

October 2023

The Stewardship Committee would like to thank the congregation for their generous support in last year's pledge campaign. Your support truly made a difference in our ability to carry out the work of our church. It is the time of year again when we reach out to you for the coming year. A time to reflect on how much our church means not only to our members but the community at large. **Because of YOU our church makes a difference.**

We are all aware of the cost to maintain our homes and property. The same holds true for our Church. We have costs associated with the Operational expenses of the church as well as supporting our community and outreach programs. The Operations revenue that is received comes mainly from our pledge donations. Other revenue comes from:

- Christmas-Easter-Lenten envelope donations
- Fundraising events like Main Street Festival, Tag Sale, Bricks for Prayer Garden, Gift Card purchases
- Church Hall rentals

The expenses related to the operation of the church are as follows:

- Salary and Wages
- Office Administration costs, paper goods
- Occupancy of the church costs such as
 - Repair, Service & Maintenance for copy/postage machine, Terminix and HVAC
 - Church cleaning, grounds maintenance, trash removal, snow removal
 - Burglar Alarm monitoring
 - Electric, Gas, Oil, and Water
- General Liability Insurance
- Payroll and Accounting Services
- Dues and Subscriptions (Fairfield East, Educational Conference, UCC dues)
- Music Operations
- Board and Committee Expenses
- Church School
- Other Miscellaneous Expenses (bank service charges, flowers, pledge envelope and financial advisory fee)

Our community and outreach programs also need your support as well which is done through income to Benevolence. This revenue comes from your pledge donations to Benevolence. The programs supported by Benevolence are:

- UCC Wider Mission

- Bridgeport Council of Churches
- Silver Lake Scholarships
- Sterling House Good Start & Adopt-A-Family
- Sponsorship Programs (Campus Crusade, Covenant to Care, Stratford Clergy Assoc, Habitat for Humanity, Emerge Inc., Holy Joe's Café and CT Food Bank)
- Special Programs (Zambia Orphanage, Lord's Kitchen and Nourish Bridgeport)

As you can see, there is a lot going on at First Church Stratford and you all help support these expenses and missions through your pledge donations. We want to continue to support, as well as grow, our church and outreach programs in our community and beyond. We, the Stewardship Committee, are reaching out to all our members and friends of First Church Stratford and asking that you set your pledge goal - where possible - to **5% of your income**. Also, when you pledge, please consider designating **10% of your total pledge to Benevolence** so they can continue to support our missions and outreach programs. We will have the "Steward Ship" in church in November for you to drop your pledge cards into or they can be mailed or dropped off at church. Pledges are important as the Trustees use these pledges to determine the budget for the new year. Just as you handle your personal checking account, having information on monies coming in helps you know you can pay your bills.

Please return you pledge card even if you use EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer). Remember that a pledge can be can be adjusted up or down if circumstances dictate with a phone call to the church. We encourage the use of EFT from your checking account. It is simple to set up and also can be changed at any time with a phone call to the church office. An EFT form is enclosed if you are interested. This method helps simplify bookkeeping and helps us to better track our pledge information.

Thank you for your generosity and support through the years. Help us continue to grow our church and expand our outreach programs in the community. Because of your generosity our church makes a difference! We are a church that truly believes **LOVE COMES FIRST!**

The Stewardship Committee,

Carol Vass, Co-Chair, Helen O'Brien Co-Chair
 Cindy Buckley, Ingmar Eggen, Virginia Millington
 Jennifer Nyquist, Lynne Pert
 Judy Therrien, Steve Wasko

**PLEASE BRING YOUR PLEDGE ON STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY,
 NOVEMBER 19, AND PLACE IT IN THE STEWARD SHIP!**