

As you know, last Sunday was Pledge Sunday for our 2011 Stewardship campaign. I am pleased to report that the response to date has been encouraging, with a significant portion of our congregation generously supporting the work of Morningside. To date, we have received 140 pledges totaling approximately \$575,000.

Both the numbers and the comments received by Tom Daniel and the Stewardship Committee have been encouraging. It is never easy to raise money, especially in the midst of continued economic weakness and the uncertainty of awaiting a new pastor. Those who have demonstrated a commitment to MPC in 2011 are to be commended.

Now for the reality check.

We are still far from where we need to be. The 140 pledges received represent just under half the 286 Morningside households, suggesting there is a significant part of our community that has not heard or responded to our call for commitment. To continue with our work, to call a new pastor, to maintain our facilities and to expand our mission outreach, Morningside needs annual pledges of approximately \$750,000. This means we are currently \$175,000 short of where we need to be. The Stewardship Committee will continue to work in the coming weeks to contact members who have not pledged, but the Committee cannot do it alone.

We need your help. What can you do?

First, if you have not done so, pledge. It is not fair to ask half our congregation to support 100% of our needs. Everyone needs to do his or her part.

Second, talk to your friends and neighbors in the church and encourage them to pledge. I have found that Morningsiders are wonderfully receptive to the ask if we explain why it matters. Rather than being fearful of discussing money as it relates to the church, let's tell the story of the great things we are currently doing and that we will do going forward.

Finally, a word about giving. We have a lot of people in this church who give very generously to support Morningside's work. The truth is that we also have some who don't do their part. Morningside is active in many areas – worship, music and preaching; Christian education; children's programs; and mission outreach. The reality is that all these things take money, and they will not occur if each of us waits on someone else to foot the bill. If you enjoy Morningside's programs, you need to give to support these programs. If you have children in MPC Sunday School classes, Big Fun Days or Vacation Bible School, you have an obligation to support these efforts.

One of the great difficulties of a stewardship campaign is knowing what to ask for. The Stewardship Committee doesn't know the personal and financial situation of each member of the congregation. I am sure there are times when we ask for too little, and I know there are times when we ask for too much. But whether you can give \$20,000 or \$2,000, I am asking you to do your part so that the work of Morningside Presbyterian Church can continue in 2011 and beyond.

Tara and I have made our commitment. I hope you will join us.