



*"The Rich Church has a big dream because it believes in a big God...."*  
Rich Church, Poor Church

Dear members and friends,

This year the Generosity Team has studied, discussed at length, and taken deeply to heart messages from an insightful book about the financial struggles of many churches in America. The book is *Rich Church, Poor Church* by Clif Christopher. Christopher is a keen observer of church stewardship issues, the meanings of stewardship, and the reasons so many churches in America find themselves with declining memberships and shrinking budgets. There are copies of the book in the church library.

You may already know the statistics. Religion used to receive 60 percent of all charitable giving in America. Today it receives 32 percent. In 2010, only 14 percent of churches could be considered financially healthy, a drop of almost 50 percent in just one decade.

We are grateful that Cary Presbyterian is a Rich Church in so many ways we can celebrate — in the faithfulness and active support of its members, in vital ministries and mission outreach, in responsible and creative leadership, and in our beautiful facility for worship and ministry. However, CPC leadership is taking seriously the issue of decreased membership and the impact it is having on our church mission.

Let's face it: there is extreme competition for our charitable donations, and for most of us, the decisions about where to give are difficult because our resources are finite and opportunities are vast. The enclosed brochure describes some of the ways in which our gifts to CPC are *supporting and changing lives*. Take a moment to look at the inside word border showing the many ministries and missions we serve — we could not list them all. We are a community that lives out the teachings of Christ in every way we can. That means using our resources, time, and talents — the wonderful abundance of who we are and the Christ we follow — to serve and support each other, our local community, and the world.

If we are to strengthen and expand our mission, we need to think big, and ask big: **Our goal for 2017 is to increase planned giving by 10 percent, bringing our overall budget to \$800,000.**

We invite you to prayerfully consider these questions: How has Jesus Christ changed your life? Do you fully recognize and value the many ways in which CPC offers life-nurturing, life-changing support to you, your family, and your brothers and sisters in Christ? Will you put CPC first in your giving and support God's work at this church as generously as your circumstances permit?

When we come forward to celebrate communion, we walk side-by-side towards the Table to receive the feast. On Commitment Sunday, November 20, we invite you to join us in this walk as we bring forth our commitments of resources, Worship +3, and prayer concerns. Together, and individually, we will answer God's call, saying with generosity and conviction — "Here I am, Lord!"

With grace and peace,  
CPC Generosity Team

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