



October 30, 2020

Dear Church Family,

For many years, the mission statement of our church has been “Called to be a light on the hill, we boldly proclaim and serve Christ, the hope of our changing world.” This year, the world has changed for everyone in a way no one could have planned for or anticipated. In times like this it is a blessing to have faith that Christ is with us, wrapping his healing arms around us and working to redeem and restore the world. This led us to choose “Christ, the hope of our changing world!” as our theme for the 2021 Stewardship campaign. We hope you will join us in looking forward to 2021 with hope and gratitude.

Our pastors, staff, and congregation have all worked hard to be the church amid these changes. We have found ways to adapt so FUPC can continue to be a visible expression of God’s grace through engaging worship, fellowship, learning, and service. One of the reasons God’s work through FUPC continues is because we have been blessed with a generous congregation. Many of you have continued your pledges or paid your pledges earlier than usual and some are exceeding their pledges. The operating expenses of the church have been less than anticipated for this year; however, the church has also experienced a drop in income since the plate is no longer passed in worship and First School has had to reduce their enrollment. We remain optimistic and believe that FUPC will continue to be a strong presence in our community.

The session recognizes that it has been a difficult year for many and has taken that into consideration in developing the 2021 Challenge Budget. This budget includes a small cost of living increase for the pastors and staff. The budgets for the deacons’ ministry and the outreach ministry have been increased to enable the church to better respond when there are critical unforeseen needs in our community. The 2021 Challenge Budget calls for a 1.5% increase in pledges. If you already pledge, please prayerfully consider increasing your pledge by 1.5%. If you do not already pledge, please prayerfully consider beginning to pledge. Please refer to the giving guides in the enclosed brochure.

Please join us for our first virtual time and talent show “Time to Shine,” this coming Sunday November 8 at 6:00 pm via the church Zoom account. The link will be emailed to you this Friday in the Weekend Update. We will highlight the talents of our congregation and the work of our ministry teams. At the conclusion of the event there will be a brief presentation of the 2021 Challenge Budget and an opportunity to ask questions.

Dedication Sunday will be November 15. Many of you are accustomed to bringing your pledge cards and time and talent forms forward in worship that day. As an alternative, a Joash chest will be placed at the entrance to the Lee Power Garden. (A Joash chest has roots in the Old Testament and was used for gathering a special offering for the Temple.) When you come to the church to pick up your communion elements that week, you have the option of placing your pledge cards and time and talent forms in the Joash chest and taking a moment to pray and to enjoy the garden. Pledge cards and time and talent forms may also be mailed in or filled out online. Instructions for submitting them online may be found on the back of the pledge card. Please return or submit them by November 15. We thank you for your generosity as we together proclaim and serve Christ, the hope of our changing world.

Blessings,

Your Stewardship Ministry Team – Amy Rossetti (Moderator), Liz Fulton (Elder-Trustee),
Art Gust, Buzz Roberts, Fred Shefte, Coleman Ward

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it. - John 1:5 NLT