

Over the last several weeks there have been opportunities to talk about the money our church spends and will spend in the next few years. It started at the Congregational Meeting on Sunday, October 13, where we agreed to move forward to **repair our roof and to incur specific expenses in 2014**. It continued a couple of Sundays later when **Lisa Peterson donned her chef hat and asked us what type of “dough” we would bring to our “baking” of ministries in 2014**. Lisa gave us the opportunity to express our intention with the Stewardship Pledge cards to be returned this Sunday, November 10th. And finally in the November Narthex issue, Pastor Mark highlighted situations of how we have been **“Takin’ Care of Business”** in 2013 and what some of our next business items might be in the years to come.

The 2014 Budget Committee is continuing this trend of speaking about money as they begin to plan for 2014 at NPCC. The Committee has asked questions such as:

1. Which areas does NPCC want to support financially in 2014?
2. With the estimated decrease in envelope giving that has occurred in 2013 from 2012, will that trend continue into 2014? (2012 envelope giving was \$610,000. As of October 31, the 2013 estimated full year envelope giving is \$585,000.)
3. How do members and friends respond financially to the needs of the church?
4. How do members and friends know of the financial needs of the church?

Personally, it frustrates me that I have more questions with seemingly few answers.

It is within this context, and the last two questions above, to which I want to provide some insight as you consider 2014.

1. **The Budget Committee, while still a work in progress, has an INITIAL estimate that expenses will be approximately \$20,000 above estimated income.** (\*Please know this is a very preliminary indication.\*) The assumptions reflect a view of income consistent with 2013 giving while trying to reduce expenses as possible and still plan for as much ministry as possible.
2. **Included in that budget indication is NPCC’s mortgage payment of \$102,900 per year.** This mortgage was taken to improve the accessibility in our building: installing the elevator, creating the south entrance, and allowing for better traffic flow through the building. This is now referred to as Fulfilling our Commitment (FOC) in our annual budget. Each of the past 4 years we have taken in less income than was needed to meet the payments. However a reserve fund was created years ago to cover the costs when we are short. That current reserve covers about 5 months of payments, which is a decrease from 9 months of reserves a few years ago. You are asked to pledge specifically to the FOC each year to allow us to specifically make those regular monthly mortgage payments.
3. At the October 13, 2013 congregational meeting, the Trustees showed an **estimate of building repair costs needed in the next 5 years. The total presented was \$650,000.** A small portion of this amount is included in the annual budget, but the vast majority will be raised outside the budget. More information on fundraising for this work will be provided in the next 6-8 months, but do be aware that this is on the horizon.

This leads me to a few more questions in the paragraphs below. They may seem rhetorical, and maybe too personal, but I welcome any and all responses you are willing to provide. Feel free to send them to the Treasurer email at [treasurer@npcovenant.org](mailto:treasurer@npcovenant.org).

Does knowing these financial needs and details change your plan or actions? What kind of influences affect your pledging, and subsequently your giving, each year? Do you give because that's what was modeled for you and you have always just done that? Does wanting to be part of a "New Day" at North Park Covenant Church influence your decision? Do you respond to financial needs when they are specifically identified and specifically asked of you?

Do you give the same dollar amount each year? Do you give a percentage of your income or rely on a 10% tithe suggestion? Do you give sacrificially? Do you review your household budget and determine how your giving fits into that context? Do you increase your giving because of a raise or bonus you may get at work or a windfall you may collect from other situations?