

Stewardship Team Annual Report, 2022-2023

Co-Chairs: Jim Bonvouloir, David Price
Members: Kim Steele, Kenna McLeod, Donna Larue
Staff Liaisons: Rev. Allison Palm, Ericka LaValley

Team Accomplishments:

The 2022-23 church year began with the covid pandemic still impacting normal church operations, forcing most activities to be done remotely. Toward the end of the year church services and activities returned mostly to in-person. The previous two years' experience prepared the stewardship team for the pandemic-related challenges and we were able to successfully carry out our fundraising goals with a hybrid approach combining remote and in-person activities.

The stewardship team again held a fall online auction and raffle in 2022. Our team followed the successful format of the online auctions and raffles from previous years. The auction and raffle were again conducted using our subscription to Auctria auction software. The theme was "Fall Harvest". This was the fourth time we used Auctria and the experience using the software in the past was invaluable as was the experience gained from the work done by the previous year's stewardship team. The team credits the success of the auction to the many generous and thoughtful donations from the congregation comprising household items, experiences, electronics, food, gift baskets, gift cards, etc. The actual amount raised was \$7,325, which was an increase of 44% over last year's amount.

On the recommendation of stewardship consultant Mark Ewert, Chartered Advisor in Philanthropy® (CAP®), a decision was made to combine our 2023-2024 Annual Pledge drive with our Capital Campaign which was already in the planning stages. The congregation overwhelmingly approved the Capital Campaign on March 5. The theme was "Investing in our Vision". The goal for the pledge drive was \$375,000 and the goal for the Capital Campaign was \$2,200,000.

The stewardship team members were recruited into a joint Annual Pledge / Capital Campaign team effort that worked hard to solicit both Annual Pledges and 3-year commitments to the Capital Campaign. Separate Annual Pledge and Capital Campaign commitment forms were distributed to members and friends of the church by visiting steward volunteers who were recruited by the combined team. The 3-year commitments will end on June 30, 2026, when construction of the capital improvements to our church are expected to be completed and is also when our church will celebrate our 200th anniversary.

The team solicited several testimonials from the congregation which were very effective. Even the young people in our church got involved by submitting a video testimonial and by staging a lemonade stand/bake sale fundraiser that raised over \$600. One generous donor committed to a \$100,000 challenge gift if the church raised 60 new or increased Capital Campaign commitments during a 3-week period. A seminar on funding a Capital Campaign with personal finances was

presented and recorded for the benefit of the congregation by Greg Gagne, Chartered Financial Consultant at the Affinity Investment Group in New Hampshire. On May 14 an ice cream sundae celebration was held to celebrate the success of the two campaigns. A phonathon was held during the evening of May 16 when the team made a final push to call and email congregation members who had not yet submitted Annual Pledges and commitments to the Capital Campaign.

Bottom line is that the team raised \$375,139.00 in Annual Pledges and \$2,303,881.87 in 3-year commitments to the Capital Campaign (as of May 17, 2023). Many, many thanks to the members and friends who supported our efforts!

The team is searching for a new member to replace Kim Steele who will be leaving the team in June. Many thanks to Kim for her many years of work on the stewardship team.

Submitted by David Price
May 17, 2023