

We Listened to You!

In June, we voted at a congregational meeting to give the board authority to engage a new campaign. We have completed our “*Let It Go, Let It Grow*” campaign, and while that campaign bore much fruit, it is clear that we need to continue with a special emphasis on our vision for the future and the resources necessary to accomplish that.

Some of us voiced concerns about undertaking another campaign, and they are valid concerns. Essentially, they have to do with sustained growth in stewardship. “After we raise some funds during another three-year campaign, then what?”



Stewardship for all Seasons

I am pleased to tell you that these concerns have been heard, not only by St. John leaders, but by Pastor Mike Ward, who has been guiding us in the consultation process. Pr. Ward has helped us determine a different course for our campaign than that which we had originally assumed.

The details are still being worked on, but rather than a conventional three-year capital campaign, we will instead engage as many as three, one-year, enhanced stewardship campaigns. Pastor Mike suggested this after hearing what discussion participants had to say when he was with us on August 14. This suggestion was enthusiastically received.

Essentially, rather than a stand-alone campaign independent of our annual stewardship emphasis (which has been the “Consecration Sunday” model), Pr. Mike would work with us on our annual stewardship appeal, incorporating some elements of a capital campaign, to help form and renew our stewardship habits, practices and disciplines, such that even after three years, our congregational stewardship has the potential to keep on a trajectory of growth. I believe this will go far in addressing the concerns some have about another campaign.

What’s the difference, you might ask, and what is there to recommend the enhanced stewardship campaign over a conventional capital campaign?

- Most important, the enhanced stewardship campaign teaches ongoing stewardship habits and practices, such that we have less concern about “three years, then what?” The “then what” is that, done well, this campaign will have us continue good stewardship habits that will keep growing.
- Among the stewardship habits we will learn is year-round stewardship, always thinking in terms of how well we are using God’s resources, not just during a fall appeal.
- Because there are not two different stewardship appeals, it is less confusing and lessens the perception that there is too much talk about money. We will put all our effort into regular, ongoing stewardship.
- We are looking at as many as three annual campaigns, but each annual campaign has its own self-contained contract with our consultant, so we are free to renew or not at the end

of each year. While we anticipate wanting to renew if all goes well, there is a sense of freedom in having that choice.

- The nature of this campaign is such that, if anyone chooses not to participate the first year, they could do so the second or third year. It isn't a one-time decision.
- The consultant's fee is considerably less than with a conventional campaign.

I also want to remind you that the campaign will not just be about raising funds, even though that's where discussion around it often goes, perhaps because we have some anxiety around money. But it's just as much about vision for the ministry and the future of our congregation. What is God calling us to be as a congregation? What do we want for our congregation? We hope that the answer to those two questions are the same, but we do well to pray constantly for guidance on both. And, finally, what resources will God raise up for us to accomplish these things, if we listen carefully to the Holy Spirit's leading?

I hope you will join us in enthusiastically embracing a new direction for stewardship in pursuing St. John's course for the future!

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Bill+

"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." – Matthew 6:21