

Stewardship 2023

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

Our pledges are distributed as we choose to four different funds, as follows:

Current Fund is the fund to pay for the church's mission, for staff salaries, utilities, maintenance and operating costs, and supplies all our ministries require.

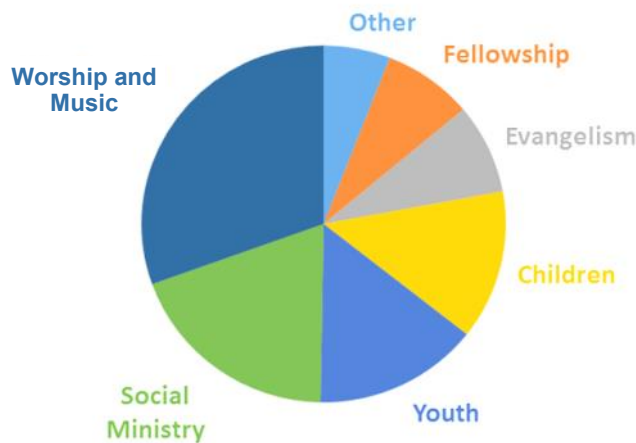
Capital Fund pays for major property improvements like furnace replacements and roof repairs, all the things that create the comfortable space and setting needed for our mission work

Benevolence is the fund to support ministry work outside our church walls, including support of the ELCA, St. Paul Area synod, Tanzania, and other mission work.

Cash Reserve Fund is the fund that ensures we maintain cash flow. It's an emergency fund and we use it every year during those times our giving falls behind the church's needs.

Stewardship Is About Our Need To Give As Disciples. It's Not Fundraising

A conversation about stewardship doesn't have to include finances. It is not an occasion to talk about budgets, deficits, fundraising, or the church's need to receive. Instead, it is a celebration of the many blessings in our lives and *our need to give* in response to those blessings. We pledge as an expression of the gifts we have received. But at the same time, it is important that we know where our pledges go to **Bring God's Love To The World.** The graph below shows how St. Stephen uses our gifts proportionately.



Pledge What You Can

Pledging allows the church to know the financial support it will receive in the coming year and plan its ministry work. Please pledge what you can. It is not an ironclad obligation, but a measure of your intent to show the extent of the blessings you have received. We all know circumstances may arise that affect our ability to meet our pledged intent.

God's Expectations Of His Disciples

In return for the promise of His blessings, God expects us:

To give **Faithfully**. We live in 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, no matter what goes on around us.

To give **Generously**. Tithing or not, we seek to be generous in all we do for others. This includes the gifts of our time and talents, too. We are generous in all we have to offer.

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
Stewardship Sunday—October 30th.
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.



A 2023 Stewardship Message

In the past two years COVID has made our lives difficult. Nothing seemed normal. It affected our families, jobs, and fellowship, even how we worshipped our Christian faith together. But something wonderful happened at St. Stephen: we never halted or wandered off our paths of being followers of Christ and never ceased being good disciples supporting the church's needs with our treasures.

We Moved Forward In Faith Together.

And with our support as good stewards of the church in 2023, we will continue to be a Christian family bringing God's love to the world.