

From Our Pastor – December 2016

CELEBRATING THE HARVEST

One memorable moment from my interim season at Valley Presbyterian Church came while I was preaching a stewardship sermon. I was talking about the blessings of a bountiful harvest and how we celebrate with gratitude before the Lord when one of the leaders of the church entered the Sanctuary from the side pushing a very large orange wheelbarrow across in front of the chancel. The dialogue between us went something like this.

“Hey, I’m trying to preach a sermon here, what are you doing pushing a wheelbarrow right through my sermon?” I said. He replied, “It’s not a wheelbarrow!” “But it sure looks like one to me,” I said, “If it’s not a wheelbarrow, what is it?” With that he replied, “It’s an offering plate! A large harvest requires a large offering plate!” And with that he pushed the wheelbarrow right down the center aisle, and as he went the parishioners sitting along the aisle all pretended to throw their harvest blessings into it.

I tell you of that moment because I am equally excited about the amazing harvest that you have reaped this year. I want to share with you four statements about that harvest that are profoundly true.

1. To balance the budget for 2016 we projected that we would need to supplement pledges and gifts with \$60,000 from the Foundation. At this point it appears that we may not need all of that Foundation gift to end the year with a balanced budget. That’s good news!
2. The Foundation has also provided for some major capital needs that were not covered in the budget; but at this point we are able to say that the Foundation made more money in 2015 than we have needed to withdraw in 2016. That’s good news!
3. We started a wish list for special items beyond the budget, like the sound system and the electronic sign, and at this point the generosity given and pledged to the wish list exceeds the amount withdrawn from the Foundation for the budget. That's good news!
4. We voted at the annual meeting to raise an additional 1% of the operating budget for global mission, and when we add up all the gifts to global mission we are there. That’s good news!

Therefore, I am excited about the spirit of generosity and the posture of stewardship of our church family. We're moving in the right direction because we have confidence in the future and we are willing to invest in it. Success has come because many hands have pitched in to provide new opportunities, and there is excitement at harvest time. Added to the list of tangible blessings is an unimaginable list of gifts of time and talent, of spiritual graciousness and courageous discipleship that make this harvest a cause for great rejoicing before the Lord.

At the congregational meeting on December 4th we will present the budget for 2017 to the church family to be approved and pledged. Our hope is that if we can focus the spirit of generosity on the budget we will take a giant step forward toward financial sustainability. And that is great news!

David