

Greetings!

Check out our recent promo on NCP's social media platforms about our upcoming continuing education retreat! It relates to our **Fireside Chats** and has a Venn Diagram sharing the relationship between *property and volunteerism*. We don't usually talk about those two subjects together, but it's time that we start.



Our denomination (and our churches) was created with laity at the cornerstone. Our Elders, Deacons, Trustees, Treasurers, Committee Members – all volunteers. We looked out into our congregations and tried to match talents with needs. That attorney was more than willing to do some pro-bono work to make sure the preschool lease was in order. The 4th grade schoolteacher aptly oversaw the Sunday School program. Our finance committee was chaired by the elder with a CPA. I could go on, but I suspect you know what I'm talking about.

As our churches shrink and age, it becomes harder and harder to do what we've always done – at least, ***it's harder to do it the way that we've always done it***. Increasingly, we are filling that void with paid services – we pay the attorney to draft and review the lease, the treasurer becomes a paid position, there aren't enough folks to volunteer for the grounds cleanup day or to plant the spring flowers, so the landscaping company does it. As our expenses increase, we look for ways to do more - but with less. Often, that means looking at ways to leverage our property. Who can we rent space to? When we start renting space, we need someone to liaison with the tenants, manage the use agreements, track the rising expenses, etc. so we look to the property committee. We put the call out for more volunteers. More volunteers on the property committee means less volunteers for ministry opportunities. Do you see the pattern?

We know something must change – but what? And how? These are the conversations that we'll be diving into during our continuing education retreat – specifically at our fireside chats. Honest dialogue, opportunities to share and learn, practices that can inform and transform. I can't wait to participate!

Registration closes February 13 and there are only a few spots left!

Blessings,

Heather