

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
**NEW** BEGINNINGS



NEW FACILITIES

NEW MINISTRIES

NEW FUTURE



## NEW BEGINNINGS



It is with great excitement that you are receiving this “New Beginnings” booklet. It means that we are now enjoying the fruit of your generosity as we move into our new facilities. Many of you have prayed fervently, given generously, and shared your talents as we have worked together over the past five years to arrive at this exciting place.

There are far too many people for me to thank in this letter who have spent many hours working to assist in the June 2012 completion of our sanctuary renovation; and our new Welcome Center and Children’s Classroom buildings completed this past month. None of this would have occurred without your generosity and your commitment to the

vision and mission of our wonderful Church.

First Presbyterian has enjoyed a rich history, filled with God’s blessings and we are now embarking in a new phase of ministry with new opportunities to expand and grow the Kingdom. Our past has been filled with great blessings, and countless lives have been transformed by the touch of Jesus; however, I believe our best and most exciting days are still before us!

I could not think of a more appropriate theme for our capital reduction initiative than “New Beginnings”. With our denominational change and our new facilities, God has truly blessed us with “New Beginnings!”

We have now come to the concluding chapter of our Capital Campaign which we began in 2011 with approximately \$2,880,000 pledged. After completion of the sanctuary renovation in June 2012, and denominational dismissal in December 2012; the congregation voted in April of 2013 to move forward and complete our vision of a new Welcome Center and Children’s building to enable us to expand and build upon our children’s and youth ministries. Authorization was given in that meeting to borrow an additional \$1,750,000 to fulfill this vision.

On Sunday, October 26, 2014 during our Reformation service each covenant partner will be asked to complete two pledge cards. With one card you will be asked to make your financial commitment to the 2015 operational budget of our church; and with the other card you will be asked to make a two year pledge to our New Beginnings campaign in an effort to become debt free within the next twenty four months. The leadership of First Presbyterian feels this is a challenge we can certainly meet as God continues to pour His blessings upon us.



During the month of October I will preach a series of sermons dealing with the theme of “Generosity!” It is crucially important as Christians that we understand the extent of our blessings from God and think deeply about how we use those blessings and the motivation behind our use of those blessings. Jesus talked a great deal about how we use our money and these sermons will be designed to help us grow in our understanding of this blessing from God and how we might grow in our personal “Generosity!” I have said many times, “God is not near as interested in our money, He doesn’t need it to do what He wants to do; God is more interested in our heart!”

It is my prayer and the prayer of our Campaign leadership team that you will study the practical tips and ideas found within this material that will challenge you and help you to live a more generous life and in so doing become more like Jesus, the one who gave extravagantly, His life so we might be free.

Thank you and God Bless!

Barry Jenkins,  
Senior Pastor



## COVENANT PARTNERSHIP

Since our transition into A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians (ECO), there has been a significant change to the way we view participation in our congregation, with members now being considered "Covenant Partners." Below are the elements of this covenant with scriptural basis that we hold in high regards and invite you to ponder, pray and reflect upon as you prepare for our "New Beginnings."



I. Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. 2:9-11)

**Because Jesus Christ is Lord, I will seek to be subject to Him in all areas of my life:** (Matt.22: 37-40)

II. You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies. (1 Cor. 6: 19b-20)

**Because my life is not my own...**

- **I will take responsibility for my thoughts and actions:** (1 Tim. 6:11b-12)
- **I will make the glory and enjoyment of God my focus:** (Westminster Larger Catechism, Q-1)
- **I will, relying on the Holy Spirit, rejoice in the Lord at all times:** (Phil. 4:4-7)
- **Scripture will be my final authority in all decisions, choices, and actions:** (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

III. Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. (Acts 20:28)

**Because the church is not my own...**

- **I will actively support, pray for, and encourage the ordained leaders of my congregation, serving when called in accordance with my spiritual gifts:** (Heb.13:7)
- **I will fulfill my part of the baptismal covenant, nurturing children and those new in the faith:** (Deut. 6: 6-9)
- **I will hold my personal preferences lightly and guard the good of the whole:** (Phil. 2:1-4)

IV. The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it; the world, and all who live in it...(Ps. 24:1)

**Because the world is not my own...**

- **I will commit to a biblical tithe of my assets, joyfully giving additional offerings whenever and wherever possible to support the work of the gospel and the welfare of God's people.** (2 Chron. 31:12)
- **I will consider my tithes and gifts as an expression of gratitude to the One who has been extravagantly generous toward me:** (Ps. 116:12, 17)
- **I will be a faithful steward of God's creation. I will treat the creation as a gift to be cared for and used in ways which honor and glorify the Creator:** (Gen.2:15)
- **I will behold the creation as a 'theater of God's glory', praising God for every reminder of His presence and love:** (Ps.19:1)

- **I will honor the sanctity of human life above the claims of human freedom:** (Ps.8: 4-5)
- **I will treat others with respect, honoring the image of God in them, however broken. I will seek God's peace and biblical reconciliation in all times and places:** (1 Pet. 2:17)
- **I will sacrificially provide for the needs of the poor and the oppressed, the neglected and the abused, the widow and the orphan:** (Isa. 58:6-7)

V. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control. Against such things there is no law. (Gal. 5:22-23)

**Because the Holy Spirit nurtures new and fruitful lives...**

- **I will yield to the work of the Spirit in my life so that I will be transformed from the inside out:** (Rom. 12:1-2)
- **I will pray that God's transforming work in my life will serve Him:** (Eph. 2:10)
- **I will set my gaze upon Jesus so that I may become what I behold, for the good of the church and the glory of God:** (2 Cor. 3:18)

VI. Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. (Heb. 12:1-2a)

**Because I do not journey through this life alone, but in the company of others and under a great cloud of witnesses...**

- **I will be an encourager of my brothers and sisters:** (Heb. 3:13)
- **I will gather regularly with my brothers and sisters, hearing the word of God, participating in the sacraments and preparing to be sent into God's world:** (Heb. 10:24-25)
- **I will give others who sign this covenant permission to both nurture and admonish me:** (Prov. 1:5)

Making a covenant is a highly personal decision. It acknowledges that something beyond us is more important than ourselves. It is only in the keeping of such personal commitments however, that meaningful communities are formed and life in the church flourishes. When one part of the body rejoices, we all rejoice and when one part suffers, we all suffer: Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ ...Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. (1 Corinthians 12:12, 27)





## NEW BEGINNINGS AND A NEW FUTURE

We are called to be stewards of the blessings God has given. With this in mind, over the past four weeks, events have been held which have given you the opportunity to share your vision, hopes and dreams for the future of our church. We thank you for your participation and input during these events. As promised, here are a few of the questions and responses which were shared.

### *What are the three most important things First Presbyterian should be known for?*

- A Christ centered church
- Mission focused
- A place where God's word is taught
- Strong discipleship
- Grace filled



### *What ministries need to be implemented or expanded at First Presbyterian?*

- Mother's Morning Out / Child Care
- Additional staff for senior care
- The addition of a columbarium
- Multi-generational activities
- Enhanced use of technology
- Intentional evangelism (Invitation to others to attend out services)

### *What motivates the people of First Presbyterian to give and serve in a greater way than they are currently doing?*

- Seeing God's work and lives change
- Creating an environment of empowerment
- Working on a team
- Feeling appreciated
- Good planning and leadership





# COMMITMENT

The financial generosity of our congregation has been a blessing. The initial capital campaign has raised almost \$ 2.7 million over 36 months, and we have been able to meet the needs of the church operating budget during this time as well. Thank you.



On **Commitment Sunday, October 26, 2014** you will have the opportunity to present two commitment cards as pictured to the right. Near the end of the service, the congregation will walk down the aisle and place each card on the alter table at the front of the sanctuary.

We are asking you to prayerfully consider tithing first to the First Presbyterian Florence annual operating budget for 2015, so that the church can continue its ministry to our congregation and to support local and world missions. See green card to the right.

Second, you will be given the opportunity to make your "over and above" gift towards the New Beginnings Capital Campaign. Our goal is to receive a 24 month commitment of at least \$ 1.75 million to fully retire the debt incurred to complete the renovations that we today, as well as future generations, will enjoy. See blue card titled New Beginnings Capital Campaign to the right.

In his sermons on generosity, Dr. Jenkins will challenge us as a church body and individually to be open to the Holy Spirit leading us to more deeply understand the various ways that we can live out our generosity. This expression is a natural response to the sacrifice, love, grace and mercy extended to us by God through Jesus Christ. A financial gift is one way our generosity can be shared to help grow God's Kingdom.

We pray that First Presbyterian Florence will utilize this New Beginning to...

- Make a new and greater commitment to serve our fellow brothers and sisters in this congregation
- Expand its reach in ministries throughout our city
- Encourage and be part of spreading the gospel to all the ends of the earth.

Oswald Chambers writes in *My Utmost for His Highest*, "Our spiritual life can not be measured by success as the world measures it, but only by what God pours through us...and we cannot measure that at all."

Be joyful as God pours his generosity through our lives to others.

During the Commitment Sunday service on Sunday, October 26th, covenant partners of First Presbyterian and our regular attendees will have the opportunity to share in the fellowship of giving generously back to God. Commitment cards will be available during the service and there will be a special time during the service to present the cards at the forward alter table of the sanctuary.

Below is a sample of the cards and a few important notes about the cards and how to complete them.

Giving/Gift towards annual operating budget for 2015

### 2015 ANNUAL STEWARDSHIP

**MY ESTIMATE OF GIVING FOR JANUARY 1, 2015 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2015**

Yes, I will pray for the mission and ministry of First Presbyterian Church.  
 I estimate my/our giving as follows:  
 My commitment is \$ \_\_\_\_\_ annually.  
 I plan on giving  weekly  monthly  a one-time annual gift

*Please print the following*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I understand this estimate of giving may be revised or cancelled at any time at my request.

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### NEW BEGINNINGS

**MY ESTIMATE OF CAPITAL GIVING FOR JANUARY 1, 2015 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2016**

Yes, I will pray for the mission and ministry of First Presbyterian Church.  
 I estimate my/our giving over the next 24 months as follows:  
 My commitment is \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (24 month total).  
 I plan on giving  weekly  monthly  a one-time gift

*Please print the following*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I understand this estimate of giving may be revised or cancelled at any time at my request.

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"Over and Above" gift towards the New Beginnings Capital Campaign during next 24 months.



# WAYS TO MAKE A GIFT TO YOUR CHURCH

*Our campaign consultants, Generis, have provided this helpful article as a tool to help you think about the various ways you can make a gift to the "New Beginnings" of First Presbyterian Church.*

**Follow up campaign initiatives** rely on individuals in the church to consider increasing their giving to the mission and ministry of the church. The most appropriate path to increased giving is the spiritual path, where we set our hearts on things above. Financial priorities then take shape from the spiritual priorities.

One way of defining this is "Lifestyle Stewardship," a term used to describe a level of giving that affects one's living. Always with us is the temptation to give in such a way that it makes little impact on how we live. The challenge of Lifestyle Stewardship is to, aggressively and prayerfully, find ways to do just that - to let our giving touch our living!

King David declared, "I will not offer to God that which costs me nothing." (2 Samuel 24:24) David understood that the value of the gift presented to God is determined by its value to the giver. The greater the gift's value and significance to the giver, the greater its worth before the Heavenly Father. The gift that would touch the heart of God must first touch the life of the giver! This is the Spirit of Lifestyle Stewardship. "If it is for my God, my gift must have meaning and value to me."

Lifestyle Giving is a level of giving that affects me: my plans, my activities, my attitude and my approach to life. It means giving up something in one area so that I can give more of myself in another. The three keys to effectiveness in Lifestyle Stewardship are:

- **Reassess lifestyle**
- **Rearrange priorities**
- **Reallocate resources**

Many Christians have been amazed at the extra giving to their church they were able to find. This article is offered to help you in that regard.

## 1. PRIORITY BUDGETING

Many families will choose to rearrange their priorities and give up something in their current budget in order to give more to a generosity initiative. Priority budgeting may mean postponing a planned expenditure such as a new car, vacation, home remodeling or other major purchase. Many Christian people giving to generosity initiatives find a way to give through sacrificial commitments made in faith and coupled with priority budgeting.

## 2. REDIRECT PRESENT EXPENDITURES

Often, families have significant short-term expenditures for special needs. One example is the large expenditure a family incurs for a child to attend college. A family in Georgia realized that their daughters would be graduating from college during the two years of the generosity initiative and, as a result, they were able to increase their commitment to year two of the initiative by thousands of dollars. Another example would be the cash flow that is freed up when a loan is paid.

## 3. INCREASES IN INCOME

Some people receive periodic increases in salary or bonuses from their employers. The temptation for many of us is to increase our lifestyle to fit the higher income. In many instances, families have decided that they will commit the full amount of salary increases.

## 4. PERSONAL PROPERTY AND ACCUMULATED CASH

A young man decided that two collectors' baseball cards worth over \$20,000 he had been holding for a number of years would be the most appropriate means of touching sacrifice for his family. Some families save money over a period of years for a special project. A couple in Louisiana had saved \$80,000 to build a lake cabin. When their church entered a generosity initiative, they decided the needs of the church were greater than their need for a second home.

## 5. UNEXPECTED CASH

Often, people pray for God to show them a way they can give beyond what they can presently see or afford. Sometimes, the answers come unexpectedly. A couple in Alabama had been praying for weeks about their commitment to the church's generosity initiative. Much to their surprise, they received an inheritance of several thousand dollars. They gave the entire amount to their church as part of their two-year commitment in addition to a commitment from their regular income.

## 6. APPRECIATED ASSETS

Many people own assets that have achieved tremendous unrealized gains in value over the years. That is good news. The bad news is that if these assets were sold, some portion of the gain could be lost to taxation. Gifts of appreciated assets – typically investment securities or real estate – can be very advantageous to both the donor and to the church. Unlike gifts of cash that have already incurred an income tax, gifts of appreciated assets avoid the incurrence of capital gain tax. In addition, the donor receives an income tax charitable deduction for the full market value of the asset. That, in effect, makes these gifts less costly to make.

Though it is important to consider the tax implications of making a gift to the church, it is also important to invest your giving in order to further the mission of the ministry God has laid on your heart. And, importantly, before making a commitment of this type, please consult your CPA, tax attorney or other financial advisor.

## PLANNING YOUR GIVING

Giving does not have to be in equal increments over the two-year period of the initiative. You might be able to give more in year two than in year one. As you think about your financial commitment to the initiative, think not just of your potential to give right now, but also of your potential to give in the future. It might be that you can make a two year commitment where 65% is given in year 1 and 35% in year 2.

## A FINAL WORD

Finally, as you consider your financial commitment to the Lord and His work, you might want to consider estate planning. Many sincere, committed Christian people have not made provision for God in the wills and estate planning. Now might be a good time to do that. It might be as simple as including a provision in your will that 10% of the value of your estate will be donated to the church holding your letter of membership at the time of your passing. Or it could involve a planned giving method such as a charitable remainder trust. While such gifts do not provide immediate financial benefit to a generosity initiative, they are marvelous gifts of faith commitment to carry on the work of the church for future generations.



# GENEROSITY LADDER

Generosity has been referred to as the “Sleeping Giant” of disciple making. There is very little in our lives that we do, where a financial decision is not made. Do we purchase a new car or a used car; do we buy the gas-station coffee on the way to work, or swing by a Starbucks for the fancy latte; the expensive designer jeans or the blue-light special? Most believers, if honest, will have to admit that they flirt on a regular basis with the “god” of money.

Because of this reality, Jesus spoke a great deal about the use of our possessions; our attitude about our possessions; and ultimately, to whom these possessions truly belong. The Bible is clear (see *the story of the rich young ruler – Matt. 19:16-22*) that to misunderstand our stewardship responsibilities has Kingdom consequences.

We must however, always remember there is much more to generosity than just a financial transaction. In God’s eyes our growth in generosity is less about a *financial transaction* and more about *transformation*. It is truly a matter of the heart!

This diagram is a model that can help us think about this journey; and make no mistake about it, to move up the Generosity Ladder requires a transformation of the heart. But always remember, climbing the ladder does not make one a “super Christian;” climbing the ladder brings one to a higher understanding of God, not a higher view of self.

As you look and think about this ladder, ask yourself this question; “What drives you to be generous?”

Below is a tool (based on an example of \$50,000 income) to help you think about your commitment to “New Beginnings.”



Annual Income \$50,000						
Percentage of Income	Intentional			Tithing	Extravagant	
	3%	5%	8%	10%	12%	15%
<b>Weekly (52x a year)</b>	\$29	\$48	\$77	\$96	\$115	\$144
<b>Bi-Weekly (26x a year)</b>	\$58	\$96	\$154	\$192	\$231	\$288
<b>Monthly (12x a year)</b>	\$125	\$208	\$333	\$417	\$500	\$625
<b>Quarterly (4x a year)</b>	\$375	\$625	\$1,000	\$1,250	\$1,500	\$1,875
<b>Total Annual Giving</b>	\$1,500	\$2,500	\$4,000	\$5,000	\$6,000	\$7,500

# SMALL INCREASES MATTER

**What will it take** for us to get to our ultimate goal of 1.75 million dollars over two years? Certainly it will take some large gifts made from stored assets (stocks, bonds, land, etc). But it could also happen by each of us making small changes in our lifestyles to sacrifice something that has value for something that we value more, in this case bringing the Gospel to the city of Florence, South Carolina and the world. Here are just a few examples of how a small change could become very large if we are all committed in this effort.

Activity per Week	Average Cost	x 104 Weeks	x 250 Families
1 Cup of Coffee	\$4		
1 Fast Food Meal for Family	\$20		
1 Round of Golf or Manicure/Pedicure	\$40		
<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>\$</b>	

Activity per Week	Average Cost	x 104 Weeks	x 250 Families
1 Cup of Coffee	\$4	\$416	\$104,000
1 Fast Food Meal for Family	\$20	\$2,080	\$520,000
1 Round of Golf or Manicure/Pedicure	\$40	\$4,160	\$1,040,000
<b>TOTAL:</b>		<b>\$1,664,000</b>	

“I will not sacrifice to God that which costs me nothing.”

- 2 SAMUEL 24:24

## UPCOMING SERMON SERIES

“For God so loved the world, He gave...” The Bible is filled with stories of God’s generosity, culminating in the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ. Generosity is not, however, just a characteristic of God; it is also to be displayed in the life of every follower of Jesus. Join us in October as we talk about what it means to be “Generous.”

Oct. 5th: **Why be Generous and how to take the next step towards Generosity!**

Oct. 12th: **What keeps us from growing in our Generosity?**

Oct. 19th: **The cost of being Generous**

Oct. 26th: **The Commitment to Generosity**



# PRAYERFUL REFLECTION

On October 26 we will all have an opportunity to make two important decisions. The intent of our "New Beginnings" booklet was to answer four questions:

**What are we doing?**

**Why are we doing it?**

**Why are we doing it now?** and

**What do we need to be doing between now and October 26th?**

As good stewards, we all need to spend time analyzing our financial commitments to the work of the Kingdom at First Presbyterian. However, without seeking God's counsel in the final decision-making process we may miss the blessings that God intends for us as we give back to Him.

Our prayer is that you will use the following Generosity Journal to guide you on a spiritual journey as you make your commitment decisions between now and October 26.

## MY INFLUENCE

### Upward

How often have I made my influence or my opportunities something I talk with God about in prayer?

### Inward

Whom do I admire or am I challenged by as I observe their influence on others? What can I learn from them?

### Outward

Who might find my influence admirable or challenging? What can they learn from me?

## MY LIFESTYLE

### Upward

Ask God to help me set my heart and mind so firmly upon the hope of glory that worldly lifestyle priorities fade in importance.

### Inward

What are the potential dangers or pitfalls for me emotionally and spiritually of material things and wealth?

### Outward

How much do I think my own lifestyle story would help others? Am I willing to share it?

## MY GENEROSITY

### Upward

How much have my thoughts and attitudes on generosity been guided by God's Word and the Holy Spirit?

### Inward

If my lifestyle impedes my ability to give as I'd like to, what action steps could I take to alter my lifestyle?

### Outward

What am I teaching my family about generosity?

## MY LEGACY

### Upward

What kind of legacy- spiritual and financial- does God want me to leave? How often have I made this a matter of prayer?

### Inward

How intentional have I been developing strategies to leave behind not only a financial legacy to my children but also a spiritual one? Is there a verbal expression of my spiritual testimony in my will?

### Outward

Do I feel that I have made or am making the spiritual impact on others that I really desire to?



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