



First Presbyterian Church

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Dear Church Family,

As your pastor, I have been asked to write a word about the “spiritual side” of giving and stewardship.

Then I wondered, what would God say?
Then I remembered, what has God said!
Let me summarize, let me personalize:

‘My precious child, I love you beyond your comprehension and deserving. I want the very best for you. Trust me!

I have blessed you with life, this wonderful world and life to come. I have given my Son for you and granted you my Spirit.

You are not your own but belong to me, now and forever!

You need to understand that you are not owners of anything – but stewards – acting on my behalf of all I have entrusted to you. When you act faithfully, obediently, you please me and you are laying up treasure in Heaven.

I know your circumstances, every detail. I know this has been a tough time for many – economically and in other ways. I care about you.

I also know you are among the richest, most blessed in the history of the world. I see your cars and your clothes closets, your homes and your lifestyles, your trips and investments. I have enriched you to the point there is enough to keep and to share, for you and for Me.

I want you to provide for your family, for food, shelter, medicine and even have fun! (really) I want you to enjoy life fully and abundantly.

But I also want you to be faithful, to serve My Higher purposes, to glorify me, investing in the Kingdom with your time/talent/treasure through My Chosen instrument, The Church.

I see the generous, sacrificial giving like the widow with her mite as well as the rich young ruler who sadly with-holds and walks away.

Giving is a true test of faith.

Here’s the plan: go ahead and keep 90% of what I’ve provided. You’re welcome!

But return unto Me for My Purposes 10% as first fruits, not leftovers. If you are not there yet in your faith journey, keep moving forward! Take the next step in the right direction, perhaps each year increasing your giving percentage until 10% is reached.

This world and all in it are passing away. What lasts, what matters most is My Love for you and your response.

I will bless you, I already have, and I will again – forever!

I’m counting on you. I’m trusting you, My steward.

What do you say?

How about, ‘Here I am Lord’?

*Affectionately,
Your Loving Heavenly Father
(paraphrased by Dr. Tom)*

P. S. Oh yes, I also want you to give for the right reasons, not out of fear or compulsion but cheerfully, joyfully, Ho Ho Ho hilariously and thankfully. And have a Happy Thanksgiving!

Commitment Sunday is November 21 and our theme, “Here I am, Lord” is our call to action for God’s work in our community and the world. Our focus in this campaign appropriately asks the congregation to search their hearts and souls for a response of commitment to our Lord as we live our lives as Christians. The Biblical message is clear, as to what our commitment should be. It’s up to each and every one of us to explore their own level of commitment in terms of time, talent and treasure.

Relevant history: Ten years ago the church’s physical plant consisted of the Sanctuary building with basement. In fact, shortly before that the interior of the Sanctuary was painted cement block without any of the woodwork presently in place. The facility was inadequate in all respects. Today, we have an attractive and functional facility that encourages prospective members to join us. If you were among the 175 that attended last Wednesday nights Salute to Veterans, you know the Thanksgiving dinner and Veterans Salute could NOT have been done without the new addition.

The expenses of operating the larger facility have become greater than envisioned. Membership has grown significantly since the new addition was opened (281 to 480). Three major initiatives; the “Well” worship service, the preschool ministry; and staffing the youth program were implemented. As expected, all three of the programs have experienced significant start up costs, which have consumed a major portion of cash reserves and put us in our current position

There’s plenty of good news – more than the space here to enumerate. We have a terrific staff, a congregation that is easy to love and, of course, an attractive physical presence in the community. Our Session, Deacons and Trustees are committed to the mission of the church, and they devote many hours of their time, talents as well as treasures. Our committees, organizations and work groups are similarly committed to God’s work. The recently added Alpha ministry is among our many activities and programs. We hope more members will move from the “audience” and become “cast” members and embrace the three “T’s” as a better way to know God and the congregation

Cost control: With an absence of improved revenues, we are even more diligent at controlling expenses in order to preserve the quantity and quality of our programs and services. In 2009 we froze salaries (our largest expense) at 2008 levels in order to maintain our service and staff levels. We are trying to be creative at reducing variable expenses, for example, this mailing, (Pastor’s message, Stewardship message and giving statements) has been combined into one mailing vs. three. Unfortunately, some expenses, such as insurance, utilities and maintenance do not offer much in the way of cost reduction opportunities. We find ourselves at a point where further cost reductions can be achieved only by service and/or program reductions.

We will help: We plan to postpone for one year the 2010 pledge campaign for the building fund. During that time, we will use the available building funds to make mortgage payments. We ask, however, that members complete their existing pledges through March 31, 2010.

“Giving is PERSONAL – it is between you and your God – so be generous!”

Jim Wootton, Member

Here I am, Lord!

Ken Lay, Elder and Treasurer

George Denick, Elder and Clerk of Session