

Rev. Paul Nesbit
Sermon October 23, 2022
First Congregational Church of Westfield

Get Your Tickets Here!

*" Some folks dream of the wonders they'll do
Before their time on this planet is through
Some just don't have anything planned
They hide their hopes and their heads in the sand
Now I don't say who is wrong, who is right
But if by chance you are here for the night
Then all I need is an hour or two
To tell the tale of a dreamer like you
We all dream a lot
Some are lucky
Some are not
But if you think it, want it
Dream it—then it's real
You are what you feel.."
(Prologue of "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat")*

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to win Mega Millions or Powerball? As I drove by today, I discovered that Mega Millions is up to \$640 million while Powerball, recently won, is at a paltry \$50 million. We all tend to get a little excited when we hear on the news or see the signs in store windows that the jackpot has reached over one billion dollars. In my house, we even have a plan of what will be distributed versus how much we really need to live. Of course, my mind wants to have a place to live in Ogunquit for the summer as well as a place in Florida to "winter." More often than not, these great ideas and plans are burst because I forgot to even buy a ticket. It would truly be a miracle if I won this way!

Today, in our church, there are people who think that we exist solely through miraculous turns of events. Wonderful things happen in our church because “someone” or a group of people got together and made them happen. Somehow, things get done and other things are paid for from money that happened to appear at the right time. For those of us who pay attention, we know that “someone” or the “group” are people with names, faces, families, and who are sometimes fully employed outside of their homes. We also know that the money doesn’t always just appear but is sometimes found because “someone” had the foresight to ask.

While we place our trust in God, we also place our trust that God has given us the ability to solve issues within our church. We also rely on the Holy Spirit to give us the gifts to serve God. Just as the prophet Joel spoke:

*I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your elders will dream dreams,
your younger ones will see visions.
Even on my servants, both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days.*

As of late, the Holy Spirit seems to have been at work at First Congregational Church of Westfield. There is a great spirit of excitement and enthusiasm as we move from pandemic to endemic. Committees and groups have re-formed, we have been blessed to be able to balance our budgets, and we continue to work to spread the Gospel message in our communities as we feed the hungry, clothe the naked and give shelter (through donations) to those in need. All of our committees, activities, and work need to be supported by all members of the Church community through gifts of time, talent, and treasure.

We give of our **time** by serving as a liturgist, usher, coffee hour provider, committee member, and helper for the events in our church. Time is a precious commodity regardless of your employment status. We are called upon to do so much. However, we are starting to run out of "someone" in our church. If we can donate our time to work on a project or an event, we can all take our turn to be that "someone."

Do we possess a special **talent** that could be of assistance in our church? Maybe you are a good organizer, can do basic repairs, or possess financial knowledge that could help our church. Some of us have yet to volunteer to sing, read, or be present when we have God-given abilities to do so. As time marches on, we begin to notice that we have less folks who have shared talents with us. We need that "someone" to come forward and help our church community. It is also important that we allow for a new "someone" to share their talents and not get stuck in "this is how we do it."

The concept of **treasure** is not new to any church goer as we take up a collection each week. Just as you do at home, our church has to pay for electricity, heat, hot water, supplies, equipment, and salaries. In times past, we were able to have to full time pastor, full time administrative assistant, and other staff in place. This is no longer the case; we currently have all half-time or part-time staff in place. Nonetheless, we must make sure that our staff is paid a just wage. We cannot and must not go under the assumption that "God will provide" without all of us using the gifts that God has given to us.

During this time of stewardship, I ask everyone to consider what they can do with their time, talent and treasure. If we simply do nothing, it is almost as if we expect to win the lottery without buying a ticket. Take some prayerful moments to consider what you can do to help your church community spread the Good News of Christ! We have to "buy our ticket" or do what we possibly can to continue our good work at First Congregational Church of Westfield. Won't you share your prophesy, dream your dreams, and share your vision with us?