Stewardship 2016

Hi everybody,  my name is Rose and I’m the Treasure here at Christ Church.  I usually try my hardest not to be up here in front of people but I feel there are some things I would like to share with everybody and I would like to help everybody understand why we talk about stewardship.

There are lots of different ways to pledge, in time, skills but I’m going to talk about money pledges. How you choose to make the financial commitment is up to you and I don’t get involved in that end unless you’re pledging asset like stocks and share.

Running an average sized house and maintain its upkeep as everybody knows is ridiculously expensive, there’s always something and the older the house the more expensive it is.   Well Christ church and Croswell Hall is bigger than most houses and was built in 1881 so it’s also older than most of our houses. Therefore our heating and maintenance fees are **a lot** higher than yours house.

Like your home we have to carry insurance, but we have carry commercial insurance which means it covers everything that your homeowners insurance covers on our bigger older building plus we have to insure all the organization including ourselves who met here and we also have employees so we have to carry  workers comp. This is a significant expense for us.

Another important expense we have is our priest.  When we were between priests there were a lot of us who were very busy.  Every night I was doing something and one of my kids complained to me “Mummy your always busy” when I said I couldn’t play again.   This really struck me.   Short term we can function without a priest but there is only so much you can expect from volunteers, you have to have a paid priest to run programs and keep the church functioning and running over the long term.    Currently we are paying our priest about 40% of her full time pay; that’s about 16 hours a week.  I would really like to see that increased.  We have to pay the priest salary, taxes, pension and expenses which all add up.

At the end of each year I make a budge where I will estimate how much everything will cost us for 2017.  I compare this to the pledging total plus the income we expect to get from the daycare.  This will tell us if there is enough money to continue functioning as we are.  With this information the Vestry can make decision about where any excess money can go or if we are short to come up with a plan.   In 2014 and 2015 we had a huge amount of unexpected build repair costs that depleted our savings so we have to produce a plan for 2017 where we are able to pay all our expenses.  This plan is called the budget and we cannot make this without the information you give us on how much you plan to give to the church for that year.  So we all have to work together on this.

If you want to know more specifics about how the money is spent we have a very open policy here and I would be very happy to go through any part of where your pledge money goes but it cost more than you would think to run this church and Croswell Hall.

The other side I wanted to speak about pledging is from my own experiences and what I have learnt over time.

When I was a full time at home mom one of my friends wanted to start a 4H club which is all about learning about where your food comes from (surprising not a packaging at the grocery store).  She held the group for just her friend’s children so there was no cost but she put a tremendous amount of work into it and did a fantastic job.  She had a background in agriculture and teaching.  Every other week we would meet.  One meeting at her house the next would be a field trip to farm where the farmer would talk to us.  It was very interesting and well organized activity.

After a while families started not being able to make it.  There were so many demands on their time and the children were sick or just plain tired.  As time went on the group got very small and after an honest discussion the truth came out.   This was a free activity and if something had to give it was the activity that people were not financially committed to.   If you’re paying money to do something you’re going to do it but if you don’t have a financial obligation it’s the easiest option to drop.

It’s the same with everything if you’re not financially committed you have less incentive to come and be a member.   It is important to make that financial commitment but it’s also important to make that commitment in time as well.  The connections you make and the friendships that follow are what make good times good and hard times easier.  Finding a balance with all the stresses and demands on your time and income is extremely hard but don’t let Christ church not be a priority. If you don’t commit by pledging, Christ Church becomes the easiest activity to go, don’t let this family drop away.  Thank you