

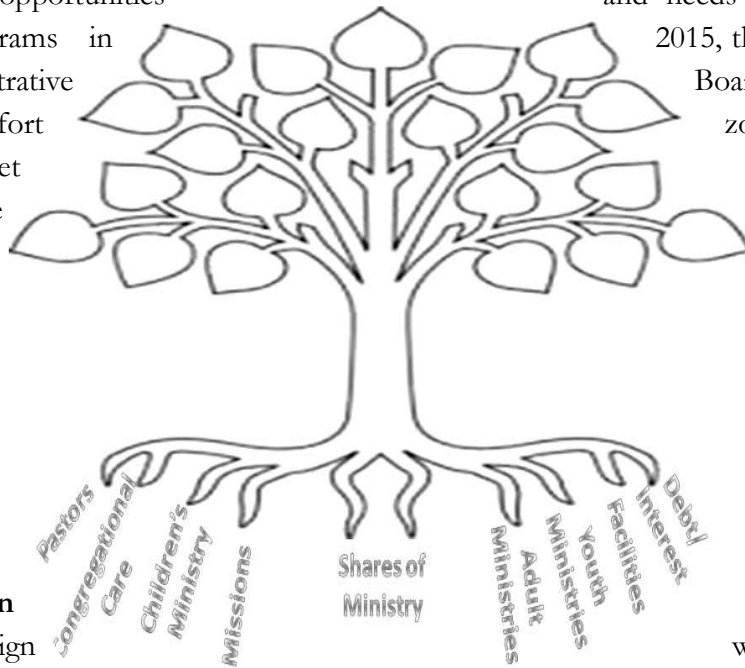
GROUNDING IN FAITH -- GROWING TO SERVE

Over the last few years, the Finance committee has prayerfully reviewed and considered the actual annual giving, attendance trends, and the results of the budget pledge process to set the subsequent years' total budget. These annual budget decisions were made based mostly on these **Facts**. But, despite our best intentions, FUMC has only reached our budgeted giving once in the last 5 years. Balancing the budget in those years came from cost cutting, reductions in missions and ministry programs, and reducing debt payments.

With so many opportunities and mission programs in and the Administrative their historical comfort FUMC 2015 budget **Faith**. In fact, we budget about 5% would suggest that ly receive. We bridge that gap.

The Finance FUMC is pleased initiation of the Budget special stew-called **Grounded in Serve**. The campaign and will showcase the var-supported by the 2015 uni-sis throughout the year. Each cember), we will feature a different explain where and how that money is spent to help grow and bear fruit for our Church (Tree). We will watch our tree grow every week as pastors, staff, committee members, and congregational leaders discuss and explain the wonderful ministry/mission opportunities during a special "**Stewardship Sec-onds**" portion of each worship service.

During April's "Stewardship Seconds", we will concentrate on the portion of our annual budget that goes to the conference as "Shares of Ministry". From local missions (such as the Children's Home, Neighborhood Center, and the Camping Program) to Global missions (such as UMCOR and Africa University), our shares of ministry combined with other United Methodist Churches help fund many valuable missions. Our Shares of Ministry also help fund the conference and global connectional ministries such as Discovery Place Resource Center, training and counseling programs for pastors and church staff, Stewardship Foundation, as well as all of the costs required to manage the local, national, and international leadership of the United Methodist Church. Starting in mid-April, be sure to listen and watch as we water and nourish the "Shares of Ministry Root". If we have roots "**Grounded in Faith**", we will be able to "**Grow to Serve**".



and needs for various ministry 2015, the Finance committee Board reached beyond zone and set the based mostly on have stretched the beyond what facts we would normal-need your help to

Committee of to announce the 2015 Unified ardship campaign **Faith – Growing to** will begin on April 12 ious ministries of FUMC fied budget on a weekly ba-month (from April through De-

portion (Root) of our budget and

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Over the next 30+ weeks, we will be highlighting various portions of our 2015 Unified Budget during the Stewardship Seconds in each church service. Leaders of FUMC will be describing how we use the weekly offerings to support our ministries and missions, as well as to support the upkeep of the church facilities. Each week we will add a flower to our tree that will represent many of these important ministries. At the end of our campaign in December, our tree will be loaded with these flowers. We are hopeful that our annual giving will be enough to continue to support and possibly expand many of these important activities.

Our tree has nine roots (one for every remaining month in 2015). The topics of each root are as follows:

April	Shares of Ministry
May	Church Staff
June	Pastors
July	Facilities
August	Missions
September	Children's Ministries
October	Adult Ministries
November	Youth Ministries
December	Debt/Interest



During May's "Stewardship Seconds", we will concentrate on the ministries that are supported by the "Church Staff". One of FUMC's core ministries is our music program. Two adult choirs, a youth choir, and multiple children's choirs, with the support of very talented organists provide artistic support and help lead more traditional worship services each week. Invocation is a praise band that helps lead a more contemporary worship service. We also support multiple bell choirs for children and adults. Other church staff ministries include our office and financial positions. These support many functions including the newsletters, bulletins, financial reports, annual giving statements, and church calendars. Our congregational care staff adds many "caring activities" including visitation, prayer support, Access Ministry, Day of Pampering, communion stewards, meals/transportation, and many senior congregational activities. During May, be sure to listen and watch as we water and nourish the "Church Staff Root". If we have roots "**Grounded in Faith**", we will be able to "**Grow to Serve**".

**Grounded
in
Faith**

**Growing
to
Serve**



First United Methodist Church

I hope you are enjoying the 2015 Stewardship Campaign and the weekly Stewardship Seconds during each Sunday service. It really is amazing the number of ministries, and the various types of ministries that are supported by our annual unified budget. The congregation is to be commended for their generous and consistent support each and every year. But this year, we have great plans (and needs) for our offerings, above and beyond the “normal” giving levels. At this point, that gap shortfall is estimated to be about \$50,000 (about 5-6%).

Jesus talked often in the Bible about truly being rich. In Luke 15, he warns all of us about covetousness, and how our life does NOT consist in the abundance of the things we possess. In order to be “rich toward God”, we need to lay up our treasures to heaven, not for ourselves. It is our hope that our annual giving will be enough to continue to support and possibly expand many of the important ministries/activities here at FUMC.

During June’s “Stewardship Seconds”, we will concentrate on the ministries that are supported by the “Pastors”. It is true that a large portion of our annual budget goes toward support of our Pastors (including salaries, healthcare, retirement, housing expenses, and travel costs). But the job description for the Pastors is much more than just Sunday morning church services. Besides preparing for Sunday morning worship services, there is planning for the Anchor services, Rejoicing Spirits, and other special services throughout the year (especially during Lent and Advent). The Pastors also plan and lead many Weddings and Funeral services throughout the year. Pastoral Care is a large part of their commitment. This includes visits to Hospitals, Nursing Homes, Rehab centers, and the homebound. Also included under Pastoral Care is pre-marital counseling, and grief, marital, and other personal counseling care. The Pastors also must assume CEO responsibility for the administration and general oversight of all operations of the church, including staff supervision, planning, committee meetings, and district and denominational reporting. The Pastors positional authority puts them right in the middle of local, district, and annual conference denominational issues. It also provides them with committee and Board of Directors opportunities with local charitable and other important denominational organizations. In their “spare time”, they also lead Bible Studies and provide small group leadership support, among other weekly church commitments. During June, be sure to listen and watch as we water and nourish the “Pastors’ Root”. If we have roots “**Grounded in Faith**”, we will be able to “**Grow to Serve**”.

As you read this article, we are already half way through 2015. I hope you are looking forward each week to the Stewardship Seconds, in order to hear about how our unified budget supports the various types of ministries that have become so important to FUMC's goals and objectives. I want to thank all of the church leaders who have presented the Stewardship Seconds each service, each week. As you will continue to hear each Sunday, FUMC has great plans (and needs) for our offerings, above and beyond the "normal" giving levels. Our total budgeted shortfall is estimated to be about \$50,000 (about 5-6%). If we can make-up this deficit during 2015, we can continue to provide (or expand) the church ministries and missions.



Whether it is a birthday, an anniversary, or Christmas, giving presents has become a special part of any celebration. And at some point in our lives, most of us recognize that it is truly more blessed to give than to receive. What a wonderful experience it is to provide a loved one with a special treat and see their joy and happiness. In 2 Corinthians (chapter 9), Paul discusses gift giving with the young church in Corinth. He wants the church members to give out of generosity, not out of obligation. In verse 7, he says, "So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity, for GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER". Whether it is our money, our time, our expertise, or our love, what a great joy it is to give. God doesn't need our money, but he does want our heart.

During July's "Stewardship Seconds", we will concentrate on the church facilities, and all that goes into providing us with the beautiful church building, where we worship each week. With all the various church ministries, outside organizations that use the facilities, the multi-purpose room, the kitchen, the Little Friends Nursery School, and the Juniper Tree Counseling services, our church is used just about every day of the year. A large portion of our annual budget goes towards support, maintenance and upkeep of the church building. The care of the church assets is under the control of the Trustees. Along with the Facilities Manager, they review, monitor and control the costs related to the church buildings. Utilities, maintenance, janitorial costs, service contracts, snow removal, security, and insurance are just a part of their day to day operational costs. When you consider long term costs, such as roof repairs, stain glass window maintenance, and upkeep of the organ and sound systems, it keeps the Facilities Manager and Trustees quite busy. During July, be sure to listen and watch as we water and nourish the "Facilities' Root". If we have roots "**Grounded in Faith**", we will be able to "**Grow to Serve**".

Our Stewardship program is beginning its 5th month in August. I hope you are enjoying the Stewardship Seconds each week, as presented by various church leaders/members. The Stewardship Seconds provide an opportunity to hear about some aspect of the life and ministry of First Church using the resources that we provide in our regular offerings to the unified budget. As you will continue to hear each Sunday, FUMC has great plans (and needs) for our offerings, above and beyond your “regular” giving levels. Our total year estimated budget shortfall for 2015 continues to be about \$50,000 (about 5-6%). If we can make-up this deficit during 2015, we can continue to provide (or expand) these important church ministries and missions.



Many of us maintain a regular exercise program. It helps us to stay fit and healthy. Lately I have been doing more resistance training, which is meant to strengthen my muscles, correct bad posture, and develop core strength (especially in my lower back). The result is that by regularly strengthening my core muscles, it then becomes much easier for me to complete my daily activities – Regular exercise strengthens my muscles. In 1 Timothy 4:8 it says “For bodily exercise profits a little, but Godliness is profitable for all things having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.” And in 1 Corinthians 16:9, Paul tells us to give to God on a regular basis. So if regular exercise strengthens our body muscles, **regular giving to God will strengthen our generosity muscle.**

During August’s “Stewardship Seconds”, our emphasis will be on the church mission budget. Despite budget issues over the years, First Church has been able to provide at least 10% of the annual budget to missions. Our Mission committee meets regularly to analyze, evaluate, and determine where our precious mission collections should be directed. During the church services in August, you will hear about many of these mission opportunities. From our support of missionaries and our congregational mission trips, to international and local mission organizations, our mission budget helps fund very important projects that spread the word of God throughout the world and make a difference in peoples’ lives. During August, be sure to listen and watch as we water and nourish the “Missions’ Root”. If we have roots “**Grounded in Faith**”, we will be able to “**Grow to Serve**”.

Our Stewardship program is now in its 6th month in September. I hope you are enjoying the Stewardship Seconds each week, as presented by various church leaders/members. Take the time to look at the budget tree and notice all the flowers (budget areas) where our offerings are put to use. As the weeks go by, the tree becomes much more colorful, and begins to show the life of our varied ministries. Each week, the Stewardship Seconds provide an opportunity to hear about some aspect of the life and ministry of First Church using the resources that we provide in our regular offerings to the unified budget. As you will continue to hear each Sunday, FUMC has great plans (and needs) for our offerings, above and beyond your “regular” giving levels. Our total year estimated unified budget shortfall for 2015 continues to be about \$50-60,000 (about 5-6%). If we can make-up this deficit during 2015, we can continue to provide (or expand) these important church ministries and missions. If we cannot make up this deficit, we may be forced to eliminate or reduce some of these important programs, ministries, missions, and/or staffing that we have heard about each week in the Stewardship Seconds.



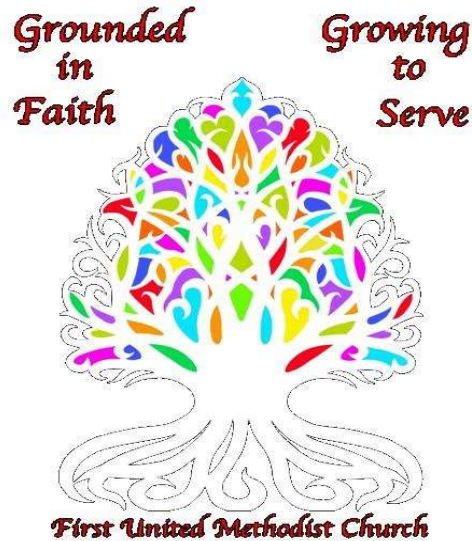
Have you ever had to sacrifice and/or give up something that you really treasured? Some of us “give up something” for Lent to represent in a small way the ultimate sacrifice that Jesus made on the cross for us. I remember the day that I had to give up playing competitive basketball and softball. Ever since I was young, I was athletic and when I played sports, I played hard and to the maximum of my ability. Then one day I realized that my back and an older body just couldn’t do it anymore. I had responsibilities that I could no longer risk, to keep playing competitive sports. So I hung up my glove and my sneakers. That was a BIG sacrifice for me, and it hurt. That’s when I learned that something is not really a sacrifice unless you feel it.

In the 8th Chapter of 2nd Corinthians, Paul discusses the rich generosity of the Macedonian churches. Even in the midst of very severe trials and extreme poverty, the people gave sacrificially. In verse 3 he states “For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability – entirely on their own...” And then in the 21st chapter of Luke’s gospel, is the story of the Widow’s offering. “As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. Truly I tell you...this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put all she had to live on.” Both the Macedonian churches and the poor widow gave sacrificially, and I’m sure they felt it. SACRIFICE FILLS OUR LIVES WITH FAITH – AND MOVES THE HEART OF GOD.

During September’s “Stewardship Seconds”, our emphasis will be on the Children’s Department budget. Our children are involved in many wonderful ministries. From Wonderful Wednesday and the Passion Play to Vacation Bible school and our Sunday School program. The Little Friends Nursery School is also a wonderful ministry and Christian based educational program that the church supports. During the church services in September, you will hear about these and many other Children’s department activities. During September, be sure to listen and watch as we water and nourish the “Children’s Department Root”. If we have roots “Grounded in Faith”, we will be able to “Grow to Serve”.

GROUNDING IN FAITH -- GROWING TO SERVE

Our Stewardship program is now entering its 7th month in October. I hope you are enjoying the Stewardship Seconds each week, as presented by various church leaders/members. Take the time to look at the budget tree and notice all the flowers (budget areas) where our offerings are put to use. As the weeks go by, the tree becomes much more colorful, and begins to show the life of our varied ministries. Each week, the Stewardship Seconds provide an opportunity to hear about some aspect of the life and ministry of First Church using the resources that we provide in our regular offerings to the unified budget. As you will continue to hear each Sunday, FUMC has great plans (and needs) for our offerings, above and beyond your “regular” giving levels. Over the last couple of months, we have started to “pick away” at our budget deficit. The congregation’s response has been both positive and reassuring. Our total year estimated unified budget shortfall for 2015 has now been reduced to about \$30-35,000. If we can make-up this deficit during 2015, we can continue to provide (or expand) these important church ministries and missions. If we cannot make up this deficit, we may be forced to eliminate or reduce some of these important programs, ministries, missions, and/or staffing that we have heard about each week in the Stewardship Seconds.



In the last few months’ articles, we discussed 3 important aspects of giving. In order to be *rich with God*, we need to:

Give to God Cheerfully

Give to God Regularly

Give to God Sacrificially

As you consider making an additional contribution to our unified budget to support these important ministries and programs, just remember these statements.

God doesn’t need our money - he just wants our heart.

Regular giving strengthens your generosity muscle.

It’s not a sacrifice unless you feel it.

And, sacrifice fills our lives with faith – and moves the heart of God.

During October’s “Stewardship Seconds”, our emphasis will be on the Adult Ministries’ budget. You will hear more about how, thanks to your generous giving, this ministry is able to reach out, invite and provide a welcoming environment to the seekers in our community. We are also able to offer opportunities for spiritual growth and discipleship to all, no matter where they are in their spiritual journey, through Bible studies and small groups. An additional focus during October's "Stewardship Seconds" will be on the Health & Wellness Committee. Through your annual giving, First Church's Health & Wellness committee is blessed to be able to provide many different programs (i.e. health lectures) which improve the physical, spiritual and emotional health of both our congregation and the community. During October, be sure to listen and watch as we water and nourish the “Adult Ministries Root”. If we have roots “**Grounded in Faith**”, we will be able to “**Grow to Serve**”.

GROUNDING IN FAITH -- GROWING TO SERVE

We are entering the final 6 weeks of the Stewardship program for 2015. My thanks go out to all the church leaders who have presented Stewardship Seconds in the church services throughout the year. I hope you have enjoyed the Stewardship Seconds. Please take the time to look at the budget tree and notice all the flowers (budget areas) where our offerings are put to use. The budget tree has increased in color, as we've added the flowers representing the life of our many church ministries. Each week, the Stewardship Seconds provide an opportunity to hear about some aspect of the life and ministry of First Church using the resources that we provide in our regular offerings to the unified budget.

As you will continue to hear each Sunday, FUMC has great plans (and needs) for our offerings, above and beyond your "regular" giving levels. Over the last couple of months, we have continued to "pick away" at our budget deficit. The congregation's response has been both positive and reassuring. I hope all of you have considered adding some incremental offerings to support all of these important ministries and missions. We still have time to make up the unified budget deficit.

When God gave David the vision that his son Solomon was going to build the temple, I can imagine that David's first thought was, "How will we get the finances to build this important place?" But as we read the story in 1 Chronicles 29, we find out that the people somehow provided what was necessary to complete the temple. David had a vision and the people (with God's help) provided the gifts. They did not all provide the same amounts of money, but they all provided the same amount of sacrifice. It's not about equal gifts – it's about equal sacrifice. And it's not a sacrifice unless it is personal. Stewardship is not everyone providing the same amount of money. Stewardship is about everyone making an equal and personal sacrifice for the glory of God, and for the missions and ministries of First Church.

During part of November's and December's "Stewardship Seconds", our emphasis will be on the Youth Department's ministry. FUMC's youth ministry has always been an important part of the church's overall financial support. After all, these young men and women will become future church leaders, and important contributors to Christ's witness and mission through out the world. During these Stewardship Seconds, you will hear from the youth and their leaders concerning topics such as weekend retreats, the "sleep out" for the homeless, the 4G youth ministry, the youth Sunday school program, and the confirmation process.

During November and December, be sure to listen and watch as we water and nourish the "Youth Department Ministries Root". If we have our roots "**Grounded in Faith**", we will be able to "**Grow to Serve**".

