

## 2019 Stewardship Letter

*I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit.*  
—Jesus in the Gospel of John

We hope you'll read this entire letter, but if you're in a hurry, we'll begin with our two most important requests:

1. Make your 2019 pledge to Old Pine! For those who have been faithfully giving, we ask you to go deeper (read further to learn why). For those who have never made a gift, we ask that you join us in making a pledge this year.
2. Please don't send in your pledge card yet! We know, this sounds strange. But we want to make our pledges together as a congregation, at the same time, in the same worship service. On Nov. 11, after a sermon on stewardship, you will be invited to come forward to place your pledge card in the dedication basket on the communion table. This will be followed by a celebration! We'll walk over to the Community Center gym to a catered lunch in which we can thank you for your pledges and thank God for the life that is thriving at Old Pine.



And now to the reasons why it's so important to make your pledge to the church. *It's because our church is thriving. People are growing in faith, healing in Christ, and helping those in need.*

As you can see in the photos above, 2018 was an amazing year. The main event was our 250th Anniversary. (We are the oldest Presbyterian church on its original footprint in the City of Philadelphia!) We honored this important anniversary with more than a year's worth of concerts, lectures, and events, concluding in an extraordinary weekend of festivities: a Gala celebration at the Museum of the American Revolution, a Tea for descendants who flew in from around the nation, a catered Saturday for Seniors luncheon, and a stirring worship service attended by friends from many years of congregational life.

As we were honoring the past, however, we were also moving faithfully into the future. This year, our membership topped 200 for the first time in decades. This has created a "good" problem, but a problem nonetheless: How do we meet the spiritual and educational needs of a growing congregation? How do we staff our busy nursery, teach our growing Sunday School classes, expand our mission outreach, and offer engaging programs for our adults and families?



After much reflection, the Session of Old Pine has decided to make a strategic investment in a new staff position. As Jason announced from the pulpit on Sunday, Old Pine has hired the Rev. Rebecca Blake to oversee our educational programs for children and adults. In the coming weeks, you will have the opportunity to welcome Rebecca to our church family. She brings over 10 years of ministry with children and adults, with a special focus on incorporating the arts into faith.

Although this new position requires us to stretch financially, we trust that God is helping us to fulfill the promises we make at baptism: to tell one another the good news of the Gospel and to show one another the reality of God's love in our words and actions. We know that like branches on a vine, our congregation grows from the deep roots of our faith in God.

That means that we cannot grow outwardly without also going deeper, by supporting those things that enhance our faith: worship, education, mission, and community.

Thank you for joining us in shepherding our congregation into its next 250 years of life and growth. We look forward to seeing you on November 11.

In Christ,

The Stewardship Committee:

Mark McClurg (chair), Pastor Jason Ferris, Megan Steelman, Bill Hoffman, and Jen Hall