



GRACE FIRST

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

6 Matthew: 19-21

November 3, 2024

Dear Friends and Family in Christ,

Stewardship Sunday is upon us once again, and with it comes a time to reflect on our generosity and service in the past year and for the year ahead. How have you given of yourself to Christ; not only your time or your treasure to the church, but of yourself, of your heart? In what ways have you been called to serve? Have you answered those calls or pretended not to hear? Between family, work, and the endless sources of distraction it's easy to get caught up in the trappings of the world around us. But they rarely give us the fulfilled life that we expect them to bring. Only through Christ can we find the true peace we seek, a peace that is a light in the darkness that enable others to see.

As we evaluate our duties during this upcoming season, consider your commitment to the Church, to the Lord, and to yourself. Take time to heed God's words by studying scripture, praying, and allowing the Holy Spirit to come into you and be your eyes so that you may see the calling He has laid out in front of you. Whether through tithing, volunteering your time, or teaching others, you have a responsibility to the Lord, who will make known His plans for you when you are still and ready to listen.

The past year has been a journey filled with uncertainties, but while we did not always know what to expect around the next bend, it has been a positive year, nonetheless. We have been continually blessed by the generosity of our members and by the responsible choices made by stewards of the past. The Session is excited to announce that our offerings for 2024 are on pace to exceed the past few years, and despite some unexpected bills we still came in under our target for expenses. Our budget for 2025 is slightly reduced, but appropriately sized given the changes in church leadership. With David Slyter installed as our Head Pastor we can now focus our attention on moving forward as a congregation and allowing the winds of the Holy Spirit to sail us in the direction of God's choosing. As we navigate the path ahead, it is important that we continue to support the Church and one another to the best of our abilities.

As we look forward, it's important to embrace change and not allow fear to prevent us from taking necessary steps forward. But the changes ahead must honor our past traditions and the attributes that define our Church today, such as: Mission and Outreach; Music Ministry; LOGOS; fellowship with family and friends; and above all our dedication to serving the Lord. These are all pillars of Grace First and will continue to be. As we celebrate our 150th year, we must reflect on the changes that we have endured over the past century and a half. There is a reason this Church is still together after such a long time, and it continues to have a purpose to fulfill: to teach God's word to anyone who will hear it. We must open our hearts and our doors and invite others to join us here. We must shine our light so brightly that those around us are inspired to take up a torch themselves. The only way our church will survive another 150 years is to continually renew our membership by inviting others to join our family.

As a member of Grace First, you are welcomed and loved by this congregation and the Lord. Let us invest our treasure in heaven by building a community on earth that worships and loves the Lord. Let us serve Him through our actions and the ways we spend our time and live our lives. Let us grow our membership by sharing our love with our friends and neighbors and making sure they know they are also welcomed here. Let us give thanks to God for the abundance of blessings He has bestowed upon us and let us share those treasures with the world and not store them, so they may not be destroyed or stolen.

Enclosed in this packet, you will find information on the 2025 budget and a pledge brochure. The Session has called a Congregational Meeting for Sunday, November 10th to explain and present the budget. We ask that pledges be received to be blessed on Stewardship Sunday, November 17th or mailed to the church office by the 17th. If you have any questions, please ask a member of Session.

Thank you for your prayerful consideration of how best to share your blessings to further the love of Christ both within our walls and in our community. God has a plan for Grace First. Your generosity will help define our story moving forward.

With Hope and Love,

The Session of Grace First Presbyterian Church

Timothy Barnes
Robyn Coffey
Rusty Crownover
Kevin Goeldner
Larry Hale

Dawn Kahlden
Dave Kaiser
Sharon Odom
Virginia Welsh
Rev. David Slyter, Moderator