



First Presbyterian Church

seeking Christ. sharing His love.

Jim Wood
Senior Pastor
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October 7, 2013

Dear Friend,

When I consider the many blessings of my life, few rise higher than the gift of this congregation. The generosity that Sheryl and I experience daily from you is simply overwhelming.

Generosity is the central message of the Gospel – the very heart and nature of God – a God who so loved the world that He gave even His own Son. From Creation to Resurrection everything God does is out of His heart of simple generosity.

In my faith journey I have come to realize that generosity really is that simple. Christ's love for me is simple and generously sufficient. My life then is to be lived as a generous response to what He has done and continues to do for me. Our spiritual growth is characterized by a continual shedding of things along the pilgrim way. The more it becomes about Christ, the more He fills me, the less room I have for the old stuff. Resentments, selfish desires, and comforts that I once thought critical, I increasingly realize are actually distractions. The journey gets lighter and lighter. For that I am so very grateful.

It is this simple generosity into which we seek to live through our ministries and outreach. From our fabulous preschool, incredible children's and youth ministries, our Seniors First, LIFE groups, and spiritual growth opportunities – all here to strengthen – to our impact within the community and our world – our soup kitchen, feedNorfolk, our involvement in Crisis Pregnancy Center, Ghent Area Ministries, our Joy Village in Kenya, care for nearly 4,000 HIV+ patients, clean water projects around the world, and ongoing work with youth in Nicaragua – all of these are merely conduits for the generosity of our God, to be lovingly shared with others.

This simple generosity defines how we use our beautiful facilities as well. From our urban internship, counseling services, AA, Al Anon, Cub Scouts, and all the many civic groups who use our space, we realize that we are mere stewards of the gift of God even as we use our buildings.

Of course, all of this is just a portion of what we are about and how we live into the generosity of God. Please check out our Internet campus to be reminded of even more.

Sheryl and I always see our annual stewardship drive as a deeply spiritual time when we consider how much more we can direct to the cause of our God. I pray that you will use this season, as well, to consider your own spiritual journey – where you are and where you want to be. What might Christ be giving you the privilege of leaving behind as you journey with Him? How might you live more fully into His simple generosity?

To continue to be what we believe Christ has called us to be and seek after our goals*, we'll need to increase our budget by 10%. I am confident though that we will go far beyond in our simple generosity.

Commitment Sunday is October 27, 2013. You will receive more information about it soon. In the meantime, I pray you will consider your own simple generosity.

In Him,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jim".

Jim

P.S. We are using a new data base system and apologize profusely if we have your name or address entered incorrectly. If there are corrections, please let my assistant Becky Pinkard know by emailing becky@fpcnorfolk.org.

*If you would like to learn more about those goals, visit our church website at www.fpcnorfolk.org/about-us where you can read about the 5-year Visions and Goals adopted by our session in 2012.