



**First Congregational Church**  
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**Reverend Edward P. Rawls**

October 28, 2011

Dear Friends:

Once again Doug Halley nailed our Stewardship sermon this past Sunday. He hit it out of the park with his no nonsense, straight shooting, right to the point approach. Doug's creative power point presentation let us know where we stand and what we need to do to survive our poor economic state of affairs. It is such a shame that so many of you missed this timely and heart felt message. We invite you to see what you missed. Let me try to summarize Doug's main points:

- \*Stewardship is a matter of the heart.
- \*Stewardship is a privilege, 365 days a year.
- \*Stewardship requires our time, talents and TREASURES.
- \*We have 650 members on our rolls but only 130 pledged last year.
- \*A mere 20 of 130 families contribute 50% of our pledged income, while 5 contribute 30%.
- \*Many have contributed more over the years, but there are fewer families pledging.
- \*We have run deficit budgets of approx. \$100,000 for the past 10 years.
- \*In 2012 the deficit is expected to grow to \$110,000. The deficits are paid for by drawing down from our investments.
  
- \*Scary, if we continue on this path of taking from our investments we could be out of business in as few as 8 to 10 years! BROKE and OUT OF BUSINESS!! Our investments depleted!
  
- \*Long-term we can strengthen our spiritual connections, seek new members, explore mergers, estate planning, controlling expenses, sharing our facility.
- \*Where do we stand? We have a projected deficit of \$110,000 for 2012.
- \*We can eliminate our deficit right now if each pledge unit increases whatever we are returning to God now by adding \$16 per week.
- \*If there are those among us for whom a \$16/week increase is more than they can bear, let those among us who can afford to increase our pledges by more than \$16 be eager to do so, for by doing so, we lift each other up in the sight of God.

So, unlike the story of Chicken Little, the confirmed pessimist, our church IS nearing a fiscal crisis. There are far too many variables involved to tell us just how many years of life our church has left, but there is one thing for certain, if we do not re-examine our giving patterns and support the church fiscally, our church will not be here to support us! None of us want this to happen. We ask that you please review Doug's sermon, attached, and pray for God's guidance in supporting of our church and eliminating our huge deficit.

Thank you.

Bill Haberlin  
Board of Trustees

Sue Wilson  
Stewardship Committee