



# ***St. Paul's United Methodist Church***

*The Ministry of Stewardship and Finance*

August 2011

## *Message From the Finance Committee*

***“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? If then you are not able to do so small thing as that, why do you worry about the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these...” Luke 12:22-27***

Friends and co-workers with Christ,

The crowds had grown to immense proportions. Jesus was more than a curiosity, and the religious officials knew it. He was teaching something very different about the faith, the Law of Moses – at least it seemed so to them. He started teaching parables that confounded the experts and made the crowds think. The disciples wondered out loud if the parables were for the religious officials or for themselves, or both. **Jesus did not give a straight up answer.** If we take a look at chapter 12 of Luke's Gospel, the picture unfolds of an appreciation for life that often escapes us in day to day worries and pressures.

Does Jesus really mean that we worry too much? The question hits me pretty hard. My answer for myself is – yes, I worry too much. Jesus was right – still is right, worry controls our lives to the point that we are prone to make worry-filled decisions. We may say that we believe in God and God's grace given to us in Jesus Christ, but we tend to worry as if we really do not trust God's promises. As we read along in chapter 12, we read, ***“And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. For it is the nations of the world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well...”***

Jesus went on to challenge the conventional wisdom by which we still tend to live: that generosity is limited. **God's generosity has never been limited, yet ours tends to have limits.** Yes, not all of us are billionaires, but most of the studies done about charitable giving show that it is not the billionaires who make up the most generous. The most generous are people of much lesser means. Striving for the kingdom of God is growing in generosity in both worldly and spiritual matters.

**We are given much, so Jesus reminded them and reminds us (Luke 12:48).** God's generosity of forgiveness and everlasting life as well as material means by which to live this earthly life has been great. None of it is our own private property. It has been given by God, freely, with grace; and so, our lives, and the means by which we live are given by God and God alone. When this is considered, then it no longer becomes a matter of what our “fair share” of the responsibility for one another and the least among us is or is not. It is a matter of generosity.

Much is expected of us, for much has been given to us. That which is expected is generosity in the manner of God's generosity toward us. Lord, help us. May it be so.

Grace & Peace,

Pastor Harlan Gillespie

*Our Gifts: Recent Special Mission Offerings:*

- Linn Comm. Food Bank : \$ 495 plus several bags of food items, helping feed local hungry families.
- Ingathering: 1109 given in July.

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

*Special Mission Offerings in the near future:*

- **August 21 and Sept. 17 & 18 Ingathering Challenge:** Be part of the Ingathering Challenge! These funds allow us to create a generous number of School and Health Kits for worldwide care. Check out the bulletin board to watch us grow towards our goal!
- **August 28 – Sept. 25 Undy Sundays:** Help us collect NEW underwear and socks for area children by bringing your donations.
- **September 3 & 4 Linn Community Food Bank:** your offerings of food and finance feed the community.
- **September 10 & 11: Christian Education/Spiritual Formation Offering:** Help strengthening various programs of religious nature throughout the United Methodist Church.

*Our Gifts: The General Ministry Budget*

| July Income | Year to Date Income all sources | Five Year Average Income | July Expenses | Year to Date Expenses | Five Year Average Expenses |
|-------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| \$100,655   | \$670,900                       | \$652,866                | \$110,436     | \$769,203             | \$703,169                  |

The above chart is a review of monthly and annual income year to date as compared with the five year averages for income and expense. The income year to date is 2.8% above the average. Expenses are 3.3% below projected budget and 9.4% above the five year average.

Our total Apportionments commitment through July is \$134,376. We have made an apportionment payment of \$13,700 for the month of July. Total amount paid is \$59,950, or 44.6% of our commitment to date.

We are blessed by the many resources God has provided for us. Through your generous giving, we will continue to advance the mission of the church.

Blessings,

Kate Ulmer, Treasurer

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|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
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