial situation. Your session has recently worked hard on both the stewardship campaign and the preparation of the 2010 budget. Nevertheless, we are in a challenging situation, and I feel it is important to share some aspects of where we are with you. Let me do so in terms of the bad news, the good news, and what we can do.

The Bad News

- Our budget has shrunk \$300,000 from 2007 to the proposed 2010 budget. Several program areas, especially mission, have been hard hit because of this.
- Our pastoral and program staff will receive no salary increase in 2010, and this is the second year in a row this has been the case. The administrative staff has received minimal increases.
- The unstable economy in general, and Michigan's in particular, have brought real economic loss and great anxiety to many.
- Increasingly crucial building maintenance and repair needs have had to be postponed.
- While the Session should be able to balance our budget for 2010, the ending of the Lilly Foundation's support for our ministerial residency program in 2011 and the calling of a new pastor mean significant increases in revenue will be needed in the future.

The Good News

- The Session and the church staff have done an outstanding job of "doing more with less" in the midst of these challenges.
- Reductions in staff have so far not been necessary.
- Congregational morale and levels of activity are good. Volunteers have stepped forward to help in many areas of the church's life in ways that have saved many dollars.
- While pledges have been slow to come in and are fewer in number so far this year, the average dollar amount per pledge has increased.

What We Can Do

- Hold your session and church staff in prayer that they may be responsive to the Spirit's leading in coping with our financial challenges.
- Please make every effort to fulfill your pledge for this year by December 31.
- If you have not submitted a pledge for 2010, please do so as soon as possible. If you need a pledge card, please contact the church office (662-4466). Or, you can now pledge online by going to the church's website (www.firstpresbyterian.org) and clicking on the "Deeper and Wider" section where, on the left side of the page, you will find "Pledge Form 2010." If you are hesitant to pledge because of income uncertainty, you can still pledge based upon your best estimate and make adjustments as necessary as 2010 unfolds.
- If you have already pledged, do please prayerfully consider if God is leading you to increase your support for next year. If so, you can fill out a revised pledge form.

Thank you for your prayerful attention to these matters.

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A prayer to share, from Erasmus in the sixteenth century:

O Lord Jesus Christ,
The Way, the Truth, the Life:
Do not let us stray from you, the Way,
Nor distrust you, the Truth,
Nor rest in anything but you, the Life. Amen +

See you in church!

Grace and peace,

Jany Farris