



**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
OF
SAN RAFAEL**

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QR code for
Online Giving

October 20, 2021

Greetings!

As members and friends of First Presbyterian Church of San Rafael, we are part of a vibrant, loving and intricately connected community. Each year at this time we reflect upon our responsibilities as stewards of this community, asking ourselves what we are called upon to do personally and financially to sustain and invigorate it. And each year, we discover new answers to this question.

Our church community was established in San Rafael more than a century and a half ago, yet we're part of a narrative of faith and service that extends much farther back in time and much wider geographically than Marin County – a narrative that, with God's grace, will continue to unfold well into the future. It's useful to bear this in mind as we struggle to make sense of the last couple of years. We've lost beloved members of our families and church community. We've witnessed the disappearance of meaningful businesses, jobs and livelihoods. Our ability to move about freely, visit with those we care about, worship and sing together in church have all been constrained. And it's increasingly evident that climate change and political turmoil anywhere in the world affect us right here in Marin County.

As people of faith, we've responded to these events with vitality, courage and grace. Now, as we cautiously resume gathering in our beloved sanctuary and chapel, we're finding that our determination to meet challenges together...to think creatively about our purpose and mission...to teach ourselves to use new technologies...all of these and more have strengthened the web that connects us all, allowing us to engage and serve people at home and far away as never before.

We've established the Spirituality Commission that builds upon Kay Collette's vital work of exploring deep, rich opportunities to engage the heart and the mind. We've recommitted ourselves to the children and families of our community – whether that means sharing the magic of gardening with the children of San Pedro School, or sharing our facilities with a mission-led preschool, or considering new forms of worship and music that engage young people who are seeking that which is true and enduring. It speaks to the character and deep faith of our community that we continued to provide financial support to the mission work of the Presbyterian Church and other aid organizations even in the face of pandemic restrictions and budget constraints.

We continue to welcome new members – people who sense God's love and justice among us and want to be part of this community of faith. We've also added to our wonderful staff – people whose talents and energies reflect the love and determination of our entire church community.

The enclosed narrative budget is designed to shed light on the nature of our income and expenses. Prudent fiscal management on the part of Session and

Sacred Journey, Intelligible Faith

the Finance Committee has meant that – despite many challenges – our financial health remains stable. This past year your pledges were supplemented by our endowment and several generous individual gifts helped us overcome a \$38,000 shortfall to meet our operating needs. This allowed us to remain focused on serving our community and fulfilling our mission despite what we believe to be a temporary decline in rental income. Planned giving also remains an important initiative for us. If you haven't done so, we encourage you to visit the [Planned Giving](#) portion of the website – or if you prefer, call the church office to schedule time to speak with someone about it.

This has been another year of transformational change for our church community – a year of great sadness, yet also of great hope. Our stewardship is a reflection of our steadfast belief in the power of God's love to renew us, and our tireless concern and care for each other and the world around us.

It's in that spirit of renewal that we humbly ask you to consider your financial commitment to the church. This means re-thinking the importance of our church's place in your life and the broader community, and your ability and willingness to support its important work now and for generations to come. In practical terms, it means that those of us in a position to increase our pledges by 5, 10 or 15 percent or more should take this opportunity to do so, and those who cannot will, as always, do our best. Additionally, we ask you to consider a one-time supplement to your annual pledge as a way of supporting the church through this highly unusual period in our history.

Together, we can fulfill our mission, maintain our facilities that serve our needs and those of other important organizations, provide our wonderful and hard-working staff with cost-of-living adjustments, and continue to express our faith in God's love for us all.

Regardless of the amount, each and every pledge is very important. By pledging, you provide the Session with the means to carry out our plans. We ask that **every one of our members and friends pledge some level of support** as a way of participating in the financial life of our church community.

As a reminder, your pledge is not set in stone. If your circumstances should change after you've made your pledge, just tell the church office, and we'll adjust in whatever direction works for you. Also, you can fulfill your pledge through an annual donation or weekly or monthly payments; in cash, check or via credit card; or even by donating stock or other securities. Many have found that making automatic, monthly credit or debit card payments or an automatic debit to your checking account is easy and convenient. It also benefits the church, distributing income evenly across the year. Contact the church office if you would like help setting this up.

Thank you in advance for your prayerful consideration of this important matter. We ask that you kindly submit your pledge no later than **November 17**, either [online](#) or by completing and mailing the enclosed pledge card.

Finally, please join us for three important events:

- At 11am on **Sunday, October 31**, members of the Stewardship Committee and Session will answer your questions about the budget and pledging. All are welcome.
- A special stewardship video will be shown in worship on **Sunday, November 7**.
- On **Sunday, November 21**, we'll dedicate our pledges and look ahead in hope to the new year.

For more than 150 years our church has stood as a welcoming beacon of hope, renewal and connection in San Rafael, Marin County and the world. Your generosity will ensure that our mission is sustained well into the future.

With gratitude,

The FPCSR Stewardship Committee: Steve Astle Susan Bryant Leslie Purdy Ralph Purdy