



October 12, 2017

Dear First Pres Family,

What does it look like to make your faith visible? Even in just a few months as your senior pastor, I've witnessed the generosity of our exceptional congregation. I'm deeply grateful to serve First Presbyterian Church of Wheaton, a church community well known for its generosity. As our *Fearless Generosity* stewardship campaign kicks off, I believe that just as David declared in Psalm 27:13, we will "see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." Generosity is faith made visible.

*Why Fearless Generosity?* At a time when the PC(USA) denomination is in decline, we could resign ourselves to the reality affecting most mainline congregations. Yet, we can also choose to live out our faith fearlessly and give generously. Instead of being fearful that the Presbyterian Church is declining, I believe that God is calling First Pres Wheaton to grow in our worship and witness. As an expression of growth, we are welcoming over thirty new members and Confirmants into the life of the church in October. *Fearless Generosity* is making an investment in our church that will allow God to ignite growth both spiritually and numerically.

As you heard through our recent ENVISION sermon series, our vision as a church is that together we celebrate, journey, and serve. We celebrate God's grace, journey with the Holy Spirit as our guide, and serve others with the love of Christ. With our vision clearly in focus, we are poised to thrive.

In order to succeed, the session has set objectives for 2018. Our hopes for the coming year are to:

*Engage more people in worship and small groups*  
*Enhance support for our talented staff*  
*Expand mission-giving and missional marketing*

Each of these objectives hinges on stewardship. To grow the scope of our ministry, we need the resources to do so. To accomplish our objectives, we have set these goals for the 2018 stewardship campaign:

1. **Increase the overall pledged giving amount** – Our hope is to build on the positive momentum of giving in recent years and invite everyone to give boldly.
2. **Increase online recurring giving** – In order to help the church achieve a balanced budget across the year, signing up for recurring giving provides greater financial stability.
3. **Increase first-time pledge gifts** – You may have yet to make a pledge or financial commitment to the church. Perhaps you've felt your gift wasn't significant enough. Even if you regularly place a weekly gift in the offering plate, making a pledge helps the church to plan accurately for ministry and expenditures. *Every gift counts!*

As my wife Sarah and I prepare to make our own pledge for 2018, we do so with a strong belief in the church's vision and in our future together as part of the First Pres family. We all have an opportunity to build upon the legacy of our great church and play a vital part in enhancing our ministries at First Pres. May we each experience God's peace and purpose as we give and go forth together with *Fearless Generosity!*

God bless you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kellen Smith".

Pastor Kellen Smith



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