



October 10, 2016

Dear Members and Friends of The Community Church of Sebastopol,

God's grace and peace to you. We are reaching out to invite you to make a spirit-filled pledge to the 2017 ministry budget of our church. Enclosed you will find a pledge card to fill out and deliver to the church by Sunday, November 6.

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus tells the Parable of the Good Samaritan to a lawyer who asked him, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus turns the question around: "Who *acted* as a neighbor?" The lawyer says, "The one who acted with mercy," and Jesus replies, "Go and do the same."

Go and do the same. Our church's mission is to share the love of Jesus, putting our faith into action, which means *acting* as a neighbor toward others. We who love Community Church and want to see it thrive in the coming years can trust that God has provided us with all the resources we need to carry out our ministry.

Did you know that over 70% of our church's income comes from pledged donations from church members and friends who can't imagine Sebastopol without this church? A pledge is an estimate of giving offered in support of the church's ministry for the coming year. Pledges are important because our church's leadership plans its ministry based on what people who care about the life of the church intend to give.

In the current year, 2016, we have received pledges to our local church ministry budget from 123 households (out of a potential 280) totaling \$256,934. (In addition, we have received pledges to mission outreach totaling over \$20,000.) We are grateful for every pledge, large and small.

But we have not yet realized the full potential of our church's positive impact upon the wider community. We want to invite you to join us in meeting, even exceeding a goal of 200 household pledges to our congregation's ministries totaling \$308,000.

In the coming year, with a fully-supported ministry budget, we plan to:

- Offer competitive compensation to attract and retain high quality staff team members, including a new Director of Youth Ministries.
- Expand our facility maintenance to support our role as a key resource in the Sebastopol community, including repairing our bell tower, mending leaking roofs, and upgrading bathroom facilities.
- Develop new programs like Our Whole Lives: Sexuality and Our Faith so that we can offer multiple opportunities to people of every age and life stage.

2016 has been an amazing year. In April, we blessed and bid farewell to our Senior Minister of 38 years, Rev. Gene Nelson. The celebration of Gene's ministry was filled with stories and emotion and appreciation. In May, our new Senior Minister was called by a vote of the congregation, and on August 1, The Rev. Dr. Benjamin J. Broadbent began his ministry with us.

Celebrating over 125 years of ministry in Sonoma County, we have much for which to be thankful at The Community Church of Sebastopol, including:

- decades of social justice advocacy,
- a vibrant youth ministry, including 30 years of youth mission trips,
- a long history of outdoor ministry at Camp Cazadero, and
- hundreds of thousands of hours and dollars supporting mission projects in our own city and in other parts of the world.

More recently, in 2016, we have:

- Paid off all debts on Faith Chapel and the Pilgrim Center,
- Sent 13 teenagers to Orlando for the National Youth Event, and
- Launched our 126th year of ministry with music-filled worship for all ages and "Godly Play" programs for children.

What a joy it is to allow our resources to flow toward the things that matter most to us in the world. Thank you for the love and care and commitment you have for The Community Church of Sebastopol. This is a place and a people through which God transforms lives yesterday and today. Thank you for being a part of sustaining this church's ministry for the next 125 years.

In Christ, Through Christ, With Christ,
The 2017 Gratitude + Generosity Team

Jeff Boal

Rev. Benjamin Broadbent

Caitie Carciere

Kristen DelMonte

Bobbie Johanson

Sara Margulis