



St. Stephen Lutheran Church
8400 France Ave S, Bloomington, MN 55431

What an exciting time at St. Stephen Lutheran Church! Over the past two months, a group of nearly forty dedicated members of your congregation have devoted themselves to the process of re-visioning both our ministry and mission plan and developing a comprehensive approach to our financial stewardship approach. It has been so great to be a part of this group of talented leaders and sense the synergy at work.

In a nutshell, we have had three sub-groups working with our consultant, Dr. Jim Pence, our history, and our long range plans. They are the Stewardship group, the Finance group, and the Mission and Vision Planning group. Each group has been working at the following goals:

- 1) Transforming the Culture around Stewardship,
- 2) Connecting with the Congregation's Vision and Strategic Plan,
- 3) Developing Best Practices, and
- 4) Setting the table for a Major Mortgage Appeal in 2010.

With so much happening and the absolute necessity for deeper education and ownership of this process, we are planning to use the season of Advent to continue the process of rolling out this exciting new plan to our members. Here are some key happenings for you to be aware of:

- **Connect and Serve** – A new portion of our weekly worship service wholly dedicated to informing you of the exciting things happening around St. Stephen as we fulfill our mission! There will be informational talks around our big plans, stewardship stories, pledging updates, and simple 'thank you's' to both God and all of you.
- **Sunday, December 6** – will be our **Celebration Sunday with a delicious breakfast served, an "introduction" to our faith pledge cards for our mission and ministry budget and our building mortgage pledges for 2010.** Unlike years past, we will dedicate the remainder of December to receiving pledges, not just a particular Sunday. A pledge packet will be in your hands prior to December 6 for you to prayerfully consider your level of financial support for the coming year.
- **Faith Pledge cards will then be received in the offering plates on Sundays or in the mail from the week of December 6 through December 31.**
- **Sunday, January 10, 2010** – As we celebrate the Epiphany of our Lord, we will also set aside time at worship to celebrate the hard work and generous response of our congregation and its leaders.

Again, these are exciting times at St. Stephen! Stay informed, stay connected and catch the Spirit!

Sincerely, Pastor Tom Olson