



2023 Stewardship Campaign

Pastoral Note on Stewardship

Greetings, siblings in Christ,

As we enter our seasons of Thanksgiving and Advent, we reflect upon God's faithfulness to us and the promise of Christ with us in the groaning of our human conditions. This year, we approach our 2023 Stewardship Campaign with this same thanksgiving AND heartfelt longing for God to restore us and lead us onward.

This year's Stewardship Campaign focuses on our staff. We seek to strengthen salaries to appropriately reflect staff contributions and provide compensation that is more in line with the changing economic landscape. We collectively acknowledge our struggle as our staff has adjusted to a new workload in light of our church treasurer, Marina McLeod's, serious cancer diagnosis. We ask you to pray for Marina throughout this campaign as we continue our work together and serve God faithfully on behalf of our congregation.

Our church staff is vital to sustaining our thriving pastoral care ministries, community outreach, children and family support, and musical worship. We are fortunate to have exceptional people in these positions to serve our ministry life together. Staff salaries comprise 2/3 of our annual operating budget (\$185,000). This budget includes my full-time salary and benefits, four part-time, three Sunday nursery and Godly Play staff.

We are all aware of the impacts of our current national financial situation and rightly acknowledge this can impact how we are able to give. Staff are also feeling the economic burdens of our time, as living costs continue to escalate. When giving does not keep pace with inflation, staff fall behind. Housing, grocery, and other essential costs take up a more significant portion of their monthly salary. We all know this to be true in our own situations. Where an increase in giving is possible, we can help mitigate the economic impact on staff.

For 2023, Northwest Coast Presbytery recommends an 8.3% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for Ministers. Our commitment to St. James's staff has been to honor this adjustment each year as much as it is within our means to do so. Additionally, due to rising medical costs, the Presbyterian Church (USA) Board of Pensions dues for clergy medical benefits will increase by 2% of the Pastor's Total Effective Salary.

In addition to addressing the rising costs of living, we would also like to reinforce and expand staff positions. Specifically, we would like to add 10 hours a week to Tracy Caruso's Children & Family Director position, allowing her to deepen her connections with youth, restart our Toddler Time program, and expand our presence in the neighborhood with students and families. We also seek to increase Sharon King's compensation to a rate more competitive among church administrators.

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2023 Stewardship Campaign

Pastoral Note on Stewardship, continued.

Your pledge not only supports our staff, but also helps to offset the rising costs of goods and services we utilize for our church and helps us keep our Mission Support giving at 10% of our pledged giving. When we increase our giving, we can keep our outgoing gifts to other vital organizations steady at a pace that supports their staff and programs.

Former Co-Moderator of the Presbyterian Church (USA) General Assembly, Jan Edmiston, writes in her reflection on COLAs and staff salaries, "Consider that your staff is an investment in ministry. They often make the difference between your congregation having a lively, organized, inspiring ministry and having a tired, disorganized, dreary ministry." Read her full article here:

<https://achurchforstarvingartists.blog/2022/10/17/lets-talk-colas-bonuses-and-raises/>

We have an ambitious goal of increasing our total pledged giving by 8-10%. We ask that you prayerfully consider your ability to participate in this increase, responding to God's faithfulness to our church and continued call to ministry in Bellingham, Washington.

Pledge forms are available at the church starting November 6. You can also fill out a pledge using our online form at <http://www.tinyurl.com/StJames2023>. Thank you for your steadfast commitment to God's work in our midst.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Seth



2023 Stewardship Campaign

Finance Committee Letter

Dear friends,

As we are now solidly into the fall season, it is with both gratitude and heavy hearts that we launch the 2023 St. James Stewardship Campaign. If you have been around St. James this year, you have been holding our dear treasurer, Marina McLeod, in your hearts as she has undergone treatment for a very serious form of cancer. Marina has been on medical leave for most of this year. While she has undergone treatment, our wonderful Administrative Assistant, Sharon King, along with Pastor Seth, and our Finance Committee, have been keeping on top of our day-to-day income and expenses.

With the approval of Session, we are currently contracting with an outside accounting agency, Avlon Financial. Avlon is working to get us caught up on our 2022 reporting, which will help us with our 2023 projections. Avlon will also help us transition to updated accounting software, QuickBooks Pro. This software is more commonly used by other churches, non-profits, and small businesses. By making this transition, we will be able to access our reporting functions in an easier fashion.

We hoped to have a clearer year-to-date picture by this time, but that is not the case. This is our reminder that our health and our life together is truly a gift. We place our continued trust in God in all things, little and big. The good news is that we have continued to have what we need to support our staff, maintain our building, and keep up to date on our expenses.

On behalf of the St. James Finance Committee, thank you for your stable support. Your gifts have bolstered our ministry, helped those in need, fostered youth faith development, and brought us together through challenging times. Great things have happened and will happen because we know that we are in this together, giving what we can and trusting in the God who sustains us. Your pledge will help us plan responsibly for our 2023 general operating budget.

Supporting our Stable & Thriving Leadership

It comes as no surprise that a culture of collaboration, open communication, coherence, and hard work are vital for a healthy and thriving church staff. Individually and collectively, the St. James Staff consistently demonstrates the skills, flexibility, joy, and humility that enable this community to live out our mission of Loving Welcome, Joyful Practice, and Compassionate Service. More than half of our General Operating Budget goes to payroll. As a Session, we would like to be able to offer our staff compensation that more appropriately aligns not only with their levels of education and years of service, but that also allows them to keep up with the rapid cost of living today.

Please consider how your pledge will support our staff and their families. In 2023, we are excited to build upon the stability and health of the St. James Staff. This April will mark six years since Pastor Seth began his call in our community. Together with Tracy Caruso (Director of Children & Family Ministries), Ta Wei Tsai (Music Director), and Sharon King (Administrative Assistant), Pastor Seth will work effectively and efficiently to carry out the daily ministry of St. James. We are blessed by their leadership and service.

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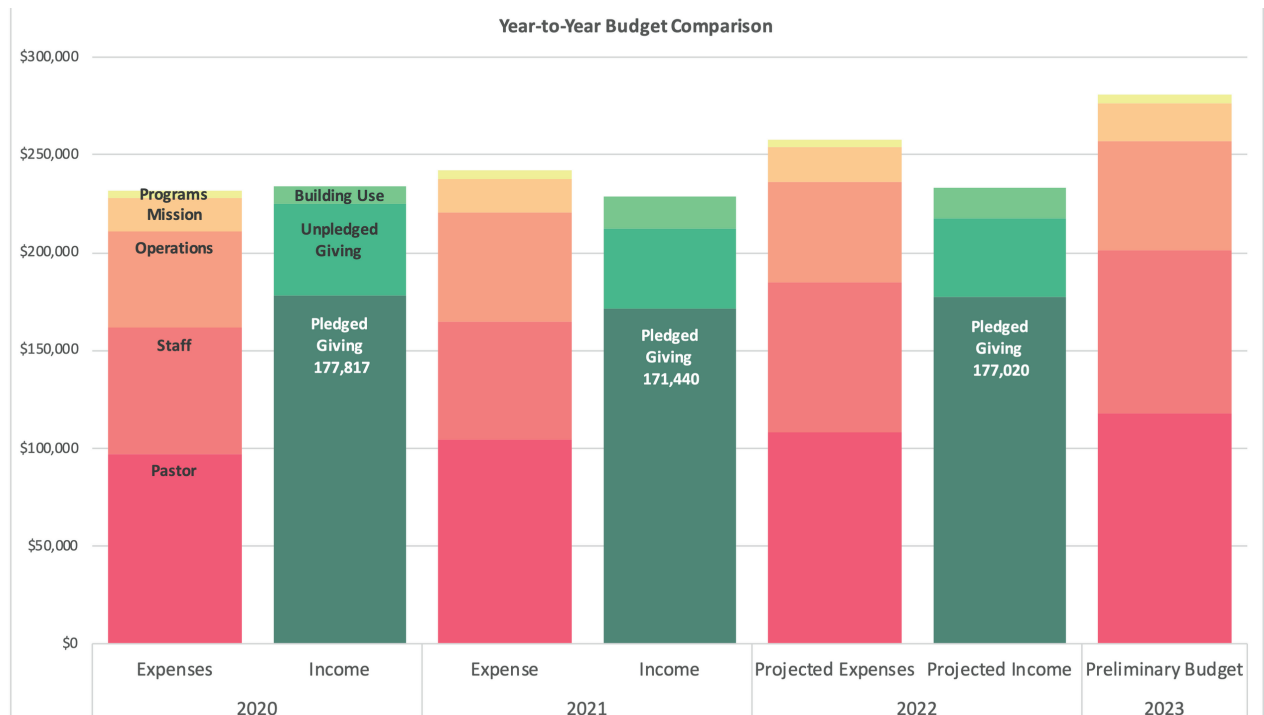
Finance Committee Letter, cont.

Compassionate Service

When you pledge towards the St. James General Operating Fund, you help us to run and maintain an important place of Compassionate Service, not only in support of our members and regular attendees, but also as an outpouring of love to those in need. St. James strives to donate at least 10% of pledged giving to Mission and Social Action Initiatives. Your gifts support St. James' work regarding earth care, housing, disaster relief, racial equity initiatives, support for the LGBTQ+ community, and other forms of giving. Thank you for helping us partner with organizations like Habitat for Humanity, Interfaith Coalition, Presbyterian Earth Care, and more.

In grace,

Lindsay Anderson, Pam Gibson, Ray Dellecker
St. James Finance Committee





2023 Pledge Form

Please complete and return this form by November 27, 2022 using the enclosed envelope. To submit an online version of this form, visit www.tinyurl.com/StJames2023

Name(s):

I/We pledge the following for 2023: (select one)

\$ _____ weekly (x 52 weeks)

\$ _____ monthly (x 12 months)

\$ _____ quarterly (x 4 quarters)

\$ _____ one-time gift (contribute now toward our 2023 budget)

\$ _____ TOTAL pledge for 2023

Pledges are the main source of funds for everything we do at St. James. They sustain our staff, operations, missions, and other programs. Pledges also allow us to effectively budget for the upcoming year.

☐ I/We will contribute to life at St. James in other ways but am/are unable to make a monetary pledge at this time.

Contact Info

Mailing address:

Phone:

Email:

One-time or recurring contributions can be set up from a bank account or credit card through the St. James website. Select "Giving" at www.saintjamespres.org

All 2023 contributors will receive an annual contributions statement during January 2024 that can be used for tax purposes. Semi-annual or quarterly statements are available by request. Please indicate your preferences here:

Frequency:

Delivery method:

☐ Annual statement only

☐ Regular mail

☐ Semi-annual statements

☐ Email

☐ Quarterly statements

Thank you for being a part of the St. James community!