

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

SUNDAY, MARCH 3, 2019

KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

“ Money, Money, Money...It's a Rich Man's World”

Based on Philippians 4:11-13

*Money, money, money,
always sunny
In the rich man's world
All the things I could do if I had
a little money
It's a rich man's world
~ABBA (Mama Mia)*

Perhaps you recognize some of the words from the music of ABBA, a Swedish band from the 1970's, re-popularized more recently in the live stage production and film of Mama Mia! (Which I think is on our Classic Cinema schedule this year.)

“All the things I could do if I had a little money...”

- I could take a trip
- I could buy a new car
- I could pay off the mortgage

Now let's put that in 'church speak' as they say...

- We could freshen the paint in the Sanctuary
- We could update the audio-visual equipment
- We could finish the basement for more rental income

• We could grade the backyard, add a garden, or create more parking

- ✓ If only we had more money
- ✓ If only we were left a large bequest
- ✓ If only we had more renters
- ✓ If only we had more envelopes on the plate
- ✓ If only we had more bodies in the pews.

“All the things [we] could do if [we] had a little money.”

I have learned
the secret of being
content in any and
every situation,
whether well fed or
hungry, whether
living in plenty or
in want.

~Philippians 4:12

The world of church finance is a strange thing; an enigma which pushes and pulls us in the same and opposite directions. On one hand, we are called to be 'good stewards' of the gifts given

and received (Mathew 25:20-21). Responsible. Dependable. As Presbyterians, we have a reputation for taking that a little further: 'thrifty', 'frugal' and dare I say it, sometimes 'cheap'!

At the same time, our Saviour demands of us to be 'generous' (Matthew 6:19-21): with our time, our talents, our hearts, and yes, our money...

- For the greater good of all,
- For those less fortunate than ourselves,
- For those in need, for those who struggle,
- For those who grieve.

You do remember the Beatitudes, don't you?"

The enigma is this: being a 'responsible steward' suggests we should scrimp and save, and hold tightly to what we have, while having a 'generous heart' suggests we should give, give away, and even spend to the glory of God!

- How do we accomplish both?
- Can we accomplish both?
- Can both ideas work hand in hand?

Paul would say yes. And so would I.

Remember last spring here at Knox? The fiscal outlook was lean. Offerings were down. Renters were leaving. The budget we passed was slimmed and trimmed to accommodate. At Session and Board meetings, we carefully looked at fundraisers, and projects to minimize costs and maximize potential income for the remainder of the year. Then, in June, out of nowhere, the Chapel Roof required immediate attention. There was no money to fix a roof. There was only a small amount in reserve. There were no major fundraisers on the horizon to 'fix the problem'. You, the faithful parishioners, were already giving what you could on Sunday. What were we going to do?

The Session and the Board met together to brainstorm on solutions. They were hopeful, that with concerted effort, and redirecting profits from fall fundraisers, that maybe, just maybe, the roof could be paid for by the end of the year, if we were lucky. They came to you, the congregation, and explained the situation. And then something very strange happened.

- Money arrived.
- Not a little money, but lots of money.
- Private donations.
- Small fundraisers.

- Strangers off the street.

By the end of the summer, the roof was fixed. The contractor paid in full. Fundraisers went back to raising money for their intended projects. Not only that, but offerings continued to be higher for the rest of the year, replenishing some of our reserve, and creating breathing space in the month to month spending.

You did that!

How?

With 'generous hearts.'

Paul said,

"I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation..." (v12)

The secret of course, was being centered on God first, and the money second.

"I can do all this through him who gives me strength," (v13)

Paul said, "With or without money. Because its not really about the money in the first place. It's about living responsibly, but generously with Him; spending when it glorifies Him, saving when it serves Him, and enjoying the gifts given each day."

As we approach our Annual Meeting this morning, with the fiscal realities of the world we live in on one hand, AND the service we give to our

community on the other hand, may we be reminded first, that yes, "It is a rich man's world." And we are the richest of all, because we have a Saviour in our heart, who cares little for the money we have in our pockets, but cares deeply about the jewels of the hearts and minds who serve Him.

Let us be responsible. But more important, let us be generous.

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always sunny
In the rich man's world."*

~ABBA