



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

## ***The Ministry of Stewardship and Finance***

January 2011

### ***Message From the Finance Committee***

***"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one, so it is with Christ." 1 Corinthians 12:12***

Friends in Christ,

Perhaps by now you have seen that we have started a new preaching and worship series called *Sacred Relationships*. The series, based upon large portions of scripture, focuses upon what it means to live with ourselves personally, with each other as neighbors and as the church, and with God through Jesus Christ. Paul's letter to the Corinthian church is a foundational document for healthy relationships within the church and for the church as the primary body of Jesus' mission and ministry in the world. Paul addressed a church that was torn up by divisions, especially divisions over spiritual gifts and leaders within the church. He is appalled at the way that they have "divided" Christ for their own advantages. What he proposes to them is revolutionary. They are all part of the body of Christ, each with their own gifts and contributions, but no part over the others. He encourages them to go a more excellent way (12:31) – the way of generosity of love (13:1-13). So what has this to do with stewardship, especially financial stewardship? The answer is within the "body" of Christ. All members of Christ contribute their spiritual and physical gifts, as each is gifted by God to do. This does not mean "equal gifts" in terms of number of hours or financial amounts or spiritual gifts. But it does mean that each person, each member of the body of Christ, is made "response-able" to contribute to the good of the body and to Christ's mission and ministry in the world.

I am thankful to everyone who contributed to the body of Christ and to Jesus ministry and mission through gifts of prayers, presence in worship, financial gifts, service and witnessing to St. Paul's good work by the grace of God in the past year. I am also thankful to everyone who has committed an estimate of giving for 2012. I will be contacting households who have yet to make an estimate of giving for 2012, for the sake of keeping every "member" of Christ's body connected and active in building up the church for the sake of ministry and mission.

The church is not like any other organization that does good work. The church shares in their "good work" but the church is not an organization. We, as a body of Christ, are an organism – an embodiment of the risen Jesus Christ on earth. Are we perfect? No, we are learning – as a "body" somewhere between adolescence and adulthood in our faith. Sometimes further along, sometimes regressing in our faith, but we are a living body of Christ.

Our *Sacred Relationships* preaching and worship series is about strengthening and making healthier the relationships we have in Christ. We each bring what God has given us to the church, the body of Christ. What that means day by day and week by week is all dependent upon all of us as members, members with a wide variety of God's gifts, all blessed with God's presence and the gift of the Spirit's forgiveness and empowerment.

We are the body of Christ – St. Paul's United Methodist Church. And the head of this body is Jesus Christ. Let's make our offerings to Christ always build one another and the body for the work of Jesus in the world!

Grace & Peace,

Pastor Harlan Gillespie

**Our Gifts: Recent Special Mission Offerings:** Thank you all for your generous donations!

**Linn Comm. Food Bank:** \$1062 plus several bags of food helping feed local hungry families.

**December 24 & 25 Christmas Missions Offering:** \$22,209 towards our 1<sup>st</sup> Mile Missions through Apportionments

**The 2012 Estimated Scope of Ministry** adopted by the Church Council is \$1,413,990 and the **2012 Project Support** is \$1,359,523. **Our goal for 2012** is to fully support the ministry of Jesus. Let us pray that every member of the body of Christ called St. Paul's UMC will willingly bring into the body what God has given so that we will accomplish the mission and ministry of Jesus in our community and the world! The Ministry of Finance Committee is preparing a number of new, innovative ways to develop the financial gifts of St. Paul's. In addition, a Financial Stewardship Team is forming to make contacts and provide encouragement to households with resources for growing in financial faith.

**Special Mission Offerings in the near future:**

**January 21 & 22 Emergency Assistance Fund:** ...an ongoing St. Paul's UMC ministry of hope and encouragement to those who find themselves in need of short-term emergency assistance.

**January 28 & 29 Pastor's Youth Lunches:** On Tuesdays and Thursdays a free lunch is provided for students of Kennedy and Washington High Schools. The lunch begins with prayer and provides an opportunity to meet with a pastor during the meal. This is a significant ministry in building relationships with Christian peers outside the church building.

**February 4 & 5 Linn Community Food Bank:** Bring boxed/canned goods or make a financial contribution for the Food Bank.

**February 11 & 12 Helping Hands Ministry:** Assisting people of Linn County who have limited material resources with emergency support with rent, utilities, supportive services and advocacy. This is supported by faith communities and local agencies.

**February 18 & 19 SPRINT (St. Paul's Reaching Out in Neighborhood Teams):** A summer ministry for children which began in 1995, designed to provide a positive, supervised environment through enrichment and educational activities.

Preliminary December Income	Preliminary Year to Date Income all sources	Five Year Average Income	Preliminary December Expenses	Preliminary Year to Date Expenses	Five Year Average Expenses
\$167,941	\$1,187,259	\$1,148,563	\$113,610	\$1,301,708	\$1,202,807

**Our Gifts: The General Ministry Budget**

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 3.4% above the average. Expenses are 8.2% above the five year average, however, this is \$119,606 below budget.

As a result of your generosity for the Christmas special offering, we collected \$21,998 for 2011 Apportionments. We were also able to pay \$8,856 as a result of November contributions. The 2011 apportionment was \$230,358. We have paid \$90,804, leaving a balance of \$139,554. An additional \$1,000 has been collected since the 2 December payments were made.

It is not too late to turn in your 2012 pledge. If you need an estimate of giving form, you may pick it up in the office or download one from our web site. You may also send an e-mail to my attention.

As we begin the new year with your faithful stewardship, we look forward to continuing our ministries and spreading the Good News.

Blessings,

Kate Ulmer, Treasurer

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