

Dear Members and Friends of Fourth Presbyterian Church:

At Fourth Presbyterian Church, God is at work. That means we have work to do, too. And in many ways, we are doing it!

During several years of “denominational turbulence,” we have taken a few hits to our fellowship and our finances. But even as we grieve these losses, our community is being replenished. God is blessing us with an abundance of new faces who are drawn to the Spirit at work here at Fourth. Newcomers and long-faithful members alike are joining together to proclaim the gospel of grace in Jesus Christ.

In this time of transition, all of us may be called upon to make more strenuous financial commitments in order to build a stronger future. Trusting in the abundance of God’s blessing, we may need to step out further in faith to sustain our faith community.

The Mission of Being the Church

Stewardship is about believing in the mission of the church. We are invested because we value the **Church Gathered** in worship, study, fellowship, and caring. We are invested because we believe in being the **Church Sent** in mission and witness to the world. We are part of the **Church Committed** when we make a personal financial commitment to sustain our mission.

Currently, we are tracking slightly behind last year in contributions to Fourth’s mission. This is due in part to the losses mentioned earlier. At the same time, due to the faithful giving of long time members, as well as the new members joining our congregation, we are not down as much as we might have expected. Still, to sustain the life and ministry of Fourth Presbyterian Church, we have to pull together for a strong financial finish in 2016.

What will a strong finish in 2016 accomplish?

- **Staffing our ministry and mission.** Crossing our budgetary finish line will show that we value the staff who support Fourth’s ministries and mission: our worship services, educational programs, congregational care ministries, mission projects, faith formation groups, fellowship, and our youth ministry, to name just a few. These ministries are flourishing under the very capable leadership of two Associate Pastors, a Music Minister, a Youth Director, and a Children’s Ministry Director. *If we want to keep paying salaries to these church servants, and our outstanding support staff, all of us will have to make a personal financial commitment.*
- **Habitat for Humanity/Sterling.** In the first week of January, we need to contribute \$35,000 to fund our share of the Habitat for Humanity house we are partnering with Westminster church to build in the Sterling community. Your contribution to Fourth’s general fund supports this project. *If we want to be involved in providing decent housing to a hard-working, needful family in the Sterling community, all of us will have to make a personal financial commitment.*
- **Your favorite ministry idea?** Some of you want to grow our creation care efforts. Others want to buy a church van to provide transportation to our elderly. Still others want to do more in mission, locally and abroad. *The Session is open to these great ideas, but to pursue new ideas, all of us will have to make a personal financial commitment.*

What about the *Legacy Moving Fourth* Capital Campaign?

We are now in the third and final year of the *Legacy Moving Fourth* Capital Campaign. Of the \$1.8 million pledged to the campaign, we still have \$413,130 outstanding. We made plans and commitments based on the pledges you made a few years ago.

Now that we have renovated and added to our facilities, how will the remaining funds be used? First, funds borrowed from the General Fund need to be repaid. Then, \$200,000 will be used to fully fund the Mamie Bruce Building Endowment. Finally, \$160,000 will go to mission beyond our congregation.

In mission, we have established a partnership with Providence Presbyterian Church in Powdersville to enable them to pay off their building debt and move toward affording a full-time pastor. Rev. Terri Price, a former member of Fourth, is providing outstanding leadership for this young church. Also, some of the funds will be used in a joint mission effort with Fountain Inn Presbyterian Church. These church-to-church partnerships were recently recognized by Foothills Presbytery as a shining example of Presbyterian connectional mission.

Our ability to repay the General Fund, complete the funding of the Building Endowment, and fulfill our mission commitments *depends on your willingness to keep your commitments to the campaign*. Do you remember your pledge? Have you made plans to fulfill your commitment?

Sharing God's Abundance

In 2 Corinthians, the Apostle Paul says this about investing in the work of a local congregation:

The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.

God is able to provide all we need to keep growing as a community of faith and to do Christ's work here on Fourth's campus and beyond. We can reap bountifully, if we sow bountifully!

How will you share God's abundance in and through Fourth Presbyterian Church?

Your servant in Christ,

Mike

Rev. Dr. Michael J. Hoyt
Pastor