

## Stewardship Newsletter

The month of October means many things. Summer has come to an end. School is back in full swing. Vacations are over, and we get back to "business". (And this year, unfortunately, October brought Matthew - a very ungrateful and destructive guest). Something else that October brings this year is our Stewardship for All Seasons Campaign: *God's Gifts 2017*. We have not had a formal stewardship campaign here at St. James for some time. This year the congregation council wanted to look at stewardship very seriously, and to do so through the lens of *vision for ministry*. In the weeks to come, you will see materials, hear presentations, and be asked to consider how God's ministry through St. James is transforming - for the community, the world, and for ourselves!

A first mailing for *God's Gifts 2017* will go out to all members of the St. James family in the next few days. Look for on-going posts which on the Website and through Facebook, text messaging, and e-mail. Please take the time to look over the materials and familiarize yourself with them. I am excited at how God is working to offer us new possibilities of ministry. And we will be highlighting this new focus during our worship services for the next several weeks. "Celebration Sunday" will be Sunday, November 20<sup>th</sup> when we will announce the progress toward our ministry goals. I look forward to us joyfully celebrating wonderful news of our generosity on that day.

We tend to think of stewardship more often as the sharing of our time and talent in ministry or as the sharing of our gifts. One thing I hope we will attach greater importance to is "Generosity". *God's Gifts 2017* is about strengthening our relationship with God and each other. It is also about building relationships with those in our community and world who need to see and hear the love of Jesus Christ.

Hopefully, we are all in agreement about two things:

1. We must be committed to excellence in our ministry to people. Our annual spending plan must reflect our passion for helping people of all ages become devoted followers of Jesus Christ.
2. Our facilities need to be appealing and welcoming to the community in order to carry on God's ministry.

*God's Gifts 2017* asks us to take reasonable risks which are also God-honoring risks. Risks are nothing new. God's people, for at least the last 4000 years, have been 'living on the edge'... taking risks... walking by faith more than by sight.

From the bottom of my heart, I believe that St. James Lutheran Church is part of God's hope for the future. That is why I am asking you to carefully read all of the materials that will be published and offered in the coming weeks. Study... discuss... share. And then pray, pray, pray! Pray that the Lord will give each of us a deep peace about how God leads us to generously participate in *God's Gifts 2017*.

Gratefully,  
Pastor John

St. James ... Doing Life Together ... 2016

