

Congregational Connector

April 2017

News from the Board of Directors

VOTERS' ASSEMBLY - TUESDAY: There will be a Special Voters' Assembly this Tuesday (April 25 at 7:30 p.m. in the Fireside Lounge) to consider the budget for the fiscal year that starts July 1. The three major items for discussion will be: a) a review of the current program year; b) presentation of the 2017-2018 theme; and c) recommendation of the 2017-2018 budget. The agenda packet, for those who would like to review it prior to the meeting, is available on the table outside the PB+J room.

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL THEMES: Our program theme of the current year is "Repair, Restore, Transform: Strengthening Congregational Health and Vitality through a Continued, United Focus upon Mission and Core Values. Two major accomplishments were Project 2016 and the introduction of Financial Peace University. At the same time we have maintained many ministry programs (i.e. FHL, CrossTraining, S.A.S.S., and MCREST) which expanding the impact of our Clothing Closet and Food Pantry ministries. The program theme for 2017-2018 will be **"Getting the WORD OUT: Reaching out and beyond, sharing the love of Jesus and his invitation to join him in his mission."**

2017 - 2018 BUDGET: The BOD will be recommending a budget of \$447,250.00 for the fiscal year that starts July 1. This is an increase of just under 1% over our current year. The budget recommends a slight raise in salaries for our staff – the first since salaries were cut 10% (April 2008) and the first increase in our salary base since May 2006. The budget proposal does not include two items that are still under discussion: Rental of our Day Care (Preschool) space (negotiations with Joy Bells continues) and the addition to our staff of a Ministry Manager. Two items that have not changed from the current budget are a) continuing to pay mortgage principle and interest on schedule; and b) no request for STL Foundation assistance to the General Fund.

NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS: The STL Voters Assembly will select congregational leaders on May 23, 2017. Nominations remain open until May 15. Nomination forms are available from the church office or near the member mail boxes. As a quick reminder, the following positions are open for nomination: President; Vice President; Secretary; Chief Financial Officer; Board of Elders (must go through the Board of Elders by May 2); Board of Community Service; Board of Mission Education and Outreach; Board of Recourse Management; Foundation Trustee.

ROOF! ROOF!: The adjuster has recommended the west roof of the old school wing be replaced because of the wind damage. We have received bids, and are awaiting authorization to move forward from our insurer. We anticipate that the permanent fix will be completed over the summer.

EASTER AND HOLY WEEK: What an exciting weekend! Thursday evening we had a steady flow of people walking through the Journey to the Cross from 5:30 – 8:00. Friday night's Tenebrae was new and inspiring (If you are curious about who played the characters, we have posted their names in the narthex). After the service a swarm of volunteers packed 80 Easter Dinner baskets (each with 5-6 bags of food – most of it fresh).

Saturday morning was even busier! At the north end a group of volunteers transformed the sanctuary from Good Friday to Easter. At the south end another group prepared the gym and kitchen for Easter Breakfast. In between volunteers manned the Food Pantry, Clothing Closet and Easter Basket Distribution. And the parking lot (front and back) was filled with cars from the community coming to pick up the baskets (southwest entrance) and to come in for clothing and/or food (northeast entrance).

And then came the climax of it all – our Easter Sunday celebration – featuring incredible music (Kapelle, Hand-bells, and orchestra ... thank you to all) and the life-changing message that death has been cancelled through the resurrection of our Lord. The altar looked beautiful. And we had to set up extra tables for the wonderful Easter Breakfast.

If you are curious about worship attendance figures, Palm Sunday was the exact same as last year, Holy Thursday and Good Friday were up a little, Easter was down a little, and the Lenten Midweeks were down more than a little. Lenten offerings were up.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Here is the report of our joint General Fund stewardship (family finances and congregational finances) from July 1, 2016 through March 31, 2016.

	Year to Date		
	Anticipated	Actual	March
Income	\$ 327,100.00	\$ 307,546.66	\$ 31,058.32
Expense	\$ 333,722.54	\$ 328,244.77	\$ 35,924.72
Net Excess (loss)	\$ (6,622.54)	\$ (20,698.11)	\$ (4,866.40)

Last year Easter was in March. Early returns on April indicate that we will be back to projections by the end of April.

Mortgage Balance: \$1,830,029.66

(We have paid \$32,417.28 off the principal so far this fiscal year)

Balance of loan to General Fund from the Restricted Fund: \$61,200.00

**There is still time to help with landscaping around our building.
Landscaping Bee - Saturday, April 22nd @ 8:30 am
Contact Dave Blocki (586-823-7183) or the church office.**