**NORTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**Stewardship Sunday**

**November 17, 2019**





A magician working a cruise ship, with a difficult audience each week, used the same tricks. Eventually the captain’s parrot caught on and started shouting in the middle of the show: “It’s not the same hat!” “Look under the table!” “Why are all the cards the ace of spades?” One day the ship sank, leaving the magician and parrot clinging to a piece of driftwood. They stared at each other for days, with not a word. Finally the parrot spoke up: “O.K., I give up. Where’s the ship?”

 Many times around the church there seems to be an aura of magic. Things seem to happen with a wave of a magic wand. And so… coffee and refreshments suddenly appear in the Brisbane Room after worship services. Ragged bushes around the church are suddenly transformed into shapely foliage. An amazing “Rally Day” luncheon takes place in Willets Hall to start a new semester of Sunday school. Worship assistants appear faithfully in the chancel week after week to help with the flow of services. Contributions to our church rummage sale stream amazingly through our church doors. Happy volunteers fill the Sunday school teaching roster. And known only to a few, dedicated Session members undertake necessary organizational and repair work at the church, and POOF, it’s done!

 Consider what other enchanted contributions the church sponsors for both our church membership and the Elmira community: a Food Pantry, a Community Cupboard, Yoga Classes, AA, Kindermusik, Four Adult Bible Studies, a Harvest Dinner, Monthly Fellowship Dinners, Christmas Caroling, ARC Training, FP Coalition Meetings, Gateway Dinner, Men’s Breakfasts, Thursday Morning Musicales, Bell Choir, Chancel Choir, Praise Band, Children’s Choir, Nursery and Wee Worship, the CASH free tax preparation program, Red Cross Blood Drives, and we are an election site for the voting community.

 There’s more magic I could list, but the point is made: many good, enchanting things are taking place in our church and are obvious to behold if we only have eyes to see and ears to hear. More than that! Those good things that are taking place in our midst are not the result of magic. They are the product of the genuine Christian effort and commitment of our church members. It’s not sorcery that keeps the ship afloat, but rather the personal stewardship of those who contribute willingly and eagerly, giving of their time, effort, and monetary offerings to God.

 We anticipate the approach of Stewardship Sunday which falls on Sunday, November 17 when we will have the dedication of pledge cards, and we ask for your help. We don’t beg; we don’t cajole; we don’t harp on the needs that we have as a congregation to keep from going under. But we trust in the counsel of God’s Spirit to touch your heart and mind both to volunteer and to give so that you will never have to say, like the parrot, “O.K., I give up. Where’s the ship?”

 – A stewardship message from Jim Hicks, Temporary Supply Pastor

 (TSP with TLC)