

A Stewardship Letter from Anywhere Presbyterian Church

Friends,

This letter is written to share information with you regarding the church budget for 2014 and to further inform you of several decisions that were implemented by the Session Council during its stated meeting on February 10. The process of developing a financial plan or operating budget for 2014 started several months ago. As the needs of the church and areas of ministry were explored, the Session Council looked at a proposed budget in the amount of \$821,830, an increase over and above the \$798,783 budgeted for 2013. However, as the Budget Committee examined the pledges and identified giving for this year it was soon discovered that anticipated income would be somewhere in the area of \$704,000 leaving us with a deficit of \$117,430.

An important question quickly surfaces, "Is there an explanation for the sudden decline in anticipated giving as compared to previous years?" Two factors have come into play. First, in the last seven months our congregation has lost several very generous contributors and strong financial supporters of the church and her ministry. These contributors and supporters have geographically relocated and no longer reside in the area. Second, we lost a small number of families who were upset over "denominational issues" and a few families who have moved to other congregations for reasons other than those related to the Presbyterian Church (USA). This has left us with a loss of around \$75,000, a gap that is difficult to make up quickly.

The Session Council is working hard to provide a balanced budget for the balance of 2014. In order that the church might avoid serious financial setbacks and consequences, the Session Council received a report from the Budget Committee and prayerfully decided to take the following course of action:

- Each Elder will review and reflect upon his/her level of financial stewardship in order that he/she meets the Biblical standards of giving via tithing and proportionate giving.
- Advised the Budget Committee to develop and present a new Budget for 2014 in the amount of \$737,000.
- That if for any reason the Session Council elects to use any portion of the church's financial reserve (\$368,000), it will use no more than 10%.
- Authorized the down-sizing of the church staff by maintaining a pastoral staff of three full-time pastors and no longer fund the position of parish associate after March 31, 2014.
- That the Communication Specialist be a position based on thirty hours a week (to be reviewed after six months based on the church's income).
- That there be no salary increases for 2014.

These are gut-wrenching with a heavy-heart type decisions. Thankful for the generosity of so many through the years and humbled by those who continue to give sacrificially, I offer a prayer of thanksgiving for your faithfulness. Looking back over my shoulder, however, I regret

that as the Senior Pastor of the Anywhere Presbyterian Church I have not said more about the subject of financial stewardship. Jane and I grew up in families that practiced the grace and discipline of financial giving, so it is something we have always done. This is how we were nurtured in the faith. Live off 80% of your income. Save 10% and give 10% to the Lord. It took us a while to get there, especially as the children came along and life offered occasional surprises, but we always seemed to manage.

In closing, I wish to be clear that this letter is not a request for anyone to give what they do not have. I have never been an advocate of coercion or manipulation or taking financial advantage of another person, especially in the name of the church. We each face differing circumstances and situations in life that impact our giving. However, if you believe in the kingdom work that APC is doing and if you are able to shoulder even a small part of the financial burden of that work, we ask that you will do so by making a pledge and sharing your resources. This is the year. This is the time.

May the peace of Jesus Christ be with you,

Pastor John Doe

Fundraising Letter for Anywhere Private Elementary School

To our valued donor,

The Anywhere School would like to extend our sincerest gratitude for your donations over the years. Because of your generosity, we have been able to fund several new programs, including an after school initiative to bolster excitement about math and science. The elementary Science Squad, which just took third place in the regional math and science competition finals, exists because you cared enough to contribute. Thank you for your commitment to our students and their education.

We are writing on behalf of a new need: the English program. While our math and science programs have excelled thanks to contributions from donors like you during last year's pledge drive, our English program was neglected. Unfortunately, that neglect became evident in last year's final test scores. However, we are undeterred in our endeavor to create an environment where *all* areas of academics prosper. We've seen how generous donations have made an impact on our math and science programs, and we are confident the same will be true of our English program, which is the focus of this year's pledge drive.

We would like to reach several benchmarks with our English program this year: increase student grades by 15%, increase the amount of reading material present in each classroom by 30%, provide one-on-one tutoring for students who are underachieving, and promote a new after school club called the Reader's Room. It is our job to better equip our teachers with advanced training and professional resources, and we are in the process of doing just that. But we need help from donors like you to fund the essential aspects of this initiative: stimulating reading material, compensation for teachers working overtime, and funding for more advanced evaluations. We will not be successful in our mission to increase the effectiveness of the English program without your financial contribution.

Regardless of whether or not you are able to give financially at this time, we appreciate your impact on the Anywhere School. We would not be where we are—ranked in the top 10% of private schools in the state—were it not for your support. We encourage you to stop by any time you are in the area; we would love to have the opportunity to show you how your donations have changed our school for the better. These children are our future, and they are better equipped to lead because of your commitment to their education.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe
Director of Development
The Anywhere School