

Stewardship 2022



October 8, 2021

Dear Members and Friends of the Presbyterian Church of Chestnut Hill,

A year ago, as we marked Stewardship Sunday with “drive-through” pledging and stewardship face masks, we noted that while we weren’t able to gather in the same way, that the mission and ministry of the church carried on. Do you remember? Worship online, gatherings under the tent, an increased need for donated items for our mission partners, lots of Zoom classes and meetings. Throughout it all, by God’s grace and your support, we sustained our life together.

Who would have thought that a year later we would be facing variations of the same challenges? We are back worshipping in person, with masks and social distancing, while many of our members, including those with health concerns and families with younger children, are enjoying our wonderful new live stream. Long-time practices—youth group, Sunday school, coffee hour—are happening, but in new ways. We will still utilize Zoom for some meetings and events, as we’ve learned that remote gatherings work with our lifestyles. Additionally, our mission partners are slowly returning to “normal,” and we are finding creative ways to support their important work.

Even as we long for a more complete return to “normal,” we know we’ve been forever changed by COVID and are called to adapt and evolve as the moment demands.

Still, your financial support is absolutely crucial as we look to the future, a future that is bright because the good news that claims us is so profound, and the moment in which we find ourselves is so momentous.

Earlier this fall, your Session adopted the *Matthew 25 Initiative*, a denominational effort that focuses on congregational vitality and commitments to end racism and eradicate poverty. Matthew 25:31-46 is built around this vision: “for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.” Jesus reminds his followers that “just as you did it to one of the least of these...you did it to me.” (See Matthew 25:31-46)

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHESTNUT HILL

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With that vision in mind, your Stewardship Committee has identified a theme for our 2022 campaign:

Gather*Bless*Serve

This rhythm—gather, bless, serve—reflects the cadence of Matthew 25. The nations are ***gathered***. People are ***blessed*** by God. The blessing is a product of the ***service*** offered to Jesus via those in need—the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked and sick and imprisoned.

That is what we do:

- We ***gather*** for worship, for study, for fellowship, for meals and events, in youth group, in the women's circle, at a baseball game. The very act of gathering is important, whether live, or, for now, virtually. We connect with one another in community. Gathering matters.
- Gathering leads to ***blessing***. We are blessed when we are touched by a prayer or inspired by an anthem or enlightened by a point in a sermon. We are blessed when we gain a new insight in Bible study or Second Hour. We are blessed as we meet someone new, or have a long-standing relationship renewed.
- Blessing leads to ***servicing***. That takes on many forms, from our Deacons visiting our senior adults to our Flower Guild to our broad range of social witness efforts focusing on housing and hunger. Our call to serve has only been magnified during the pandemic, as human needs in our community have increased.

Gather, bless, serve reflects our life together as a congregation, and it underscores the very real need for financial support. These efforts are led by a gifted and committed staff, and even during COVID, require our beautiful church facility to gather us in and send us out.

Thank you for your support over these challenging months. Your pledges, along with two federal grants and prudent fiscal management, allowed us to sustain our ministry. That federal money will not be available to us next year. It's up to us to support our ministry as we move into the future.

We will launch our efforts on ***October 17***, culminating with ***Stewardship Sunday on November 21***. Mark your calendars. During that time, you will hear in various ways from staff and members who live out the ***gather*bless*serve*** cadence. As you hear their words and discern how you fit into the patterns of life at PCCH, consider how your dollars support our ministry.

Thank you for all you do to make The Presbyterian Church of Chestnut Hill what it is, and for your financial support that keeps it all going.

Faithfully,

Your Stewardship Committee

Linda Amsterdam, Mark Bernstein, Matt Eastman, Laurie Menyo, Jim Lutz,
John Wilkinson (staff)