

Voters' Meeting Report
To Faith Lutheran Congregation
By: James Synatzske, Congregation President
December 12, 2016

Yesterday, we had a very fruitful and well-attended voters meeting that resulted in the opening up of our minds, our eyes and our hearts to some awesome God-given challenges and tremendous opportunities for the coming year.

The Board of Stewardship presented a proposed 2017 budget that trimmed over \$28,500 from last year's budgeted expenses. And they did that without cutting funds to any of Faith Lutheran Church's awesome ministries. After much discussion and prayerful consideration, the voters unanimously adopted the proposed budget.

Based on the giving level in 2016, this new budget's projected expenses are almost \$60,000 greater than our historic giving-level. If this trend were to continue through 2017, it will mark the third year in a row that our giving has fallen short of our expenses by about \$60,000. Even with the realization of this projected shortfall; no one among the voters present at this meeting could fathom dropping or downsizing any of our ministries; and all were keenly aware that our ongoing expenses (salaries, benefits, utilities, maintenance, etc) are absolutely necessary and have been closely monitored and very admirably held below last year's budgeted expense level.

This awesome challenge offers each of us an opportunity to re-examine ourselves and our stewardship commitment going forward. When spread across the total number of "regular giving units", the \$60,000 "shortfall" equates to an AVERAGE giving increase over what we did in 2016 of \$15 per "giving unit" per week in order for us to meet the budget-approved expenses for 2017.

When we think of this in terms of a \$15 per week average; it obviously means that those who have already maximized their stewardship effort may not be able to increase their weekly giving. So, it becomes incumbent upon those of us who are not yet maximizing our "returning of HIS gifts" to prayerfully consider how we continually benefit from HIS abundant grace; and how we can better share HIS grace through our stewardship and regular offerings.

It was noted too, during the meeting, that the fruits of the Free to Serve and Sewing Seeds stewardship campaigns are flowering into very positive results regarding our individual stewardship. This past October, for example, was a record-giving month for 2016.

Pastor Tom and members of the Faith staff presented their respective goals and objectives for 2017. All recognized wonderful opportunities for Faith Lutheran to grow in our various ministries of music, Christian education, Faith School, and outreach. And the administrative staff emphasized their continued commitment to closely monitor our ongoing expenses in the coming year.

We were also reminded that our Faith School families are an orchard full of low-hanging fruit ripe for harvest to be brought into HIS Kingdom. Many of the meeting's attendees expressed a sincere desire to reach out to our Faith School parents and families so they may come into HIS light and enjoy the benefits of ALL of our exceptional ministries here at Faith Lutheran.

Matthew 5:14-16

¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."