Invitation to make a Pledge to Little River United Church of Christ for Calendar Year 2022

Who: All members and friends of Little River United Church of Christ (LRUCC) are cordially invited to make an annual pledge or contribution to LRUCC’s Operating Fund for Calendar Year 2022.

What: 118 individuals and families made pledges or gifts totaling $535,270 for Calendar Year 2021. Thank you! Staffing comprises about 70% of the church’s annual operations budget. The Board of Trustees have been able to generate some savings on utilities and cleaning costs during the pandemic. However, staffing costs were slightly higher, as it takes more time to organize and support church services and operations virtually than in person. We also invested in additional cameras, lighting, microphones and other audio-visual equipment to start “Hybrid”, in church and virtual, worship this Fall. Trees continue to fall, and our building requires special maintenance driving other costs up.

We are extremely grateful to Pastor Art, the staff and, especially, all the volunteers -- including members of boards and committees and our Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts -- who have worked together to “keep the wheels turning” on the day-to-day operations of the church despite the fact that in person gatherings in the church have only recently become available. Thank you for your time and active participation in the church’s programs and your support for our church community.

For Calendar Year 2022, we continue the “Interim” process, with Pastor Art of preparing to open a search for a new Settled Senior Pastor. We continue to adjust our ministries--to our congregation and to our neighbors near and far--to the nuances of the Pandemic. We continue, as a congregation, to develop our vision for the future. We expect expenses for operations for 2022 to be a little higher than 2021. We always aspire to give an increase to staff for the new year, and we would like to be able to provide more for benevolences and the church’s emergency reserves.

Thus, we need your help. As you are able, please consider increasing your gift by 1% to 15%. (This could be $4 to $3,000.) New pledges and gifts are also welcome and appreciated. We know some individuals and families may not be able to commit financially this year due to complications involving the pandemic. We also have members who move or pass away each year. Hopefully, we will be able to shift back to meeting mostly in person. Yet, we will want to host parallel online opportunities of our worship services and coffee hours for those members who cannot or will not attend in person. Our priority is to make LRUCC accessible for all members and friends, no matter their circumstances or condition.

When: This year’s Stewardship Campaign will run for three weeks. We will kick off the campaign on October 10, provide updates on October 17 and wrap up during the week of October 24.

Where: Our Stewardship Campaign will be mostly virtual this year. In this Stewardship mailing, you will find a “Guide to Giving” and a Pledge Form which you can complete online (on the church “donations” page), or email it to Stewardship@lrucc.org. Alternately you can mail the completed Pledge Form to the church office – Attn. Stewardship Campaign. We will send reminders. You can reach
the Stewardship Committee with any questions or suggestions regarding your pledge or contribution at Stewardship@lrucc.org.

How: In most cases, making a pledge or donation is easy. Just complete the Pledge Form for our records. Trustees ask boards and committees for estimates of how much they need for programs and ministries of the church, as well as benevolences. They then factor in the costs of the building, grounds, and staffing to develop a draft Operations Budget. This is compared to the amount of pledges and projected income from other sources, such as building use and funds transferred from our church endowment. Together, these factors determine the budget for 2022, as voted on by the congregation at Annual Meeting. Your pledge and gifts are the primary source of revenue for LRUCC.

About the 2022 Stewardship Campaign

Your Stewardship Committee has chosen the theme – “Forward with Faith.” We have worked together, prayed together, and stayed together through the Pandemic, through dramatic changes in our community, in our country and around the globe. We are reopening our church, restarting and creating new programs, reengaging our youth and families, and reaching out to members and friends we have not seen for a while. We will be reaching out to select and hire a new settled Pastor. Sixty-six years ago, a small group of neighbors in Annandale were asked whether they were interested in starting a new Congregational church. They said yes, and moved forward with faith. We continue to move “Forward with Faith” in new and novel ways adapting to the times and the needs of our members and the communities around us.

We are grateful for all of the contributions you have made this year in response to our troubled world – gifts to feed those in need, help for immigrants and Afghan Refugees, contributions for our own community as well as all the other charities that many of you support. With you we move “Forward in Faith.” We accomplish so much more than we could do alone.

This fall we ask you to turn your attention to our own congregation. As you are able, please ensure that you are up to date with your pledges for 2021 as we prepare for the Stewardship Campaign. Our support to the operating fund of Little River is crucial for our church to thrive and to move forward. Our staff, our building, and our grounds are the foundation on which we stand as a community. In the next three weeks you will hear reflections from some of our members on how our pledges are used to live out the LRUCC mission. During three Sundays in October, we will provide updates on pledges and gifts received for Calendar Year 2022. During those services we also hope to have some fun videos and updates connected to our theme, but also to thank you for your gifts. Thank you very much. Together we can make a huge difference within our Congregation and beyond.

Attached in this Newsletter please find:

- 2022 Stewardship Campaign Pledge Form
- Giving Guide 2022