

## **Greg Yothers Temple Talk**

Sunday October 24, 2009

Good morning! Fellow members of St. Paul's, I would like to share a few words with you about our congregations' financial status. As of the end of the third quarter, our giving is about 15% less than what we need to satisfy the budget we as a congregation adopted early this year. This amounts to being about \$23,000 behind where we need to be at the end of the third quarter. These numbers are seasonally adjusted, so they already factor in that the fourth quarter tends to have the highest giving. Much of this deficit is because we have not received extraordinary gifts this year that we have received the last couple years, but it is also evident that regular envelope giving is less this year than it was in 2008, 2007, or 2006.

I understand that we are experiencing a tough economy right now and some of our members are having hard times financially. It is understandable that church giving would decline with significant declines in income.

I also recognize that some members have concerns about the recent actions at the ELCA Churchwide Assembly. I would share with you that Church Council has been striving to understand the varied concerns of our congregation and we have been investigating our options for how to respond to the recent changes in our Church. We are planning an educational meeting for the congregation. We also plan to have a congregational vote on whether our Benevolence funds should be given through normal ELCA channels or whether we should bypass our synod and national church bodies and give our funds directly to the charitable organizations who would normally receive the bulk of these funds anyway. Bear in mind that this congregation has made financial commitments, and we are in danger of falling short of our obligations.

I would ask those members of our congregation who are financially able to please respond to our need and increase giving. My wife Robbin and I have already decided to increase our weekly giving by 15% for the fourth quarter. I understand this congregation has a reputation for coming through when a true need arises. I'm confident that we as a congregation can get through this financial rough patch together by relying on each other. Thank you!