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Dear St. John's Community,

Recently, I've been reflecting on our ministry together as a congregation. What are we doing together now that we want to continue? Are there emerging interests and opportunities for ministry at St. John's as a congregation? Is there a ministry that we seek to do more or less of in the year ahead?

When I sift through these questions in my own mind, I land on this snapshot of ministries to continue into 2025 and beyond:

- Worship, including music
- Coffee Hour and Fellowship
- Nurture Our Neighbor and Hunger Ministry more broadly
- Supporting Immigrants and Refugees
- Benevolence and Designated Giving

I see that the congregation has also made these areas a priority by the way you regularly share your time and talents to make these a recurring part of St. John's life as a community.

All that we do together as a congregation is a matter of stewardship. How can we best use the gifts we are given to accomplish together the ministry God sets before us? Gifts include people's time and talent, our stewardship of the property and building, and the money contributed to support our ministry together. It takes all three — time, talent, and treasure — to support and sustain congregational ministry.

At present, St. John's is on track to use some combination of designated and undesignated reserves to the tune of nearly \$60,000 in order to balance the annual budget. The Congregation Council has been informed that volunteer extraordinaire John Wells will be retiring from his roles as treasurer and groundskeeper at the end of 2025. Therefore, the Council is anticipating increased expenses for the 2026 budget related to groundskeeping and bookkeeping, adding another chunk of expenses in the coming years.

The theme of our fall stewardship campaign is “13 in 12”. I am asking each household to consider making one additional gift to the general fund in 2025. So for people who give monthly, this would be making 13 offerings in 12 months. A similar approach for people who give weekly is to seek to contribute 12 months of offerings in the first 11 months and continue to make weekly offerings in the month of December. This works out like adding an extra month to the calendar. Making 13 gifts in 12 months is a proportional way for the whole congregation to grow in giving and support the congregation’s ministries.

By increasing your support to St. John’s general fund, you help make St. John’s ongoing ministries more sustainable now and into the future. Together we can take a step this year to close the shortfall in the annual budget at St. John’s.

St. John’s will be receiving pledge cards in the offering basket at worship on November 17, 2024. A digital pledge card will be available in the weekly email for those who prefer to complete their pledge online.

Faithfully,

Pastor Travis Kern