



St. Paul's United Methodist Church

The Ministry of Stewardship and Finance

April 2011

Message From the Finance Committee

“After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.” Matthew 28:1

Dear Friends in Christ,

Jesus was raised from the dead, but it did not come at a cheap price.

The cross stands empty because of the great worth that God placed upon human life and the life of creation. **The price that God gave for such worth was the death of God's own self, incarnate in Jesus Christ. The women went to the tomb early on that Sunday morning to complete Jesus' burial. They owed that much, and more, to him for his vision, expressed in his teaching, his life, his healing. The vision he gave completely transformed life for them and for all creation. Their grief was great, and they would soon learn that the vision was not dead any more.**

The church – a local community of believers – is both a body of Christ and a body of human beings, both saints and sinners. We are beloved of God and people who struggle with being beloved. At times, **we deny and betray our own” beloved-ness” and the beloved-ness of others. We live with our hearts split – one part in the old life and one part hoping for the vision of Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, for our lives and the life of the world.**

We often say that Jesus paid the price of our split hearts; and this is true. But there is still a price that only we can pay. It is the price of our willingness to accept the grace of God raised from the dead and the **price of our willingness to accept that we are stewards of God's life given to us and not owners of our own lives and our possessions. God's prevenient grace is not cheap grace. It opens the way for us to respond to offer ourselves to the new vision for ourselves, and for all humanity and creation. God believed and acted because we and creation are worth it.**

The evidence that we know something of the great price of God's grace is in our willingness to grow in generosity. Generosity is the sign, the outcome, the substance of the vision Jesus Christ has for you and me, for the church, for Jesus' ministry through us, and for creation.

The work and character of St. Paul's – you and me, with split hearts - is making the Jesus-vision real in both the church and the world. Imagine what the world will become, if we become a people who are generous with grace, with respect, with mercy, and justice, with love for people of all ages, nations and races. And, my friends in Christ, it is happening within us and around us. This is what we have learned during Lent through *Unbinding Your Heart*. Lives are being influenced by the vision of Jesus Christ. Come, and support that vision with the gift of our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service, and our witness.

Grace & Peace,

Pastor Harlan Gillespie

Our Prayers & Witness

“Turning Tippers into Tithers” Finance Workshop Hosted at St. Paul’s April 10

St. Paul’s hosted one of three Conference-wide workshops this past weekend. 24 leaders of St Paul’s and clergy attended along with 120 people from other churches in the area. It was great workshop with concepts for us to use to increase our growth in faith and the work of God through the church. You will be seeing some of the results of this workshop soon! The youth did a *fantastic* ministry of preparing the evening meal, serving it, and wowing the participants with their presence. You can be very proud of our youth and the adult-youth leaders and Pastor Phil! In prayer and witness, give God thanks for the ways that God is working through us and the United Methodist Church, transforming the world and making disciples for Jesus Christ.

St. Paul’s Maintenance Staff Praised by DHS

Recently the DHS staff person who regularly makes assessments of early childhood programs in the area commented that of all the places she visits for evaluations of programs, St. Paul’s has the best kept and cleanest facility! She highly praised our maintenance and volunteers for the great way in which the building is kept. What witness to the work of God that our maintenance staff and our volunteers have made to DHS, the families in the Early Childhood Ministries, the teachers and assistants! Thanks be to God for: Bill Kasner, Kelley Aarhus, Lesa Aler, Steve Edgar, Okee Jones, Larry Tresnak, and a host of volunteers.

Circle Drive Concrete Replaced & Sanctuary Elevator Upgraded

Thanks to the witness of Jesus Christ that you provide through faithful giving, the broken concrete near the 3rd Ave SE entrance and the Sanctuary Elevator Entrance has been replaced. Through giving to How Firm a Foundation 2, the sanctuary elevator has been updated to meet the new safety codes of Iowa. **Both projects are ministries of hospitality that witness to Jesus’ invitation to come to this house of God called St. Paul’s United Methodist Church!**

Our Presence – Worshiping God

Saturday-Sunday, April 16-17 – Palm Sunday

Matthew 21:1-11; Philippians 2:5-11; Matthew 14:22-33. Unbinding Your Heart: Faith Focus.

Before the 9:00 service, children should gather at the back of the sanctuary to prepare for the Palm Procession. **After the Procession, children will stay up front for the Children’s Message. At 11:30, the Palm Procession will happen after the Children’s Message.**

Wednesday, April 20 – TGIW Activities

Meal at 5:15 followed by children, youth and adult small groups & activities

Thursday, April 21 – Holy Thursday Communion Worship 12:15 and 7:30

Combined choirs from 1st Lutheran and St. Paul’s along with chamber orchestra will present a portion of Handel’s Messiah as part of the evening worship.

Friday, April 22 – Good Friday Worship 12:15 and 7:30

A Service of Shadows

Saturday April 23 – Neighborhood Easter Egg Hunt

For toddlers- 5th grade and their families, starting at Westminster Presbyterian Church (across 3rd Ave from St. Paul’s) to decorate bags and walking to Redmond Park to gather eggs. No need to bring a basket, just come and have fun!

Saturday - Sunday, April 23-24 – Easter!

Saturday 5:30; Sunday 8:15, in the chapel, and 9:00, 10:30, and 11:30- all in the Sanctuary!

Easter according to Matthew 28:1-10. *This news “rocked” all of creation. Come and let our praise be for God and come closer to God and one another by the grace of Jesus Christ!*

Sunday May 1 - Confirmation (9:00 worship)

Come rejoice with our young people as they express their faith in Jesus Christ by joining St. Paul's United Methodist Church as full members.

Our Gifts: Every Household – not equal gifts but equal sacrifice to grow in faith.

In God's love we are made, each, with unique combinations of gifts and talents. God does not expect that each of us will give ourselves in identical ways, but that we will give and give sacrificially. The opportunities for giving to God through Jesus' church increases the love of God in our lives and in the lives of others. Let God search your heart; and give as God's love leads you!

Our Gifts: Recent Special Mission Offerings:

- Ingathering, one of 4 offerings to raise funds for gathering materials and supplies for worldwide care kits. **\$859**
- Linn Comm. Food Bank **\$125**
- Interfaith Religious Council Collection – An abundance of personal care items delivered to the Cedar House Shelter. Thank you!
- One Great Hour of Sharing **\$1331**. Gifts underwrite UMCOR's "costs of doing business" so that 100% of every other gift you make to a specific UMCOR project goes entirely to that project.

Special Mission Offerings in the near future:

April 16 & 17 *Ecumenical Center*, located at 601 Second Avenue SE, has a mission of "sharing ministries of humanitarian care and service with the surrounding neighborhoods." They do this through Helping Hands, providing emergency financial assistance and referrals, CompuPlace, providing specialized abilities-based computer learning services to people with disabilities, and ECC Agency Housing, providing low cost office space rented to other non-profit agencies.

April 23 & 24 *Easter Offering*: This offering will be divided between 1. Neighborhood Meals, a local ecumenical ministry which provides thousands of meals in our social hall throughout the summer months to those in need, and 2. the Central Conference Pension Initiative, supporting native African pastors and their spouses who have been left in critical need throughout Africa. This initiative is designed to become a long-term solution through a foundation for retirement security for those who would otherwise have little or nothing after years of devoted service. For more information please visit www.ccpi-umc.org

April 30 & May 1 *Linn County Food Bank*: Help feed local hungry families through your offerings.

May 7 & 8 ***Mother's Day Church World Service Blankets***: Make an honorary Mother's Day gift in support of this interfaith, intercultural coalition helping to eradicate hunger and poverty and promote peace and justice. CWS responds to disasters with blankets, tents, bedding, food, medicine and other emergency supplies as well as seeds and tools to struggling farmers. CWS also provides clean water and health assistance to impoverished communities. www.churchworldservice.org

May 21 & 22 *Native American Ministries*: This offering through the United Methodist Church gives us the opportunity to respond to funding urban ministries and scholarships with Native Americans.

For a complete calendar of 2011 Special Offerings, pick up a wallet- sized card at the St. Paul's Welcome Centers.

Our Gifts: The General Ministry Budget

March Income	Year to Date Income all sources	Five Year Average Income	March Expenses	Year to Date Expenses	Five Year Average Expenses
\$96,919	\$272,159	\$271,865	\$104,895	\$331,414	\$316,468

The above chart is a review of monthly and annual income year to date as compared with the five averages for income and expense. The income year to date is .01% above the average. Expenses are within total budget but 4.7% above the five year average.

Our total apportionments commitment through March is \$57,589. We have paid \$15,800 of our commitment.

We are optimistic that we will see continued financial giving to advance the mission of the church.

Blessings,

Kate Ulmer, Treasurer

<p>Finance Contacts</p> <p>St. Paul's United Methodist Church 1340 Third Avenue SE Cedar Rapids, IA 52403 319-363-2058</p> <p>Kate Ulmer, <i>Treasurer</i> Shirley Morrow, <i>Finance Secretary</i> kulmer@stpaulsumc.org smorrow@stpaulsumc.org</p>	
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Our Service

We each “volunteer” our ministry to Jesus, but Jesus has already called us and given us gifts and graces to be in ministry. This is what it means to be baptized by water and the Spirit in name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We are called to share the good news in our service in countless ways. Each calling of service is unique to each one of us who is named and claimed by God, but all are alike in service to Jesus Christ. **Each week in the “Church at Work” worship handout there are many ways to offer yourself in ministry. Can’t find something there that connects to you? Then contact any one of the pastors or ministry leaders and offer what you would like to do – you might even start a new ministry as long as there is at least one other person to partner with you!**

Willis Dady Center

The Willis Dady Center Emergency Shelter at 1247 – 4th Av SE is newly remodeled. The shelter provides an important place of hospitality and ministry. Volunteers are needed. Check out the website at www.willisdady.org, contact the volunteer coordinator at wdesvc@gmail.com or call 319-362-7555 for more information.

“Faith Factor”

A group initiated by the Church Council in December’s meeting has begun meeting to look at additional way of financial support for the ministries of Jesus that will also provide more opportunities for laity to **be in hands on ministry and create new ways of growing both the church and the community in God’s invitation of health and salvation.** If you feel a tug at your heart from the Holy Spirit to participate in the prayer and planning, contact Pastor Harlan Gillespie, Lorna Barnes, Council Chair, and/or Ron Bunch, Council Vice-chair to get involved!