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## MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY!

Dear Christ First Friends,

**We are now** in the season where we typically engage in a multiweek stewardship campaign. Why do we ask for your financial commitment? It is true that Christ First (CF) requires funds to operate on a daily basis, but there is a far more subtle and purposeful objective at play here. Our church is evolving and redefining what is the true work of Christ First. In my view, less of what we emphasize is about ourselves and more is about how blessed we are to be able to give so much to so many in our community. You have only to look at the list of organizations we support to see the true reach of our donations. It is truly a “feel good moment” when we give comfort to others and a real sense of purpose to those in need. How important is this? Extremely!

**You will recall** that in November 2019 members of our congregation were invited to participate in a Visioning Session as part of a process to review and prioritize what activities were important to our Community of Faith. Amazingly nearly 100 congregants participated in developing our vision. A not so surprising outcome of this important session was the confirmation that the two founding congregations of Christ First, with equally rich traditions of community service, would successfully come together as one with a shared vision – spiritual engagement, strong connection of members and an overwhelming desire to have a strong community involvement. As a consequence, the Christ First influence is spreading with vigour throughout our Port Credit and Clarkson neighbourhoods.

### SUPPORTED GROUPS

- The Compass
- The Open Door
- Canadian Food Grains - Bighead River Foodgrains Project
- Children of Hope Haiti
- Christ First Band Camp
- Community Round Table Initiative
- Church Community Volunteers
- Amnesty International Christ First group for stamps
- Chase The Chill
- Out of the Cold
- Mitten Tree (mittens, scarves, hats)
- Children's Christmas crafts
- Bloom Clinic
- Circle of Care
- Options
- Immigrant Farm Workers

**Let's reflect** upon what a strong community involvement really means. To some of us, it means that we can be a significant and complementary asset to our community. Others see us as an economic driver within our community. While others know we are important to our neighbourhoods but have difficulty explaining how and why. What we are beginning to recognize is that if CF ceased to exist the cost to replace our physical and fiscal contributions to our community would be immense.

**How can we conclude** that our economic impact is meaningful and dramatically impacts our immediate catchment area? Until recently it has been difficult to articulate the economic importance of a congregation such as ours on our adjoining neighbourhoods. A study of Christ First forms part of a Halo Canada Project which, since 2016, has conducted detailed socio-economic studies of 80 congregations across the country.

**A digital copy** of this study will soon be part of our website for all to read. However, for purposes of highlighting our importance from an economic perspective in our area and why our stewardship campaign is so important, permit me to highlight a few important conclusions drawn from the study:

- Christ First plays a key role in the socio-economic life of Mississauga with a local value to our community of \$2,800,000;
- This represents a per capita contribution of \$20,905 for every worshipper;
- Church members and program leaders expend close to 13,000 community volunteer hours worth close to \$350,000 in social benefit; and
- For every dollar the congregation spends the surrounding community receives \$4.08 of social impact.

**Let's consider** the above for a moment. Not only are we a spiritual hub providing inspirational services and wonderful music to our local community we are more, much more. We have a congregational-supported ethos that motivates us to serve our community and drives us to make a positive and profound influence on the lives of others.

**We were taught** to share our abundance with those less fortunate. We as a worshipping community are blessed to be in a position to be able to do so. I ask you to join with me in supporting our church as we continue to do God's work.

**Thank you,** sincerely, be safe and healthy.



Steve Shaver  
Chair of Council