

September 8, 2020

Friends,

The Church is the people.



I suspect that our church is one of the few places in your life that treats you like an adult. Sure, we have youth group and Pre-Confirmation. But worship is for everyone together – we don't separate the 12-year-olds from the 82-year-olds. Adults and youth together sing in Kathy's choir. Many of you already serve on committees, task forces, the deacon board or the session, right alongside people who used to teach you Sunday school. And when you're confirmed, you're just as confirmed as your grandmother. You get the idea. The Church is the people, and you are among the people.



So, here's one more way your church is treating you like an adult and asking you to do and be what you can – what God created you to do and to be. The church is asking you to give money. *Why does the church need money?* Well, I'm glad you asked:



1. We love and serve our neighbors in all kinds of ways, like the Walk-In Ministry (\$), through advocacy groups like Durham CAN (\$) and other mission partners like Urban Ministries (\$).

2. In order to do God's ministry in the world, we need a place to meet – when we can do that again – that's cool in the summer (\$), warm in the winter (\$) and dry all year long (\$).
3. We rent vans (\$) to go deepen our faith or serve at places like Montreat (\$), Massanetta (\$) and Appalachia Service Project (\$).
4. We give Bibles (\$) to give to kids and new folks, and buy curriculum (\$) to help us learn and supplies (\$) for all the silliness that is Youth Group. Not to mention toys for the nursery (\$) and worship bags (\$).
5. Your ministers have families (\$) and mortgages (\$) and fancy vacations to Europe (\$)(\$)(\$)(\$)(\$). Yes, my salary and the rest of the church staff's come from our giving. No, I do not travel to Europe. Or anywhere – it's a pandemic.



That's a lot of \$. Simply put, we do a lot of cool ministry and mission at First Pres., and we need some money – along with faithful people and the Holy Spirit – to make it all happen.

At FPC, like many churches, we collect money mostly through pledging. A pledge is a promise from a member or friend to give a certain amount of money in the next year. When we gather the pledges in the fall of 2020, we can figure out how much money to expect, so we know what we can plan to do in 2021. Some people give a portion of their pledged amount weekly, or monthly (me), or just all at once.

The next question is how much to pledge. I like this answer: "Give until it doesn't hurt." I try to give an amount that makes me feel good about what I'm doing – not shameful because it's weak sauce and not burdened because it's too much. I hope you will do the same. Maybe think about what you spend on stuff for yourself. Then think about what feels good to give to God to use in the church. A few suggestions...

- ✦ \$5 for every letter in Lenore Champion's name – that's \$70.
- ✦ \$8 for every youth group game you can think of.
- ✦ \$10 for every Sunday school teacher you've had at FPC.
- ✦ \$36 – that's \$3/month.
- ✦ \$182.50 – that's 50 cents/day.
- ✦ Or think of your own creative way to decide a good amount.



Think and pray about it. Talk with me if you'd like. And then pledge. Pledge dedication Sunday is October 25th– when we offer them to God in worship. Please turn in your pledge by then.

God with us in the hard,
John