

Subgroup 10: FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Members: *Grace Hayes, Barbara Saliunas, Nancy Ferris, Patty Hill*

Individual subgroup members' suggestions for Provocative Propositions on Financial Stewardship

"In 2010, all repairs on the original building have been made, thanks to an anonymous gift of \$1,000,000 received in 2005, to be used at once, solely for that purpose, with any excess money to be used for upkeep. Work on the new project was only slightly delayed by this work and was completed in 2007. All pledges have been paid on time and in full. A thorough review of the budget with congregational participation, and cutting of frills and less important expenses resulted in a pledge drive that reached its goal, including enough payments on the mortgage. Improved communications through reversion to the production of a newsletter every other week has increased participation of the members at all events."

"We should see a broader, rather than a deeper sense of financial stewardship within the congregation. What I mean by this is the sense that those who participate by contributing financially (as they are able, of course), will likely feel a deeper sense of connection with the church community. From that standpoint, I don't think that is necessarily desirable that the knight on the white horse to come in with the large contribution and bale us out. Rather, we should seek to educate the community on the value that they may find from financial commitment and seek contributions from a wider base of individuals. One of the ideas that was discussed in our meeting was the idea that some groups feel disenfranchised-- rather than "us," members discuss "they." We all people to feel a sense of belonging, throughout members lifetimes, and to achieve this, we need to recognize that while individual needs change over time, the community needs (such as RE, or pastoral care, for example) remain constant."

"Financial Nirvana at RRUC: What It Would Look Like

- There are no layoffs of staff from year to year nor reduction in hours. All employees receive full cost-of-living pay raises and, when merited, bonuses for exceptional work.
- The average pledge unit's contribution increases at least commensurate with inflation.
- Reserves and endowment are maintained and/or increased. Money is set aside for predictable large expenses in the future, such as replacing the roof or the furnace.
- Members "buy into" the true costs of keeping RRUC operating at the expected levels. Members have a greater sense of church ownership - so that it's "our"

budget and "our" staff, not "theirs." Members believe that RRUC is well-managed. There is widespread understanding of what's in the budget and why.

- Membership is increasing at a steady but not spectacular rate - maybe 5 percent per year.
- The annual pledge drive takes little time and energy because people expect to pledge and do so generously.
- A culture of giving takes hold and most members regard RRUC as a special recipient of their giving, not just another on the list of charities they support."

Debt free, the church comfortably and equitably supports a ministerial team, staff and strong programming that operate within our means. In addition, we commit a sizable percentage of church income to working towards a more just, equitable, peaceful and compassionate world.

Members are confident, personally organized enough, and committed to personal financial stewardship of our church. This means that:

- members feel confident and secure in their own personal finances *[I would feel better about giving if I had a better grasp of my own finances];*
- members understand the connections between their involvement, the services they benefit from, and the financial needs of the church;
- all members feel a strong sense of stewardship where they truly understand and take responsibility for the impact of their financial support on the church.

Finally, members thrive on the attitude of generosity and support that is reflected in everything our church does.