

Thursday, March 26, 2009

Dear Christ Church Parishioners,

At our Annual Parish Meeting in January, the Vestry presented a preliminary budget for 2009 that included a significant deficit, with the understanding that a newly formed Taskforce would recommend to the Vestry at the March meeting a plan to generate more income and/or strategic cuts in the ministry budget. The preliminary January budget already included a 20% decrease in programs across the board, a freeze in all salaries with no cost of living increases, and the elimination of the position of administrative assistant for Children's Ministry.

The Taskforce, which included Greg King, Mary Parker, Marcus Rogers, John Harrison, Jed Morrison, and Scott Barr, presented its report at the March 17 Vestry meeting. While a concerted effort had succeeded in raising some additional revenues, the amount raised was still short of our budgeted expenses. At the Taskforce's recommendation, the Vestry unanimously approved approximately \$82,000 in additional cuts (see below). These cuts are strategic and very painful, especially for those whose positions have been eliminated or have had their hours reduced. In addition to these cuts, approximately \$100,000 will be taken from unrestricted funds to balance the budget for 2009.

A more detailed breakdown of the ministry and personnel cuts is available upon request from our Parish Administrator, Gary Birdwell (736-3132). Listed below are the additional reductions in the 2009 budget from what was presented at the Annual Meeting:

- Reduction in "Student Ministries" \$7,000, including position(s) for student interns;
- Reduction in "Children's Ministry" \$3,595, including nursery director moving from salaried to hourly;
- Reduction in "Adult Education" \$2,500;
- Reduction in "Outreach" \$2,000;
- Reduction in "Missions" \$2,000;
- Reduction in "Support Staff" \$23,477, including reducing receptionist hours from 40 to 30, eliminating the kitchen assistant position, and reduction of \$4,000 from staff continuing education;
- Reduction in "Clergy" \$18,360, including elimination of assisting priest position (Kern Huff's), and elimination of support for the Anglican Communion Network and the American Anglican Council, and reduction of \$2,000 from Rector's Professional Expenses;
- Reduction in "Music Ministry" \$4,864, including reductions of Children and Minisinger choir directors by 20%;
- Reduction in "Worship Services" \$3,500;
- Reduction in "Pastoral Care" \$4,714, including reducing Pastoral Care Administrator from 32 hours to 24 hours;
- Reduction in "Kitchen" \$1,930;
- Reduction in "Office" \$900;
- Reduction in "Communications" \$1,600;
- Reduction in "Stewardship/Leadership Support" \$5,900, including reducing seminary support by \$2,000, and reducing clergy discretion funding by \$2,400

As families at Christ Church have to budget closely and curtail extraordinary spending because of these extraordinary times, Christ Church is doing the same. This obviously means sacrificing and learning the lessons that can only be learned in challenging times. We humbly ask for your prayers for our staff and for God's protection over our church families. Thank you for your support, for your pledges and for your encouragement. We three feel very privileged to be serving a tremendous church family and we look forward to the future when, no doubt, "finances" will be better for our families and for our church.

Chuck Collins  
Rector

Tom Hardin  
Senior Warden

Gary Birdwell  
Parish Administrator

P.S. (From Chuck)

These are obviously painful cuts. Over the past 8 years Christ Church has experienced significant yearly growth, both in Sunday attendance and in giving. Today we have the largest Sunday attendance in our history, but the "giving" has not followed the enthusiasm that I feel when we gather.

I met last Sunday with the senior and junior wardens from the past eight years, and hearing their reflections on our situation, I am learning several things. First, with some obvious exceptions, most of our members have not lost their jobs or salaries, but everyone is affected by the fear that instability on Wall Street has caused. Second, it is clear that many at Christ Church still give out of "surplus," or from year-end bonuses, or for tax benefits rather than as First Fruit offering or tithing (10%) for what God has done in their lives. This means that we have not succeeded to teach the value of Christian/biblical giving. And lastly, there are several hundred parishioners who do not give at all to the support of this ministry. This, frankly, is the most shocking of all.

I ask for your prayers as we contemplate these lessons and our future together in His service.