

**NORTHRIDGE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**REV. BETSY LYLES SWETENBURG**

Dear Northridge members and friends,

It's stewardship season at Northridge Presbyterian Church—the season when we focus intentionally on our finances. Unfortunately, I think stewardship season has been equated to the fundraising drives we experience at other organizations to which we give money. It's easy to think that stewardship season is the church version of what every other nonprofit does when they ask for money and you give. While it's true that we *are* asking for money, stewardship season is not about the church. It's a season of personal reflection where we ask ourselves how we're responding to God's grace in our lives. Stewardship is a spiritual practice. It helps cultivate our faith. The church needs money, yes, but the church doesn't need stewardship. *We need stewardship!*

When I think about the spiritual practice of stewardship, the most helpful instruction for me comes from Leviticus. In the Old Testament, the book of Leviticus includes specific instructions about how to harvest a field:

*When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and for the foreigner residing among you. I am the LORD your God. (Lev. 23:22)*

In response to this law, the Israelites began harvesting their perfectly square fields in a circular fashion, leaving the corners of the field untouched, not completely finishing the job. These instructions about how to harvest were intended to build generosity into the rhythm from the very beginning. The patterns of the fields were a visible reminder to the entire society that we're meant to give our harvest away from the very beginning instead of waiting to see what's left over.

I hope you'll accept this invitation to spend a month nurturing the spiritual practice of stewardship in your own life. Reflect on these ancient instructions. Sure, you may not have a field to harvest, but I've found it helpful to think of my budget as the field. How are you harvesting your field? Have you left the four corners of generosity?

Enclosed is a prayer card, and I hope you'll commit to praying this prayer daily. Pray this prayer each morning. Pray it each evening. Spend time reflecting on what God is teaching you through this practice of stewardship. Worship during the month of November will be a chance to continue this reflection on and cultivation of stewardship. Our sermon series is titled "In God We Trust," and together, we'll think about how our narratives of money have been shaped and what it means to say "in God we trust" when it comes to our budgets. I am confident that if we each commit to nurturing the spiritual practice of stewardship in our lives, our community will be enriched in ways we can't yet imagine.

As you pray each day, I hope you'll pray specifically for this community and for God's work among us. In the month of November, you'll hear stories of how God has worked through Northridge Presbyterian Church in the last year. Your stewardship enabled this work!

I look forward to journeying with you through this season. Enclosed is a pledge card. In worship on November 21, there will be an opportunity for you to physically present the enclosed pledge card as an act of worship, responding physically to God's grace in your life. If you've already submitted your pledge before then, we'll have a card that you can bring forward so you can still participate in this ritual.

Ken Slack, stewardship chair, or I would welcome the opportunity to speak further with you if you wish. Please don't hesitate to contact either of us with questions or concerns.

With great anticipation,

Rev. Betsy Lyles Swetenburg

Pastor/Head of Staff

***You are invited to read this poem as a prayer throughout the month of November.***

"On Generosity" by Walter Brueggemann

On our own, we conclude:  
there is not enough to go around  
we are going to run short

of money  
of love  
of grades  
of publications  
of sex  
of beer  
of members  
of years  
of life

we should seize the day  
seize our goods  
seize our neighbours goods  
because there is not enough to go around

and in the midst of our perceived deficit  
you come  
you come giving bread in the wilderness  
you come giving children at the 11th hour  
you come giving homes to exiles  
you come giving futures to the shut down  
you come giving easter joy to the dead  
you come - fleshed in Jesus.  
and we watch while  
the blind receive their sight  
the lame walk  
the lepers are cleansed  
the deaf hear  
the dead are raised  
the poor dance and sing

we watch  
and we take food we did not grow and  
life we did not invent and  
future that is gift and gift and gift and  
families and neighbors who sustain us  
when we did not deserve it.


It dawns on us – late rather than soon-  
that you “give food in due season  
you open your hand  
and satisfy the desire of every living thing.”

By your giving, break our cycles of imagined  
scarcity  
override our presumed deficits  
quiet our anxieties of lack  
transform our perceptual field to see  
the abundance.....mercy upon mercy  
blessing upon blessing.

Sink your generosity deep into our lives  
that your muchness may expose our false lack  
that endlessly receiving we may endlessly give  
so that the world may be made Easter new,  
without greedy lack, but only wonder,  
without coercive need but only love,  
without destructive greed but only praise  
without aggression and invasiveness....  
all things Easter new.....  
all around us, toward us and  
by us

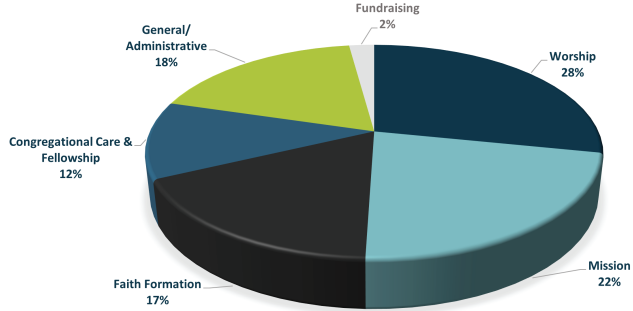
all things Easter new.

Finish your creation, in wonder, love and praise.  
Amen.



When you reap the harvest of your land,  
do not reap to the very edges of your  
field or gather the gleanings of your  
harvest. Leave them for the poor and for  
the foreigner residing among you. I am  
the LORD your God.  
-Leviticus 23:22

## ALLOCATION OF BUDGET



Age Group	Pledging Units	\$1-999	\$1,000-4,999	\$5,000-9,999	\$10,000-19,000	\$20,000-29,000	\$30,000+
Up to 39	6	2	2	2	0	0	0
40-49	7	0	3	2	2	0	0
50-59	17	1	7	4	2	2	1
60-69	28	2	9	8	4	2	3
70-79	29	3	18	4	2	1	1
80-89	11	0	5	5	1	0	0
90+	8	1	7	0	0	0	0
Age not disclosed	11	2	6	3	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>

## PLEDGE BY AGE TABLE



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Name

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Address

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City

ST

Zip

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Email

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Phone

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Signature

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Date

In response to God's grace in my/our lives, I/we estimate that my/our total pledge for 2022 will be: \$\_\_\_\_\_

My/our financial commitment will be fulfilled:

☐ per week \$\_\_\_\_\_

☐ per month \$\_\_\_\_\_

☐ per quarter \$\_\_\_\_\_

☐ one-time payment \$\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your continued commitment to this community.

Please contact the main office at (214) 827-5521 with questions.