

Report

Stewardship Commission

New Jersey Association

April 25, 2009

The Stewardship team has continued to work diligently to assist pastors and Stewardship Committees find additional funding for the ministries and missions of their churches.

We have encouraged churches to become actively engaged in Planned Giving and are somewhat dismayed that few churches have taken advantage of this untapped resource for additional funds.

Dick Batchelder continues to be available to assist churches. We published a Planned Giving Roadmap to point the way and have had several communications with pastors.

Donovan Hill, Minister and Team Leader for the UCC Financial Development Ministries, will spend several days in New Jersey in early May. During that time we will introduce a new Planned Giving packet designed to make it easy for churches to launch a successful program.

We have also nudged, cajoled, and nagged churches to start early to prepare and execute a plan for the annual fund campaign. The Stewardship Roadmap for 2008 laid out a detailed easy to follow blueprint for such a campaign. Frequent reminders have been sent to motivate pastors and Stewardship committees to get with the program. A Stewardship Roadmap for 2009 has been prepared and will be available for the annual meeting.

We have long been aware that we had no idea if and how churches were conducting annual fund campaigns and with what results. With the professional help of Marge Royle each church pastor has been asked to fill in a brief but comprehensive survey either electronically or by mail. This survey will also provide information needed to encourage churches to move toward becoming Covenant Keeper churches. We are now making a vigorous followup with the pastors who have not responded.

We are beginning the process of reviewing and revising our Work Plan.

We have sponsored three gatherings since the last annual meeting

A brown bag lunch for Retired Clergy on May 14 2008 at Union Congregational Church in Montclair. It turned out to be a bountiful feast enjoyed by those attending it.

Stephanie Weiner hosted a wine and cheese time at her home for pastors on May 17, 2008. The date was chosen when most churches would have just completed their annual campaigns and this provided an opportunity to say thank you for the pastoral leadership essential in fund raising.

A well attended gathering of Bergen County pastors was held at the Haworth Church on St Patrick's Day 2009 to introduce the concept of an integrated program for fund raising. This "four legged stool" would include the annual fund, special and major gift programs, capital campaigns, and Planned Giving. This concept will be promoted and improved over the next year.

We are living in a time of hope. Our hope is that every pastor and Stewardship Committee will join us as we continue to find ways to be mutually supportive in this vital part -- like it or not -- of ministry.

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Dick Batchelder
Joan Brannick
Greg Rupright
Dalton Smith
Sherry Taylor