



Richmond First United Methodist Church

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...growing disciples who make a difference

May 11, 2022

Dear Church Family,

This letter needs to begin with a big “Thank You” for all that we have done together to weather the Covid 19 crisis that set in a little over two years ago. Many businesses were forced to close their doors across the last two years, but we have moved through, finding new ways to do the things that we found to be the most deeply meaningful to us. We have survived because of the generosity and dedication of our people.

I wish I could end this letter on that note. However, emerging from the pandemic is proving to be more difficult than actually living within it.

This is due in part to the slow trickle of people finding their way back to church. Our Sunday attendance across all services is roughly half of what we enjoyed before the pandemic. This slow growth in attendance translates to fewer volunteers available for the ministries of the church. Many of the ministries available to us pre-pandemic are simply not possible with the visible work force we have in front of us.

Our greatest challenge, in this moment, though, is our financial one.

We had some inkling that this would be true. When we prepared our budget for 2022, we made cuts in almost every line item, including an almost \$50,000 cut in our staff payroll alone. When we approved this budget, we agreed to evaluate it at the end of the first quarter of the year.

The good news is that our spending for the first quarter of the year was \$176, 252. That’s almost \$10,000 below our budget for the quarter. The BAD news is that our adjusted income for the same quarter was only \$132,344. That’s over \$50,000 less than we had budgeted. In all, the difference between our income and our expenses for the first three months of 2022 was a loss of \$43,908. We are operating at a loss of a little over \$14,000 per month.

We were able to absorb that loss because we had cash in the bank from income producing investments held by the Trustees. However, we cannot continue to operate at a loss for very much longer. Over the next few months, we need to make some radical adjustments to the way in which we fund the ministries of our church.

In response to this challenge, I am calling the church to a season of profound prayer and reflection. Here’s what you can do:

1. Stay informed. Attend our meeting scheduled for 6:30 PM on May 25 to receive more details
2. Stay Involved. All of our leaders need to commit to spending some extra time and effort to rethinking the ministries and funding of our church. If church leaders ask for you to chip in with any gifts or expertise that you have to offer, try to make yourself available. We’ll be collecting data. Please participate in any surveys that come your way.
3. Stay in Prayer. This is God’s work we’re talking about, so we know He has an answer. If we find Him, we find the answer.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Bruce Nettleton, Pastor

Bryan Gardner, Finance Chair