

## **Minutes of Westminster Presbyterian Church Stewardship Committee Meeting – April 2, 2008**

The Stewardship Committee met in the Johnson Parlor on April 2, 2008. Present were Frank Fraser (chair), Dave Gunter (vice chair), Jon Butterbaugh, Carl Chidlow, Donna Cramer, and Art Sauer. These minutes were prepared by Dave Gunter.

Frank opened the meeting with a devotional. Frank then announced that the next Chronicle would carry an update announcing this year's stewardship theme, "The assurance of things hoped for."

The primary topic of discussion was online pledging and donations, and more generally, ways in which we could increase the convenience and choice in ways to make donations to Westminster. We first discussed having an online pledge form on the church web site, and reviewed the model that Frank passed out. The model contained spaces for name, amount of pledge, frequency, and other information found on the paper pledge cards. We concluded that the online pledge form should: (a) state that pledges remain confidential; (b) clarify that this is a pledge and not a contribution; and (c) offer an invitation for an opportunity to discuss a gift with a member of the Stewardship Committee. We also noted that this last element should also be added to the paper pledge cards.

Next, we discussed whether we should go beyond online pledges and offer online donations. There were several options on the table for this.

(a) We discussed encouraging the congregation to consider online bill pay from their bank web site, as a way to increase convenience (for members) and consistency/predictability (for the church). It was also noted that members could accomplish this offline by voiding a blank check and setting up an automatic monthly withdrawal with Nancy Bea.

(b) We discussed adding a donation form to the church web site itself. It is possible that our web contractor could set this up for us. The primary advantage of this is to keep control of the stewardship operation within the church, but the disadvantages may include cost and security concerns.

(c) We discussed using a third party coordinating service such as Parish Pay, which sets up automatic debit or credit card charges for members of the congregation and handles security issues from their own web site. The advantage of this is convenience; the disadvantage is cost (since the third party service takes about 1% of debit and 3% of credit donations) and the need to convince the congregation to trust the third party.

We discussed choosing one or more of these and communicating to the congregation that there are multiple ways to donate that may be more convenient and less costly for them and for the church. Dave agreed to look further into the cost, security and convenience factors for these options and present them to the committee at the next meeting.

Finally, the committee discussed whether Westminster's stewardship campaign should include a "time and talent" pledge in addition to a pledge of financial support. Jon recalled that Westminster had done this in the past. However, the group concluded that there were several disadvantages to this course, including interfering with the responsibilities of other committees (particularly the Mission committees), and the possible impression that giving time and talent is an appropriate substitute for financial support.

The meeting was closed with a prayer.