

Carl Traynor Stewardship Testimony
Sunday, October 9, 2011

Good Morning. Well, actually, it's a great morning for Michigan fans like us.

First, on behalf of Geoff Murray, the co-Moderator of the Stewardship Committee and the rest of the Committee, we would like to thank each of you for your commitment to support our Church last year – you acted on our beliefs – and truly 'stepped up' during a very difficult time.

During the next couple of weeks you will be receiving the 2012 Stewardship materials. Yes, we decided again this year the return address on the materials is the Church, not the home address of the moderators.

The theme for the Campaign this year is 'Give to What You Believe' and our goal is to raise \$2.2M in pledges to support the work of our Church in 2012.

Give to What You Believe. As part of Christine's sermon about beliefs a few weeks ago, she said 'to be a Christian is to choose to shape one's life story by the story of God's love for the world in Jesus.'

This Church . . . this Congregation . . . has most certainly been blessed . . . blessed by persons – like you - who choose to be a part of this Church . . . and who believe they have a responsibility to shape the life of this Church.

Last week Addie Morrison told us how she and Harold recognized our Congregation as one that lived the belief: 'to whom much as been given, much is expected' and have themselves become active members of mission.

Just a few years ago, my wife Darcy and I brought our family to First Church. Darcy and I were drawn to the programs here that offer children the opportunity not only to form their beliefs but also to act upon them . . . through Vacation Bible School, Youth Groups, and other means.

We believe there is something about acting on our beliefs that causes them to take root in us. . . to truly shape our lives as Christians. It is the 'pure joy' that we feel when we give . . . when we give our time, when we give our talents, and when we give our treasure to the work of this church.

Over the course of the next three weeks you will hear from members of our Congregation – who are shaping their own life stories . . . who are shaping the life stories of this Congregation, and this Community . . . by giving of themselves . . . the same story of God’s love for the world in Jesus.

Two of whom are well along in the process of forming their beliefs . . . Billy Gregg, a member of the Senior High Youth Group, and Sarah Brune, a student at Lake Forest College.

Both of these young adults have felt that joy of giving through participation in Mission . . . through working at Rummage . . . through singing in the Sanctuary Choir.

Both of whom will carry that joy for the rest of their lives . . . and will share that joy with their children . . . and the members of the congregation they join . . . and all of the communities they will serve.

At the conclusion of the Stewardship series, we will also hear from Chris Edwards, one of the leaders of our church, who has acted upon her beliefs to shape the life of our Church and the communities we serve.

As we proceed through this Stewardship season, please consider how you formed your beliefs, the reasons that you chose this Congregation, the joy of giving that is so much a part of this Church, and the way we all experience that joy as we give to support the work of the Church.

On November 13th, Commitment Sunday, we will all have the chance to shape our life stories by pledging to support our church . . . by sharing the ‘joy of giving’ – together - as we make our pledges for 2012.

The Stewardship materials you receive will present a 5% increase from our target in 2011 of \$2.1M. That is certainly our goal as a Congregation, but our simple request to each member of the Church is that you pledge . . . in whatever amount . . . and give to your beliefs . . . as your situation permits.

Please join us on Commitment Sunday – and every Sunday – and may God continue to bless each one of us, our families and our Church.