

UNIVERSITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



Enter In

Practical Ideas for Living & Giving Generously

From the Pastor

What emotion immediately comes to mind when you hear the word sacrifice? Is it positive or negative? Some say it evokes a negative emotion. What about investment? Positive or negative? Many imagine the stock market when they hear the word investment. If you have had any investments in the stock market in the last decade, then your response to the word investment is likely to be positive.

It is interesting to note that the definition of sacrifice and investment are very similar: the giving up of something of value so something of greater value can be achieved or obtained. The etymology of sacrifice is to “make sacred,” and the etymology of invest is “to clothe.” I like the image of investing sacrificially as clothing ourselves in sacred activity for the upbuilding of the Kingdom of God.

In the parable of the Three Servants, each of the three servants were given the opportunity to manage the resources of the landowner in whatever way they chose. Like the landowner, God has given us free will from the beginning. Two of the servants chose to invest the resources placed in their care out of response to the landowner’s trust and investment in them, and in both cases their investments were doubled. The landowner invited them into the joy of their lord.

The third servant acted out of fear and chose to do nothing with the resources given to him. The landowner was greatly disappointed with the third servant because his response represented a lack of trust in the landowner, the landowner’s resources, and in the servant himself.

The giving of our finances can be scary, especially if we are experiencing financial or spiritual challenges. However, the parable of the servants illustrates what the gift of choosing to trust God with our finances and investments can be - even if such investment requires sacrifice.

As we Enter In to this season of giving, we put together this generosity toolkit to offer you creative and different ways to give. We hope the toolkit provides you hope as you Enter In to the conversation of how you as an individual or family can invest in the Kingdom of God through University United Methodist Church.

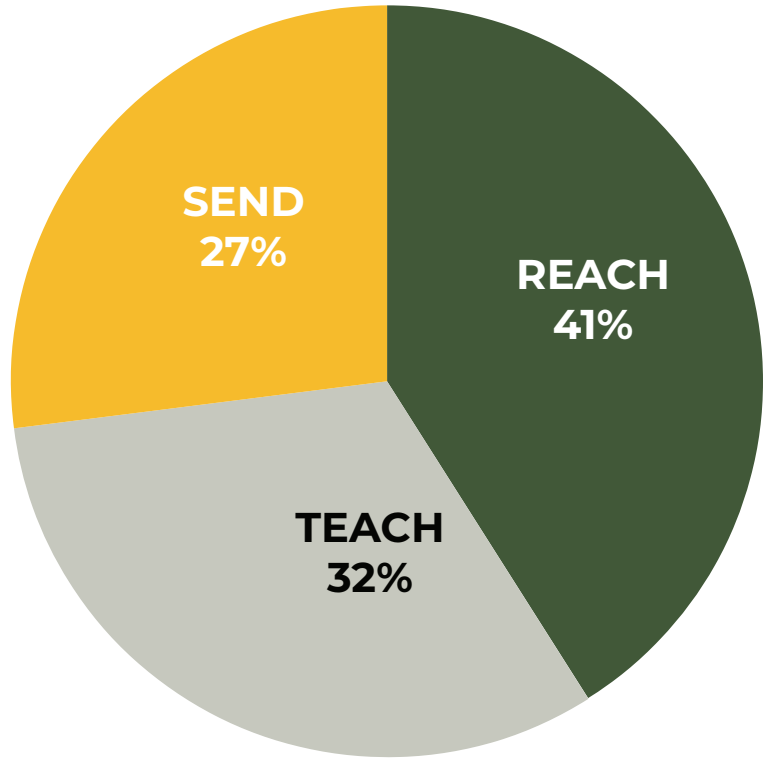
Blessings,
Pastor Justin



Our financial priorities naturally flow out of our spiritual priorities. In the parable often called the “Parable of the Three Servants” (Matthew 25:14-30), all three servants reveal their spiritual priorities in the way they exercise their financial priorities. The first two servants were willing to invest what they had received. No doubt their investment was based on their belief that the landowner would honor sound investment. The third servant, scripture says, was afraid and so operated out of fear. He believed the landowner was a shrewd business person and was not about to risk any of what he was given. The third servant’s financial priorities flowed from his spiritual beliefs and priorities.

There have been quite a few adaptive challenges over the last 18-24 months that could tempt anyone to follow the example of the third servant. And yet, God, like the landowner in this parable, is offering each of us the opportunity for our financial priorities to flow out of our spiritual priorities. We give thanks for all that God has already given us. We lean into a God who always blesses us. As we consider 2022, the challenge to our community is that we allow our individual priorities to flow from our spiritual priorities. The parable of the servants indicates that as we trust and invest the resources God first gave us, we will *Enter In* to the joy of our God.

Where will the money go?



Through Bold and Courageous Generosity, we continue to REACH, TEACH and SEND ...

REACH

The past 18 months have seen University UMC *reach* out courageously during this period of uncertainty. We have increased our use of social media and video messaging. We have implemented several facility upgrades to both reduce energy usage and improve connectivity on our campus. And, perhaps most importantly, we were able to safely allow children most negatively affected by online learning to participate in a Learning Center on our campus. Consistent with our missional vision of serving others, we embraced this outreach opportunity by implementing safety protocols, installing infrastructure, funding scholarships for the program and mobilizing volunteers to meet the needs of some of the most disadvantaged in our community during the pandemic.

(Budget areas include Evangelism, Outreach, Hospitality and Facilities)

TEACH

The pandemic presented many challenges as we worked to *teach* others about God's love through worship, programs and discipleship. We met those challenges with creativity and God's grace. Worship never stopped as services moved online. Siblings in Christ from around the country joined (and continue to join) in online worship. Our youth, children and music ministries took advantage of gathering outside. Bible studies, small groups, United Methodist Women, United Methodist Men and Sunday School classes met via Zoom. Staff reached out with regular video messaging, such as the *Preparation for Worship* videos and the *Children's Moments*. As we look to the future, we are excited about in-person worship and having more in-person activities. We are also looking forward to the possibilities afforded by online community and hybrid Zoom meetings. *(Budget areas include Worship, Discipleship, Music Ministry, Children and Family Ministry, Youth Ministry and Adult Ministries)*

SEND

Send implies going someplace. When in-person congregational care visits and mission had to stop, the congregation and staff again reacted creatively. Congregational care teams of lay members and clergy used phone calls, texts, emails, US mailings, video and "driveway visits" to keep members and friends of University UMC connected and supported. Stephen Ministers continued to support those wanting their help. We also continued to support our mission partners: IFC, TABLE, Habitat for Humanity, and ZOE Empowers. This Fall we have kicked off a virtual mission trip to Argentina. *(Budget areas include Missions, Benevolences, Hospitality Visitations and Congregational Care)*

... continuing our vision of Loving God, Serving Others and Building Christian Community.

During the worship service on October 31, our University UMC family will have the opportunity to celebrate God's grace and generosity as we complete our 2022 Estimate of Giving cards.

An Estimate of Giving Card is included with this mailing. A sample card is also shown below.

If you prefer to complete your card online, click on the QR code.

If you have a Realm account, save some steps and fill out your commitment there.

Login to your Realm account.

Click on Giving.

Click on +Pledge.

Click on the blue General Fund Jan 1, 2022 – Dec 31, 2022 button.

Complete the pledge amount and the frequency as appropriate.

Click Save Pledge.



Enter In



2022 Estimate of Giving

Please provide information about:

- Setting up online recurring gifts
- Making a gift of appreciated assets or from an IRA
- Giving through Estate Planning (*will, insurance beneficiary, etc.*)



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OUR COMMITMENT

*We will trust in the Lord with all our hearts.
We'll estimate giving to the Lord's work and
ministry through our church next year as follows:*

Amount Weekly _____
Amount Monthly _____
Amount Quarterly _____
Amount Yearly _____

Please print.

Name(s) _____
Address _____
City _____ ST _____ Zip _____
Phone _____
Email _____
Signature _____
Date _____

*I understand this estimate of giving may be revised
or canceled at any time at my request.*

Save time and postage! Fill out your commitment card online at universityumc.church/pledge or through your Realm account.



The following are additional creative ways to give .

1. PRIORITY BUDGETING

You may choose to rearrange your priorities and give up something in your current budget in order to grow in your giving. Priority budgeting may mean postponing a planned expenditure such as a new car, vacation, remodeling, or other major purchase.

2. APPRECIATED ASSETS

Many people own assets that have achieved tremendous unrealized gains in value over the years. That is good news. The bad news is that if these assets were sold, a significant portion of the gain could be lost to taxation. Gifts of appreciated assets – typically investment securities or real estate – can be advantageous to both the giver and the church.

3. IRA CONTRIBUTIONS

If you are 70.5 in age or older and have an IRA, there are certain advantageous rules for you. Please contact your financial planner or accountant to learn more about how to give in this manner.

4. CARES ACT IMPACT ON GIVING

In response to the coronavirus, the CARES Act of 2020 includes a clause that radically impacts giving for individuals who itemize their personal tax returns. Many of these provisions have been extended into 2021. Please contact your financial planner or accountant to learn more about how to give in this manner.

