

No matter where you are on life's journey you are welcome at St Pauls

We are greeted with those words every Sunday.

The stewardship task force selected 'St Pauls, A Great Place to Grow' for this year's stewardship campaign. In the coming weeks you will hear from individuals about their relationship with St Pauls, their journey and their growth through their involvement with St Pauls. As chair of Stewardship I hope that you will reflect on their stories and your own journey as you contemplate your 2009 financial commitment to the Church.

This year we have produced material to help explain Stewardship. Words often have many meanings. We have attempted to define those words that we use to discuss financial involvement with St Pauls. Stewardship is a difficult topic made easier when we all have the same definitions. The 2009 Stewardship campaign begins today. We are on our way to 400 pledges and \$1.0 million and we need everyone to consider a pledge.

The Church council has discussed and implemented a budget plan to live within our means – and as a finance professional I certainly support that idea, but I also challenge us to dream big – we live in a world where hate and intolerance seem to be drowning out love and acceptance. Your dollars can keep us from cutting the budget further and in fact can help us grow our programs and outreach, indeed making more joyful sound in the city!

I hope that like me you believe that St Pauls is a great place to grow and will do your part to help. If you have questions or would like information about Stewardship at St Pauls there will be Stewardship Ambassadors available at coffee hour in the social hall. I would like the Stewardship Task Force members and Stewardship Ambassadors to stand and remain standing for a moment. This group of dedicated St Pauls members and staff have provided significant time and thoughtful input to the Stewardship process, in addition to recognizing them for their valuable work on this task I wanted you to know who they are so that if you have questions you can seek one of us out to get answers. Thank you volunteers.

There is a myth that St Pauls has all the money that it needs in the Memorial Endowment Fund. The Endowment fund was created by donations from generous members over the years in

memoriam of those members and special folks in those members lives. The fund is used to pay unplanned expenses and emergency and non-emergency building repairs. The endowment fund can be thought of much like operating reserves of a homeowners association – it is prudent to have reserves on hand but it is not prudent to spend those funds on normal expenses. Our reserves are between one and two years of our operating expenses – not a large amount to run deficit spending against, leading to the budget and planning discussions to live within our means.

I once heard a fundraiser say that the organization he was speaking on behalf of had all the money that it needed, the challenge is that it is in your pockets – we have the same challenge at St Pauls, and WE have the same opportunity.

We will be reaching out to you in the coming weeks – if you are unable to pledge we understand, please indicate so on a pledge card and we will not continue to ask, if you've already pledged – Thank you! There is a brochure and pledge card in the bulletin today, this year there will be one mailing of a pledge brochure and pledge card to your home, the website is available to make your pledge online and you can provide instructions to fulfill your donation online as well.

In conclusion - as the offering plate comes around this Sunday and every Sunday, please use this time to consider your journey and St Pauls' roll in your journey, its' roll in your community, your life and the lives of others – whether you contribute to the plate, via ACH transfer, credit card, or check by mail – this is our weekly chance to contemplate our contribution to help make St Pauls, a Great Place to Grow.