

Connections

IT'S WHY WE'RE HERE

THE 2020  STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

Monday, May 11, 2020

Dear RedRiverUU Family,

This is the story of how three dudes from church who hang out at CJ's every Wednesday morning ended up preparing the 2020 Stewardship Campaign letter. Their weekly conversations at CJ's meandered through politics, music, family, sports, exercise, health and news of the day. But matter not where the conversation started, it invariably ended up talking church... and church finances. Spreadsheets, P & L's, budget allocations excited two of the dudes. The third (who hasn't balanced his checkbook in sixty years) pondered new ways to arrange the chapel chairs. The financial chats led the trio to realize they were, ipso facto, the church finance committee. So, they carefully plotted out a timeline, strategy, and Excel spread sheets. Dates were determined, and volunteers were recruited to give a 3-minute appeal during the morning assembly. Jim, Jolene and Marilyn gave theirs in March. The dudes were on a roll! Then the Coronavirus hit the world.

The three of us realized one important truth: successful stewardship campaigns may be doomed if they start in the middle of the worst global financial and health crises in our collective lifetimes. In times of uncertainty, soliciting pledges for the next fiscal year might seem insensitive and heartless. We returned to the spreadsheets and started trimming the forecasted draft budget, in an anticipation that our upcoming stewardship campaign might be more challenging than in any previous year.

The board rescheduled our Spring Congregational Meeting from May 24 to June 28, via Zoom. During the June 28th meeting, we must approve a budget that starts three days later, on July 1. It will be hard to approve a budget if we haven't secured the financial foundation of pledge commitments. That is why we feel the 2020 Stewardship Campaign, "*Connections ~ It's Why We're Here*" starts now.

As a lay-led congregation, we create our worship and social gatherings. We tend to our building, serve on committees, join interest groups, potlucks, chalice circles and work in the larger community. We are it. Without coming, participating, and sharing the work and the rewards, there would not be a liberal religious presence in Texoma.

We deserve to feel good about what we've wrought. We know how important it is that there is a place where compassion, diversity and spiritual growth are fostered. There is something else we do as well - we pay for every bit of it. That's why each Spring, along with Flower Communion, comes the annual Stewardship Campaign.

We have for 23 years maintained a balanced budget, never ending one with a deficit. We have prepared a bare-bone budget. The proposed budgeted expenditures are only \$200 more than our budget three years ago. We expect to balance by securing \$34,660 in pledged contributions.

What brings any of us to church is as varied as our own theological beliefs, or lack thereof. We may come when we want, or when we need to. We might come when the topic intrigues us. For most of us, however, it is the connections that we forge at church. "*Connections - It's Why We're Here!*"

Advertising experts claim that a tagline with more than 6 words will never succeed. With hope and love, as each of us make our pledge for next year's budget, may our tagline prove true, so that the chalice of our faith will continue to burn brightly for another year, our 24th.

Yours, with anticipation,

Jim Holmes, Dick Powell, and Doug Strong
The Three Dudes, (aka The Finance Committee)

The Fine Print:

Please make your contributions by June 1st You can pledge online [here](#), or on our website or using the church app or simply email treasurer@redriveruu.org stating amount and payment schedule.