

# Stewardship 2021

## With Our Pledges, We Choose How Our Gifts Are To Be Used

We pledge our gifts to four separate church funds, as follows:

**Current Fund** is the fund to pay for staff salaries, utilities, maintenance and operating costs, and supplies needed for all our ministries, including administration.

**Capital Fund** is the fund to pay for major property improvements, such as furnace replacements and roof and parking lot repairs.

**Benevolence Fund** is the fund to support ministry work outside our walls including support of the ELCA, St. Paul Area Synod, Tanzania and various other ministries.

**Cash Reserve Fund** is the fund to make sure we can maintain cash flow. It's an emergency fund. We "borrow" from this fund when Current Fund costs exceed revenue, and then must pay back the "loan" to ourselves before the end of the year.

## 2021 Current Fund Budget

The 2021 Current Fund budget of approximately \$443,000 will support our ministries in accordance with the distribution shown on the pie chart (right).

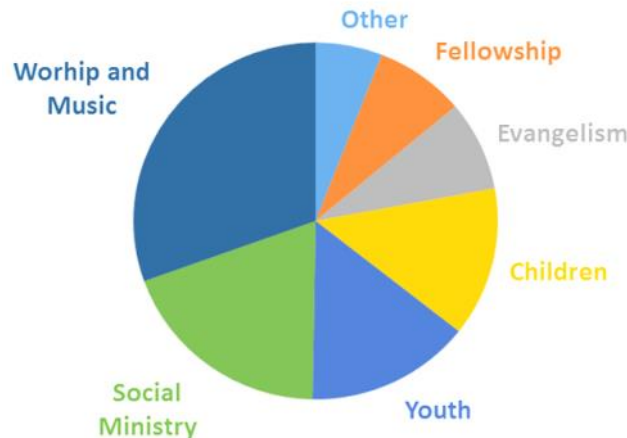
## Pledge What You Can

Pledging helps us set the church budget for the coming year. When we have a better idea of the gifts to be received, we can plan next year's staffing, events, and programming with confidence. We ask you to pledge what you can, according to the blessings you have received, and not necessarily in response to the church's needs. A pledge is not an ironclad obligation, but a message of intent and a measure of blessings. We know circumstances may arise that affect our ability to meet our pledged intent.

Thank you for pledging what you can.

## Moving Forward In Faith Together

What does stewardship have to do with the ministries of the church? Everything. Stewardship is everything we do as Christians after we declare "I believe".



It is how we work together to support our ministries. Without stewardship, there would be no ministries.

We declare a faith in Christ and then ask what can I do to demonstrate my faith? The answer is that we get to choose what our personal journeys with Christ will be and what ministries we will support along the way. We make our journeys as members of our church family. That is why we call our stewardship program Moving Forward In Faith Together.

## It's Not Fundraising

Stewardship is not fundraising. It is giving in return for God's blessings in our lives. In return for the promise of his blessings he expects us:

- To give **Faithfully**. We live with faith and we give with the faith that His work will be done with our gifts.
- To give **Joyfully**. Joy is greater than happiness. While happiness can be short-lived, we can choose to be joyful always in everything we do.
- To give **Generously**. Tithing or not, we seek to be generous in all we do for others.
- To give of **Our First Fruits**. Give to God *first* what you are able, and then take care of the rest. First fruits are our best gifts.

## What The Bible Says About Stewardship

*For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and return not thither but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth;*

*It will not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and prosper in the thing for which I sent it.*

*For you shall go out in joy, and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial, for an everlasting sign which shall not be cut off.*

*- Isaiah 55:10-13*

*Please fill out and return your pledge card by November 15th.*

*Thank you for your discipleship to St. Stephen and continued support of its ministries!*



**ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY BRINGING GOD'S LOVE TO THE WORLD.

## Stewardship 2021

### Stewardship In Difficult Times

We are clearly living in difficult times. Nothing about our lives today is normal. The COVID epidemic has affected our families and jobs, how we entertain ourselves, and even how we worship our Christian faith. We long for the day things will return to normal. But in the meantime, we have to balance our duties and routines to carry on with the need to stay safe and protect ourselves.

Much of St. Stephen's ministry work has been scaled back to maintain our safety. Since March, we have been worshipping on-line from the safety of our homes, and having to forgo the fellowship and sense of community in-person worship provides. During the summer, we learned that we could worship together at Wednesday evening outdoor GAP services if we followed certain safety protocols. Now we're ready to apply those protocols to worshipping together inside on Sunday mornings.

This is not to say we have foregone our stewardship duties. On the contrary, we have shown a great capacity to give and provide financial support for:

- The church's internal ministry work and property needs with our gifts to the Current and Capital Funds, respectively.
- Benevolence and ministry work outside the church
- A new cash reserve fund to guarantee cash flow and help our Capital Fund pay for big projects like replacing our aged furnaces

Through the pandemic, we have come together and remained as a body of Christ bringing God's love to the world.