

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE 2017 REPORT

The Stewardship Committee was approved as a Standing Committee by the Board in the 2015-16 Congregational year. It meets each month with the goal of planning and executing the annual Stewardship Campaign and Pledge Drive. It also maintains an on-going function to solicit pledges from new members of the Congregation.

Members of the Committee are Andy Roberts (chair), Arthur Snoke, Joe and Linda Powers, Pat Traynor and Wayne Neu. Ex-officio members are Lisa Evanylo (Administrator), Rev. Don Rollins, Carol Kern, and Tim Pickering – the President and President Elect of the Board. Early in the planning stages, two members were unable to continue on the committee and withdrew their memberships. The budget for FY 2016-17 was \$700. Of this, we have spent \$331 on materials, printing, mailing and the ice cream social. The budget for FY 2017-18 remains \$700.

Accomplishments: The Charge to the Committee was approved by the Board. This year we adopted the cottage meeting model for the pledge drive and received a record number of pledges – 150. Because “pledging units” may represent individuals or families we do not have a tally for the number of church members and friends who pledged. The monetary amount of pledges, \$289,072, was \$525 less than last year and did not meet hopes for the stretch budget. Members of the committee updated or created new campaign documents, all of which were included on the Congregation’s website. The entire Congregation, including both members and friends received these materials through the mail. As in 2016, the celebratory Ice Cream Social was a popular event to close out the campaign.

Lessons Learned and Future Goals: The cottage meeting model required fewer stewards and less training and offered a more communal gathering for “the ask”, but the committee was disappointed with the cottage meeting turnout. Of 246 pledging units only about 51 “units” signed up for meetings. The poor meeting turnout demanded a larger than expected effort to contact and initiate conversations with the rest of the members. Follow-up was by email and by personal contact from willing recruited stewards and by members of the committee. For the cottage meeting model to be effective we need to find a way to generate more interest among the congregation.

Two topics which should be explored are moving to a year-round stewardship model and incorporating newer forms of communication among congregants, particularly younger members. As mentioned in last year’s report, campaign planning should begin early regardless of what strategy is employed. Coordination with other church committees (Finance, Worship and Religious Education) is also critical. Campaigning to generate the funds to ensure the church thrives is difficult for many reasons, but perhaps the biggest challenge is how to engage the most people of different age and economic status without becoming overbearing or annoying.

Submitted 26 May 2017 by Andy Roberts, Chair