

Congregational Meeting, November 20, 2011

Welcome to our second one hundred years!

Historically here at Friedens November has been the time we have made our financial pledges for the upcoming year in a dedication ceremony. This year, however, we are taking a slightly different approach. We are purposefully pushing dedication Sunday into spring as we prepare to engage in an effort we are calling Faith Forward. Faith Forward is a multifaceted commitment that will provide us with the framework to confidently and responsibly move into our second century while continuing to grow as a congregation and continue to work in accordance with our Mission, our Vision, and our Values.

Step one is ensuring we have a clean slate to work from. For those of you who attended this morning's congregational meeting, thank you. You have already seen the 2012 budget remains flat with our actual spend in 2011. Despite this conservative approach our average weekly giving is not currently meeting our budget needs. In order to correct this pattern we need to increase our average weekly giving by \$2,000. This translates to an average of \$8 - \$10 per offering, per week. This item is one we can individually begin to address immediately - through prayerful consideration of what we are able to give and being disciplined to follow through consistently.

Step two is where we truly begin to stretch, and Faith Forward really takes off. With Faith Forward we seek to accomplish three specific items above and beyond our annual budget:

1. Expand upon our Youth and Equipping Ministries to provide for spiritual, personal, and leadership development within our congregation so that we may make a greater impact with each other and on the world beyond our campus.
2. Provide Funding for investment with a Global Mission partner that will provide us a direct link to the front line of the mission fields.
3. Position us to aggressively address the churches mortgage which currently represents 15% of our annual budget. This number, just over \$100,000, coincidentally represents the current gap of \$2,000 a week in our 2012 budget.

The Faith Forward committee will be delivering details to you all in the coming days, weeks, and months. We are committed to significantly increasing communication to the congregation regarding the churches finances and ministries and this will take shape in many forms: the church news letter is returning in January, the next congregational meeting will occur on January 22, 2012, we will be coming out to your small group meetings, and we will be scheduling forums to ensure you have an opportunity to voice your thoughts, concerns, interests and ideas. Please take the time to get involved and to be engaged in these discussions.

We are currently experiencing a very exciting time in Friedens history. The labors of the past decade, and century, have provided us with a strong church family that is prepared to carry on the work of Christ and we are fortunate to have a beautiful facility to operate from.

As you consider how you can make your most meaningful contributions of your time, your talents, and your treasure, please understand we recognize everyone's situation is different and therefore the gifts you can offer are different. Do not concern yourself thinking about what others are doing or feel any sense of expectation being laid upon you. Focus only on what you can do and pray for God's guidance, and be glad in it.

Matthew 11: 28-30

"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Matthew 17: 20

He said to them "Because of your little faith. For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you."

Thank you for all you do here at Friedens to further God's kingdom here on earth.

Thanks be to God.

*FAITH*FORWARD

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Friedens United Church of Christ

