



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

## *The Ministry of Finance*

March 2011

### *Message From the Finance Committee*

***Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished.” Matthew 4:1-2***

Dear Friends in Christ,

With Ash Wednesday last week, we began our yearly pilgrimage with Jesus to the cross and the resurrection on Easter, April 24. Lent is a literally a journey from where we are today to where God desires for us to be.

The number 40 is a prominent number in the Bible: 40 days of rain that supported the ark of Noah; 40 years of God's people called Israel wandering in the wilderness after 400 years of slavery under Pharaoh; and 40 days of Jesus fasting in the wilderness before his public ministry. All of these “40-events” have a direct influence on the 40 days of Lent. The represent God's mercy: the flood, the support of God's salvation through the waters; the wandering of Israel – our own wandering from, in, and through faith and from the slavery of our own lives lived apart from God; and Jesus' fasting time and journey in the wilderness is an example of how setting ourselves apart from the usual rush of life is essential for returning to the connection that God has made for us in him.

Often, I visit with you about financial stewardship. Makes sense since this is a ministry of finance newsletter; but finances are only a sign of our faith and life in Jesus Christ. The central call in our lives is a call to the center of God's love in our living. We are tempted to wander around it, run from it, and hide away from God's love. We get distracted with many important things, yet we can neglect the essential awareness that all of what we are, who we are, and what we will do and will be is centered on the reality that it is only by God's grace – the gift of God's love freely given to us – that we have life, either for a few brief moments or many years, at all!

I am often reminded that where I literally spend my time, attention, and resources is where my heart truly is. I invite you to take a look at where you literally spend your time and resources and ask yourself, like I am asking myself, “Is this where and how God wants me to spend myself? How does this show me that I am loving God with my whole heart, soul, strength and mind and my neighbor as myself? How can I more lovingly know and follow Christ and help others know and follow Christ?”

Even Jesus – fully human and fully divine – “spent” his time, his attention, and his resources away from the everyday important stuff of life to better follow and love God by first and always praying.

I pray for you, sisters and brothers, every day; for you and for your loved ones, your work, your families, your/our neighborhoods; and among those prayers is a prayer for you to find some moments where you can spend yourself in prayer with Jesus who listens to your deepest desires, hopes, fears, and dreams. I hope that we will pray often, together, spending ourselves in the worship of God – and all the rest of life, with God's attention, will settle into place.

Grace & Peace,

Pastor Harlan Gillespie

## *Our Prayers & Witness*

### **“Unbind Your Heart” and the Ministry of Jesus Christ**

We are now into the first full week of our Lenten journey *Unbind Your Heart*. If you have not yet purchased a book or are in a small group, it is not too late. As pastors with the Lenten study team, we invite you to come along, pick up a book, join a small group if you can, and worship. This study is unlike others in the past because it brings us closer to the heart of what it means to know **our own story of God’s love in our lives and what it means to help others know their story of God’s love in their lives. For the days in which we live, this is a “must” study of prayer and witness of Jesus’ love.**



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

On Sunday, April 10 St. Paul’s will host a regional ministry of finance event: *How To Develop Tippers Into Tithers: Just In-Time Training for These Difficult Economic Times*, led by Paul Nickerson, Jim Griffith Sr. Assoc. & Coach in Evangelism, Vitality and New Church Starts. The event will be 3 to 7 p.m. Attend the event and/or volunteer yourself to be on the team of St. Paul’s hosts by contacting administrative assistant Laura Runkle at [lrunkle@stpaulusmc.org](mailto:lrunkle@stpaulusmc.org) or 363-2058.

## *Our Presence – Worshiping God*

If you love contemporary-styled worship, then come and get connected to God through the leadership of our new contemporary worship leader, Matt German on Saturdays at 5:30 and Sundays at 10:30 and 11:30. Matt has a genuine faith, and points his faith and love toward Jesus Christ. He started leading these worships on the first weekend of March. Come and be a part of an energetic, growing, faithful, and prayer-filled worship!

### *Our Worship Presence:*

This is our intentional desire to grow in faith as a congregation that worships together.

Total worship attendance through February, 2011 is 5,335, with an average attendance of 593 to date, **which is higher than 2010’s average attendance of 590!**

Come and worship God for your faith and the faith of others as a congregation of Jesus Christ.

See the Lenten worship calendar for scriptures, sermons, and prayers on **Unbinding Your Heart for both traditional and contemporary worship at St. Paul’s**. Your invitation and encouragement to worship is found here, in the Outlook, on the website [www.stpaulsumc.org](http://www.stpaulsumc.org) and in the welcome that you will get in the congregation this weekend and every week!

**St. Paul’s is now hosting a vibrant and growing Hispanic worship community** that includes United Methodists who have come from Mexico each Sunday afternoon in the Social Hall at 5:00 pm. Let us add the this new faith community to our prayers and praise. Very much like our relationship with Pastor Daniel Nionzyna and the African National Congregation, United Methodist Christians are all over the world and some of our “world-wide” members have made the journey of faith full circle to us by the

grace of God in Jesus Christ! Who would have guessed that “knowing and following Christ and helping others to know and follow Christ” would be worked out this way! Thanks be to God! May their faith inspired by God inspire us, by God!

*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:

- \$1274 for SPRINT Program, a St. Paul’s summertime neighborhood ministry for children
- \$115 for Linn Comm. Food Bank

Special Mission Offerings in the near future:

Through March: Interfaith Religious Council Collection – Check the bulletin board and donate toiletry articles to the Cedar House Shelter. All donations need to be brought to St. Paul’s by March 27<sup>th</sup>.

March 19 & 20 Ingathering, one of 4 offerings to raise funds for gathering materials and supplies for worldwide care ‘kits.’

April 2 & 3 Linn Comm. Food Bank PLUS One Great Hour of Sharing. Gifts to this offering underwrite UMCOR’s “costs of doing business.” That helps UMCOR keep their promise that 100 percent of every other gift you make to a specific UMCOR project can be spent on that project-not on home office costs.

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 hundreds of meals in our social hall throughout the summer months to those in need, and 2. the Central Conference Pension Initiative, supporting 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](http://www.ccpi-umc.org)

*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

February Income	Year to Date Income all sources	Five Year Average Income	February Expenses	Year to Date Expenses	Five Year Average Expenses
\$80,279	\$175,240	\$173,780	\$102,880	\$226,519	\$209,936

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 .08% above the average. Expenses are within budget but 7.9% above the five year average.

Our total Apportionments commitment through February is \$38,393.

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

Blessings,

Kate Ulmer, Treasurer

### *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 that are like one another’s calling and, at the same time, very unique to each one of us who is named and claimed by God. 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!

### **Thrift Mart’s Here - No Foolin’**

Here is the schedule for this Spring’s Thrift Mart. *Volunteers are welcome at all times.*

Saturday March 19, 3:30-5:30 pm	Receive donations at the 3rd Avenue door
Monday March 21 & 28, 8:30-10:30 am	Receive donations at the 3rd Avenue door.
Saturday March 26, 3:30-5:30 pm	Receive donations at the 3rd Avenue door.
Monday March 28, 8:30-10:30 am	Sorting donation in the Social Hall
Wednesday March 30, 6:00 PM pm	Set-up and move donations out of storage
Thursday March 31, 8:30 am	Set-up and price
Friday April 1, 9:00 am-7:00 pm	Sale day
Saturday April 2, 9:00 am-1:00 pm	Sale day

If you have questions, please contact Mary Hurlbut (377-5843) or Doug Thompson (366-6863).

### **“Faith Factor”**

A group instigated 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!