



New Hope Presbyterian Church

A Congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA)

Ministers: All the Members

October 25, 2018

Dear Members and Friends,

We had a fabulous time celebrating at the “Sowing Bountifully” luncheon on Sunday, October 21! Thank you to all who were able to come. Enclosed is the promised pledge card. If you were not able to join us for the luncheon (the barbecue and cake were to die for!), here are the highlights.

The Bottom Line

Here it is in a nutshell: we have so much to celebrate here at New Hope Presbyterian Church! And, we need to **raise our member contributions by \$37,500 in 2019**. We are asking you, as our members and friends, to prayerfully consider **raising your pledge by up to thirty percent**, according to your means. We invite you to submit your pledge by Dedication Sunday, November 11.

Celebrations and Growth

Membership & Worship: In the last two years, no less than **thirty new members** have joined our church! This fact underscores our growth: on Sunday, October 21, we had more people in worship than we had on Easter Sunday in 2015! The choir is growing under the new direction of Rob Blackwell, and in October, our elders brought the Extended Service of Communion to several of our homebound members.

Outreach: We give **ten percent of our income** to outreach ministries and organizations in our local community and abroad. Each year, we provide over twenty educational scholarships to children in **Guatemala**. We also provide salary support for two mission co-workers in Guatemala whose ministry is to empower women. We contribute financially to the **Habitat for Humanity** Presbyterian-Methodist house each year, as well as to several other ministries fighting hunger and homelessness. In terms of **regular hands-on service**, a group of New Hope volunteers serves every month at **MANNA Food Bank**. We also serve dinner to homeless women and children at **Steadfast House** every fifth Sunday of the year and provide shelter for up to twelve homeless women in our Fellowship Hall through **Room in the Inn**. Our **food and clothing drives** this year brought in over 500 food items and well over 500 clothing items!

Kim Wells, Pastor: pastornhpc@gmail.com | Rob Blackwell, Director of Music Ministry: rblackwell@hotmail.com
Erin May, Administrator: officenewhope@gmail.com | www.newhopepcusaasheville.org
3070 Sweeten Creek Road, Asheville, NC 28803 | (828) 274-0191

Justice & Reconciliation: We are seeking to be faithful to the prophet Micah's call "to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God." We are educating ourselves to be able to better love our neighbors as ourselves, especially in the areas of **immigration** and **anti-racism**.

Education: Our **Sunday morning class** is thriving with up to **twenty** class participants! We have several well-attended **Tuesday-night book studies** every year, **three small groups**, and a small but vibrant **family ministry** that includes a monthly youth group and a new educational support group for parents and grandparents. Our seasonal **Lectio Divina** groups provide opportunities for contemplative group reflection.

Fellowship: We just love to be together! Our activities include a monthly **fellowship luncheon**, a bi-monthly **men's brunch bunch**, and a weekly **out-to-lunch bunch**. Our recreational activities are really popular too: this year we had **forty** people at our lakeside picnic, **thirty** people at our storyteller/ice cream social, over **twenty** people for our Asheville Tourists' baseball game, and **twenty** people for our trip to the Barter Theater!

Personnel: After several years of transition, **we have a staff team!** Kim Wells has been serving as our pastor for two years, Erin May has been our Church Administrator for almost a year, and Rob Blackwell is our newest addition as our Director of Music Ministry.

Elder & Deacon Leadership Development & Visioning: During the past year, our Session and Diaconate have both had spiritual formation retreats to deepen their capacity as spiritual leaders. Our Session retreat resulted in the creation of a "New Wineskins" team that is advising the Session on new visions for ministry as we move into the future in a changing cultural era. It has been exciting work! At our deacons' retreat, we spent time reflecting on the call to provide Christian care to others during seasons of struggle and deepened the well of our own spirituality.

Community Hospitality: We give back to the community by sharing our facilities with outside groups: AA, ACA (Adult Children of Alcoholics), OA (Overeaters Anonymous), and NA (Narcotics Anonymous) all meet here, as well as the Girl Scouts, Memory Care, a writers' group, Stitches of Love, and Saturday morning Tai Chi classes. We also serve as a voting precinct.

Stewardship of Our Building & Grounds: Our amazing team of facilities stewards saves us money and keeps our property looking beautiful in so many ways. Our skilled volunteer crew has installed LED bulbs throughout the facility, organized the installation of a new, high-efficiency HVAC system, and saves costs on professional services by spot-cleaning the carpets themselves, mowing the lawns and gardening regularly, and organizing two clean-up days each year. Special projects include having stopped a water infiltration in the furnace room and installing track lighting and picture hanging systems in the hallway where the photos of our Guatemalan brothers and sisters are now hanging.

Now for straight talk about the budget ...

Member Contribution Levels

On the enclosed “NHPC Budget History” handout, take a look at the top line item that says “Member Contributions.” Note that member contributions have mostly stayed the same each year at about \$121,000. (The exception was in 2017, since so many transitions in 2016 inhibited regular stewardship planning). Now, look at the right-hand column called “2019 Approved.” Note that the Session has approved a budget that projects a member contribution level of \$159,475 in 2019.

That’s an increase of \$37,500 in member contributions from 2018.

Increase in Expenditures

Now take a look at the “Total Expense” line near the bottom of the handout. Notice that our expenses jumped significantly from \$151,538 in 2016 to \$174,049 in 2017. This is mostly due to increased Personnel costs due to (1) catching up to the market rate by paying Pastor Kim Wells the average salary for a solo pastor in the Presbytery of Western North Carolina; and (2) catching up to the market rate for our part-time Church Administrator and Director of Music Ministry positions. In addition to raised Personnel costs since 2016, our increase in expenditures is also due to normal and anticipated Building & Grounds expenses. We are extremely blessed to have so many capable volunteers who take care of our property—those expenses would be even higher otherwise.

Closing the Gap in 2017 & 2018

How did we close the gap between our income and expenses in 2017 and 2018? In 2017, the most significant factor in closing the gap was a rollover budget surplus of \$34,848 from 2016, when Personnel expenditures were significantly less due to having a part-time interim pastor for seven months followed by almost two months of pulpit supply. Other resources in 2017 and 2018 included a generous bequest, another one-time financial gift, and income from the plate offering that was higher than anticipated. While all of these resources were certainly blessings, note that none of them are recurring sources of income.

Planning for Closing the Gap in 2019

We need to move away from (1) relying on one-time gifts and bequests—these are unplanned, and we can’t count on them to come in each year; (2) drawing on our reserves—while we are blessed to have reserves to begin with, once they are spent, they are spent; and (3) the notion that cutting the budget will close the gap—even if we were to cut all our committee expenditures except for Personnel and Building & Grounds, we wouldn’t close the gap. That’s how frugal our budget is. Moving forward, we need to raise our base of member contributions to a sustainable level. For 2019, that means **raising member contributions by \$37,500**. We have enjoyed an abundance of

new members over the last two years, which helps, but it is not enough for us to rely on new members joining in the future. Current members need to raise their giving levels according to their means. We are asking those who have the means to prayerfully consider raising their pledges by 30%. We are asking everyone to increase their 2019 pledge by whatever percentage they can.

Ideas for Increasing Your Giving

All of us have a “guilty pleasure.” What’s yours? For those of us who don’t have a lot of discretionary room in our budgets, giving up a guilty pleasure and contributing the savings to the church can be one strategy. Examples of things people have committed to do are: use the library rather than buy books, decrease magazine subscriptions, buy fewer recreational car parts, and buy less ice cream.

Join us in Sowing Bountifully

This year our stewardship theme comes from 2 Corinthians 9:6: “The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.” We want to sow bountifully so that we might continue to reap bountifully at the church we love and call home. Everyone has something important to contribute. We invite you to partner with us for an abundant harvest.

Making Your Pledge

Enclosed is a pledge card, along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope. We invite you to mail your pledge card back to the church. **The only person who will see your pledge amount is Jay Maveety, our Financial Secretary.** If you would rather submit your pledge by email, you may write to Jay at his confidential email address: jay.maveety@gmail.com. Please submit your pledge by Dedication Sunday, November 11. We would like to celebrate all our pledges in worship on that Sunday!

Thank you for your generosity.

With Gratitude,

Kim Presley, Elder for Stewardship, Finance & Administration

Terri Carpenter, Treasurer

Jay Maveety, Financial Secretary

Kim Wells, Pastor