



St. Paul's United Methodist Church

The Ministry of Stewardship and Finance

September 2011

Message From the Finance Committee

“If there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.” Philippians 2:1-2

Friends in Christ,

In our day, it would seem that having the “same mind” would be impossible. There are many strong divisions on many different topics and beliefs in the world, but is that any different than when Paul wrote these words in his letter to the Philippi? Was Paul talking about agreement on all matters or something else?

Paul frequently wrote about disagreements in the life of the church, and about disagreements he had with them and with the world as he knew it. His missionary journeys to Philippi, Ephesus, Corinth, and, eventually, Rome confirmed what he already knew. The world is not usually a place of unity and one mind. In writing to the Philippians, Paul had another purpose. He was not attempting to unite them in all matters of the world; but in the matter of Christ Jesus. He had once believed that Jesus Christ was returning very soon, but he now knew that was delayed. The occasion of his writing found him in prison in Rome, under the threat of death. He wrote this letter to the Philippians who had both great love for him and great worry for him.

Instead of lashing out against the world and even his captors, Paul wrote about the love of God in Jesus Christ. There are matters, important matters, of great disagreement in the world, yet the position he takes and encourages in them is to have the mind of Christ. The mind of Christ means **several things, but above all it means to be a servant of God’s love with humility. Christ emptied himself of equality with God to take on humanness.** Therefore, Paul encourages them, and us, to offer ourselves in a like manner to God and to each other. This is a sign of God at work in them and in us.

Our prayers for self and others, our worship of God with one another, our giving a portion of our financial resources, our service in the name of Jesus, and the witness we bear in our words and action all indicate some manner in the way we allow God to work in us. I believe that Paul is encouraging us to allow God to work in us as Jesus Christ allowed God to work in him. This is being of the same mind.

There are many examples of how you as a church, in a similar fashion to the Philippians, **allow God to be a work in you. It's again that time of year for Ingathering Kits, mission projects, Bible studies, Thrift Mart, and more.** The worship committee and a great group of other volunteers are working on readying the Social Hall — **now called the “Wesley Center” for the launch of “Worship Café.”** The church council has been diligently working with the Reveal Spiritual Life Survey results to formulate an approach to lifelong spiritual growth so that everyone will have the opportunity to grow in Christ as God calls each person. Ministry areas have been prayerfully considering what would be both the same and different in and **through St. Paul's in the years ahead if we responded to God's leadership in adding to and/or renovating the facilities for ministry.**

We have sought to be of the mind of Christ in our solemn remembrances of 9/11. Looking back through this last weekend, I was struck with the overwhelming nature of the grace of God in Jesus Christ that has been around us and continues to be around us. Yes, the way **for many years has been difficult; but God's grace and love in Jesus Christ has been sure and certain.**

Take this as encouragement, friends in Christ. We are moving forward with the mind, and being of the same mind as Jesus Christ.

Grace & Peace,

Pastor Harlan Gillespie

Social Hall becomes “Wesley Center” with a makeover for many uses.

Funded by memorials and a portion of money set aside a few years ago from capital resources, the Social Hall is undergoing some improvements to make it more useful for many purposes, including worship. The stage area is being updated. Projectors and screens have been added on both sides of the stage. The sound booth has been renovated. Curtains will be added to the room to allow for Thrift Mart storage. All of this will increase the technology for worship, presentations, meetings, and gatherings. The Wesley Center will be a place to do exactly what John Wesley intended for Methodists to do: **offer Jesus Christ.** Many thanks to God and to many people are raised for the long hours of work, and for the many activities such as Thrift Mart sorting and Sunday worship that have been adjusted during the updating. In the long run, the changes will be beneficial for everyone and for every use that has been and will be made of the Wesley Center.

Worship Café begins Sunday, September 25

Spread the word. Send out invitations. Tell one another the good news! Worship Café begins on Sunday, September 25 in the Wesley Center at 10:30 and 11:30 am! Led by the praise team partnered with the direction of Matt German, this worship is intended to connect people to God through the love of Jesus Christ in new ways. Join the worship team and committee in prayer for the dedication of Worship Café to God and for the sake of Jesus Christ. Invite someone, come and support this new worship venue and service.

Our Gifts: Recent Special Mission Offerings:

Linn Comm. Food Bank : \$ 809 plus several bags of food items, helping feed local hungry families.

Ingathering: \$1,540 given in August!

Golden Cross Sunday: \$689 to support the work of health and welfare ministries and institutions in the Iowa Annual Conference.

Special Mission Offerings in the near future:

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 for ways you can contribute items for the kits and to watch **us grow towards our goal! In July and August, we've raised \$2649 toward our goal of raising \$3000 in additional funds for this ministry.**

Sept. 17: Mission of Hope Food Pantry: Participate in Colton Valenta's Eagle Scout Project by offering food items in the collection boxes at St. Paul's.

NOW – Sept. 25 Undy Sundays: help us collect NEW underwear and socks for area children by bringing your donations.

October 1 & 2 Linn Community Food Bank: your offerings of food and finance feed the community.

October 8 & 9 Family Promise: an ecumenical ministry proven to be successful in its equipping of homeless families. It offers hope through food, shelter, and support through a network of local churches. This offering will go towards start-up and first year needs in hopes of launching this ministry before the winter.

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

Have a trailer to donate?

The Trustees are looking for someone who has a small trailer that can be towed behind the church garden tractor. The trailer would save time and effort in caring for the grounds of the church that stretch over two different city blocks. If you have one, please contact Bill Pepper, chair of Trustees. Thank you!

Our Gifts: The General Ministry Budget

August Income	Year to Date Income all sources	Five Year Average Income	August Expenses	Year to Date Expenses	Five Year Average Expenses
\$81,185	\$752,085	\$743,081	\$104,026	\$873,228	\$803,623

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 1.2% above the average. Expenses are 3.6% below projected budget and 8.7% above the five year average.

Our total Apportionments commitment through August is \$153,572. We have made an apportionment payment of \$13,700 for the month of July. Total amount paid is \$59,950, or 39% of our commitment to date. Apportionment payments are made based on cash reserves necessary to fund daily operations. We are prayerful that we will continue our apportionment payments through the end of the year.

Let us be thankful for 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

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