Dear Commissioners of the Presbytery of the Cascades,

In October of 2018 the Presbyterian Leadership Commission approved a plan recommended by the Budget and Finance Committee to adopt a Long Range Financial Sustainability Plan. It was assumed that this plan would have to work in sync with an emerging vision for the presbytery. Initiatives in that plan were planned for the March, 2020 presbytery meeting. As all of us are aware, the coronavirus pandemic sidelined both that meeting and our work for many months.

In January of 2021 the Presbytery Leadership Commission re-ignited that plan under a new name and an appointed group called the Strategic Planning Team. They have been working for nine months now meeting every other week as they propose new mission and vision statements, guide the process for financial strategies, and anticipate making infrastructure proposals in 2022 to align with our new mission and vision.

The 2022 budget that is before you reflects both the direction that we intuitively believe God is taking us and the unfinished work of the Strategic Planning Team that should emerge in 2022. Here are the proposals in the 2022 budget that you should pay special attention to as we take another step toward a new vision and address the issues of our long range sustainability issues:

1. Per capita has been set at $39.00 for 2022. Note that this appears to be a significant increase over 2020, but also remember that there was no increase from 2019 to 2020. Also, note that it is believed that this is too low to address potential staff changes and additions in 2022 that may come as the result of the Strategic Planning Team’s infrastructure proposals. The Trustees felt that this per capita amount was reasonable for this year.
2. Three part-time Commission on Ministry Team Leader positions are included in this budget that allows for the COM to take the pressure off of liaisons to “be all things to all churches” and places specialized expertise in three teams—Church Conflict, Pastoral Transitions and Pastoral Support. This has an impact in the budget in the amount of $24,022.
3. While the assessments have not been completed, the budget does reflect a potential shift in the office to provide more staff support for the business office and property management. It is possible that we may be able to handle this in the office with current staffing patterns and contractors, but the budget reflects increasing the Stated Clerk from .75 FTE to .85 FTE, and increasing the Business Manager from .25 FTE (paid to the Stated Clerk in administrative) to a .50 FTE in the program budget to reflect the additional duties that may be needed. This decreases personnel in the Administrative budget by $15,915 and increases the Program budget by $54,207, for a total increase of $38,292 in personnel costs overall.
4. In the past, the Trustees have transferred funds from our unrestricted reserves in order to replenish the Barnabas Funds, the Vitality Fund and the Technology Grants Fund. However, we already have a Vacant Property policy that provides for the replenishment of those funds with the sale of property. This budget reflects our decision to rely on property sales for those funds and the intention to include the Technology Grants fund in a revised Vacant Property policy.
5. This budget reflects a deficit on the program side of the budget of $102,543. The deficit is covered by unrestricted program reserves. This is the side of the budget that is supported by our Presbytery Partnership Giving. Given current trends it is anticipated that we will run out of reserves sometime in the next two to three years. While some churches may be able to increase their pledge and their giving, it is not believed that the long term answer is for churches to make up the difference. A major portion of the Long Range Financial Sustainability plan is the revision of the Vacant Property policy that will transfer funds from the sale of properties to fund the personnel side of the budget in addition to the four grant funds (Barnabas, Vitality, New Ministries’ Team, and Technology).
6. In addition to and with these changes the budget continues the key programs we have funded for many years: New Ministries’ Team, Barnabas, Vitality and Technology grants; Warm Springs Mission and Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon.

Presbyterian Leadership Commission recommends this budget to you for consideration and approval.