

First United Methodist Church
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Edinburg FUMC
Loving God By Loving And Serving Others

Stewardship Edition

November 2021

...I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. Genesis 12:2b

Ok, so you already know that this is our “stewardship campaign” month. I urge you, read on, pray through the newsletter, be encouraged, be inspired, and respond to God generously. This month’s newsletter will look a little different. I’m going to take some time to answer various questions about our finances and financial health. I’ll share about how this church is blessing our community. I’ll help cast the vision for where I believe God is leading us as a congregation and how we can all participate. And it all begins here, with this verse from Genesis. “I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others.”

To be honest, I could care less about being “famous”, but what God is really promising is that Abraham will be known as one who is faithful to God and a means of God’s faithfulness to others. That – that I would love. I would love for our life as a church family and our reputation as a church community reflect God’s abundant provision and our eagerness to bless others in God’s name and by God’s power. It can be fun to be known as the “Pumpkin Patch/Bread Church”, but how much more wonderful to be known as “that church where God does great and crazy things”?

We were created to be blessed by God and to bless others. As God’s people, God’s sons and daughters, we are called to bless others. Jesus tells us that he, fully God and fully man, savior of us all, came NOT to BE served but TO SERVE others. It is the rhythm of the economy of heaven. We receive, we give. We give, we receive. We are blessed, we bless others. We bless others, we are blessed. In the economy of heaven, there is no lack. That’s a hard eternal-truth to believe when what we see in the physical/temporal world is that they are so many in need. We will press into that biblical truth in our sermon series. In the Kingdom of God, there is more than enough.

We are blessed to be a blessing. And the first response of being blessed is to thank God and bless God in return, our tithes and offerings. After we bless God with our tithes and offerings, then we bless others with gifts above and beyond the offering/tithe. It’s the biblical support of “first mile and second mile” giving. Our pledge cards will be different this year. One side will be our pledge to bless God (our tithes for the daily running, work of the church) and the other side will offer the opportunity to pledge to bless others through the specific ministries of EFUMC.

Throughout November, there will be two wooden boxes in the front of the spaces. One will be marked “I am blessed...”. Each week, you will be invited to write down how God has blessed you that week and place it in the box as an offering of praise. The second box will be marked, “To be a blessing...”. In this box, we will place our tithes, gifts, offerings, and our pledge card for 2022. Commitment Sunday will on November 28th, the first Sunday of Advent. It will be symbolic of both responding in thankfulness to God’s abundance in our lives and our first gift to be brought to the manger.

Please. Come into this season of Thankfulness with an open heart and an open mind. Prayerfully read through this newsletter and let the Lord lead your response. Remember, we are blessed to be blessing.

Helpful Hints For Giving Habits

Work toward giving the biblical tithe as your minimum standard of generosity. Remember that our tithe and offerings are part of our discipleship and worship of God. If you do not currently give, start. Every gift matters. If you are a regular giver, move towards the tithe. If you tithe, ask the Lord to show you the next measure of generosity in your giving. The goal is for everyone to give faithfully. If you are one of our new online community, please consider giving to help support livestream/media expenses for ministry. Churches who depend on a few “big” givers struggle to survive. **Everyone’s offering is necessary. Everyone’s gift matters.**

Commit to give faithfully and consistently, even if you are absent from worship, (vacation etc.). In order to maintain healthy budget/spending practices, the church depends on the consistency of its congregation.

Submit a commitment card. Many of you have shared your feelings about pledge cards and why you dislike or struggle with submitting one. I understand. However, I also know that in order for the church to be good stewards of the tithes and offerings made, the leadership has to have a reasonable estimation of the money that will come in so as to determine the priorities of the budget (keeping staff, programs, etc.)

Give to the operational budget first and then additional giving to fund special ministries of the church. It won’t matter if we have money for the food bank/prayer garden/shoe bank, if we cannot sustain the operation of the church.

Share how God has continued to meet your personal needs as you give generously to God. Tell your stories about how God provides for you and the joy you receive in giving .



A Financial Update on the State of the Church

There has been a lot of conversation and questions about the financial health of the church, particularly in context of the pandemic. COVID-19 has impacted giving to local churches and EFUMC is no exception. Currently, EFUMC is running in deficit of about \$6400 for the year. This means giving has fallen short than our expenses by \$6400. EFUMC received about \$171,600 in pledges and offerings through September 30th. EFUMC has paid \$177,960 in expenses as of September 30th. Thankfully, we have enough money in reserve to cover this deficit, but not if it grows any greater. The proposed and accepted budget for 2021 was \$282,000. However, as a result of fewer operational/budget contributions coming in, we reduced spending, some planned programming was cut, and priorities regarding staffing were realigned to ensure we were being good stewards of the tithes and offerings being given. Our community has been responding with great generosity to missional needs, but in doing so, redirected their operational/budget giving to special funds. There are many months where the total monthly giving far exceeds our monthly operational need. Unfortunately, more than 1/3 of that monthly income is often designated to specific ministry areas and leaves the operational, budgeted needs, short. This has been a challenge. It is beautiful to see the community respond to people in need. It is nerve-wracking for leadership to navigate the day-to-day financial responsibilities of having/being the church when operational giving is redirected.

We still owe \$75,000 in principle on our Church Future (capital needs) loan. Stipulated in loan paperwork, the first 3 years of the note, monthly payments are interest only. EFUMC was able to make a \$25,000 principle payment last year and hope to make another \$5,000 - \$10,000 principle payment before the end of the year. We have replaced the air conditioning units needed in the worship space, added sound/video/livestream equipment needed, repaired the parking lot. Of the \$100,000 there just shy of \$19,000 remaining. Some of those remaining capital funds will be used to make repairs to the parsonage (roof work/rotted wood, etc.). The board is working on setting priorities for the remaining funds. There is work that needs to be done on the office building. A new sign for the property is also needed. When the church voted to take out the loan to make these critical and necessary repairs to the property and buildings, several families pledged a monthly gift for the life of the loan to cover that expense. If you have not yet had the opportunity, I encourage you to begin giving a designated gift to capital repairs and improvements. Long after this loan is paid off, there will be needs for the property and the buildings. It is part of our legacy of faith and our stewardship of what God has given us.

I mentioned earlier that some of the regular giving has been redirected to the missional outreach of the church. As of now, we do not include expenses for Food Pantry, In His Steps Shoe Bank, Choir scholarships, Pastor's Discretionary/Benevolence etc. as part our operating budget. These ministries operate out of 2nd mile giving and are limited to what they receive in special fundraisers or designated campaigns. This year, we will prepare a second budget that reflects what each ministry hopes to receive to do its good work. Where able, we will apply for grants to help supplement the financial support of the church and the community.

The proposed budget for 2022 will be included in this mailing. Please direct any questions you might have to the church office (edinburgfirst@sbcglobal.net) and I will make sure we arrange a time to discuss. Other pieces of this newsletter will address items like the need to submit a pledge card and how what is pledged will impact what remains in the budget. I have also been asked about staffing/office hours/hiring. That will be addressed in this newsletter as well.

FELLOWSHIP/HOSPITALITY

Supplies	\$1000
Special Events	500

MISSION & OUTREACH

Mission & Outreach	1,000
Campus Ministry	3,000

(see complete mission/ministry budget on page 5)

WORSHIP

Supplies	2000
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MUSIC DEPARTMENT

Supplies & Maintenance	2800
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MEDIA

Equipment/ Maintenance	2,000
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TAXES

Property	550
Payroll	4,400

PERSONNEL

(Pastor, Staff, Interns, etc.)	133,000
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GRAND TOTAL BUDGET 2022 \$280,800

TOTAL WEEKLY BUDGET REQUIREMENT \$5400

FUMC MINISTRIES/2nd MILE GIVING

BALANCES IN FUNDS AS OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2021

FOOD PANTRY	\$16,352.18
IN HIS STEPS	6,149.00
MEMORIALS	5,994.00
MUSIC DEPARTMENT:	
CHOIR SCHOLARSHIPS	3,661.29
BELL CHOIR	2,765.00
PRAISE BAND	584.00
PRAYER GARDEN	2,751.23
PLAY GROUND	3,009.98
YOUTH	6,782.76
TRUSTEE RESERVE/MAINTENANCE	9,514.00
PASTOR'S DISCRETIONARY FUND*	332.01
TOTAL	\$57,894.98

*Pastor Michelle's 2021 YTD distribution is approximately \$6000 in confidential benevolence and emergency support. From this total, just over \$4500.00 was given to members/attenders of EFUMC in crisis.

Administrative Board for 2022

Gerry Rodriguez-Board Chair, Maryann Denner - SPRC, Amanda Ramirez - SPRC, Susan Wiesehan - Trustee, Ronny Villarreal - Trustee, Will Pagel - Trustee, Tina Gall - Finance, Rebecca Morrison - Finance, Chris Rierson - Lay Leader, John Ryan Rodriguez - Lay Delegate to Annual Conference, Dana Villarreal-Treasurer, Michelle Vernone-Pastor

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF EDINBURG

2021 OPERATIONAL BUDGET/IST MILE GIVING

The detail of First United Methodist's Budget for January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022 is shown below.

**Commitment Sunday Nov. 28th
Your Pledges Help Determine The Budget**

Please bring your completed pledge cards on or before Nov. 28th. Commitment Sunday will be on November 28th, the first Sunday of Advent. It will be symbolic of both responding in thankfulness to God's abundance in our lives and our first gift to be brought to the manger. We will have a special consecration of them on January 2nd as part of our vow and covenant renewal service marking our intentions in faith for the new year.

I know pledges are a sensitive subject for many. I understand. That said, the best way for your church leadership to be the best possible stewards of the gifts and tithes given, is to be able to create and care for a budget that reflects its community. I believe God provides. I believe God will make a way even when I don't see one. I believe. I also know it can do irreparable damage to a church to prepare a budget built on hopeful numbers without reasonable support. The budget included in this newsletter is based on needs and priorities of the church and the historical giving information/trends from 2019 – 2021. It will include some increase and realigning of priorities. After pledge cards have been submitted, the board and I will evaluate where we are with pledges to determine what needs to be refined or cut. Our budget is already very "bare bones" so keep in mind that "cutting" could include salaries, hours, and/or part-time staff as well as entire ministry areas.

The commitment we make is more than our financial resources. On the card there will be places to designate your commitment to pray, to serve, and to attend. Praying is always the foundation of every community. We need everyone to pray in all the ways they can. This year, we've noted in the commitment to attend that it includes both in-person and online attendance. Thanks to the live stream, it is possible for everyone to commit and maintain 100% attendance. We will continue to work toward building community in-person and online. Serving will be an important place for every member of the community to participate. Part of realigning financial priorities to ensure worship continued during the pandemic meant that we did not rehire an office administrator. Those budgeted salaries were distributed to hire media/tech/sound/worship personnel. At this time, there is a need for help in the office, but mostly volunteer help. We need persons who are willing to come for a few hours a day, a few days a month, to answer the phone, help with filing (paper and digital), greet people who come into the office for appointments with the Wesley Nurse or MHM Counselor. We are also looking for someone to take over the newsletter responsibilities (writing, crafting, editing etc.). In the last 2 newsletters, we have posted the need for a church historian(s). There are many ways in which everyone can take part in physically caring for the church and the work of the church. A gentle reminder- we are all called to participate in all ways to support the church. We all must pray. We all must give. We all must attend. We all must serve. Everyone can do something in each of these areas. What will you do?

ADMINISTRATION

Advertising	\$800
Annual Conference	100
Bank Fees	50
Computer Supplies	100
Copier Lease	3000
Copyright	1000
Janitorial Supplies	1200
Memberships	250
Office Supplies	1,100
Payroll Service	1,100
Bulk Mail Permit	250
Bulk Mail Postage	300
Postage Stamps	880
Security System	1,800
Legal fees/Background Checks	500
Software Licenses	1,200

Rio Texas Conference

Apportionments	\$22,000
Five Star Giving	100

MAINTENANCE

Electricity	\$21,000
Maintenance	4,000
Fire System Checks	5,000
Pest Control	800
Telephone/Internet	3,700
Water	2,750
Lawn Maintenance	8,400

PARSONAGE

Maintenance	\$3,400
Electricity	2,200
Pest Control	250
Telephone/Internet	2,680
Water	1,500

Education

Children's Program	\$1,200 (from designated fund)
Adult Men's/Women's Studies	500
Young Adults Studies	500
Youth Program	1,000 (from designated fund)
VBS	500 (from designated fund)
"Upper Room"	300



Missions and Ministry Budget

The Missions and Ministry Budget is based on non-operational/2nd Mile giving totals from 2020. In 2020, \$72,000 total were given for the collective ministries not necessarily included in the operating budget. In 2021, EFUMC did include \$3000 for Campus Ministry and \$3000 for Choir Scholarships in the operating budget.

This year, EFUMC continues to do good in the community through very generous giving and the receiving of grants. Our shoe bank gave more than \$7000 in shoe vouchers to ECISD from money given at end of 2020 and up to October 1st of this year. We hope to be able to give another \$5000 in the Spring semester. Our Food Pantry received a \$10,000 grant for MHM and as a result of continued community giving and support, have increased the number of bags distributed to 100 per month. Each bag has basic pantry staples as well as a bag of fresh produce and fresh meat/protein.

The money Campus Ministry receives from EFUMC has been vital in the relaunching of this ministry after UTRGV campus closure last year. Every week there are more students in the ministry center, sharing meals, finding community and a safe space. This semester, Campus Ministry is putting together a small food pantry in the Student Ministry Center that not only provides non-perishable foods, but gives the students access to a kitchen and fresh food to cook and have a healthy meal. Support from this church is making it possible to have a stackable washer/dryer installed for students to have access to. There are many different needs on the UTRGV campus and UMCM with the support of EFUMC is working diligently to meet those needs.

Though we do not currently have a student ministry in the “traditional” sense, EFUMC is deeply invested in the lives of children and students - and not just through Shoe Bank or Campus Ministry either. The music/choir scholarship program is another way EFUMC is reaching out to young people, providing opportunities for growth and spiritual care. The gifts they bring to worship are pleasing to the Lord and a blessing to the community.

For the last few years, EFUMC has been a resource of hospitality and mentoring for Project Transformation Rio Texas. This is another program that reaches out to improve literacy for at risk children and youth. I and other members of the church have worked with the summer interns and supervisors who run the summer program. We are including a budget/Missions Ministry line for 2022 to become a recognized funded partner with Project Transformation.

Last but not least, there is the good you all have done through your generous gifts to the Pastor’s Discretionary fund. These contributions/distributions are confidential and often anonymous. In 2021 this fund has been used to help members of our community in crisis:

- Receive groceries delivered to them
- Help pay medical bills
- Help pay rent
- Help pay for school expenses
- Help pay for funeral expenses
- Help provide items to those who lost everything due to natural disaster or fire
- Provide help to a mother and child start over after leaving a domestic abuse situation

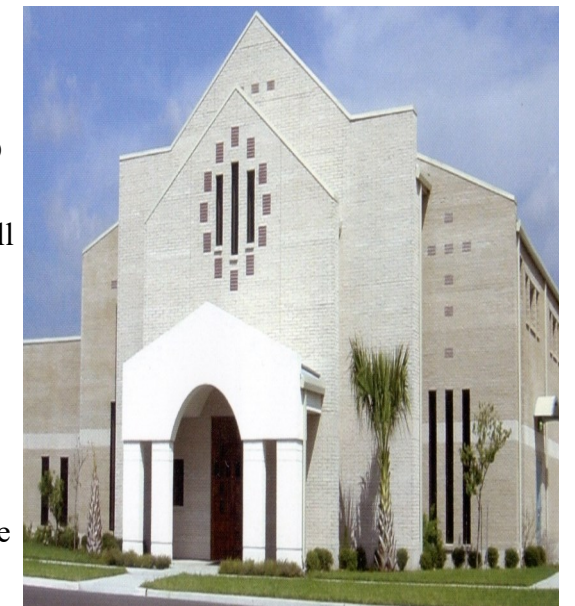
... and so much more.

Here is the prayerfully/hoped for Missions and Ministry Budget of 2022

Missions Budget for 2022	GIVEN/Fundraised 2020	HOPES 2022
Campus Ministry	200	4,000
Choir Scholarships	2,900	8,000
Church Future (Capital loan)	30,717	12,000
Food Pantry	14,022	18,000
In His Steps Shoe Bank	3,058	18,000
Pastor's Discretionary Fund	9,900	8,000
Project Transformation	new	3,500
Food boxes	7,320	(included in Food Pantry)
Christmas Eve (FP/SB)	1,798	
Memorials	1,990	
	totals	71,905
		71,500

Here Is Another Way You Might Help Your Church....

We are trying to go to the next step in tithing and to help our church be able to do the ministries that are near and dear to our hearts. This is one way that you might not know about. If you are 70 1/2 years old or older and you have money invested in a traditional, SEP, or Simple IRA account you are required by law to take a RMD (required minimum distribution) each year. This part you may know about, but here is something to consider. You will be paying taxes on this money. The idea when you took it out was that by the time you had to do this you would be making less and you would not pay as high a rate at distribution. This may or may not be the case. Regardless, here is a way to help our church and to help you NOT pay any tax dollars. If you contact your advisors and inform them that you want all or a portion of your RMD to go to the Edinburg FUMC, you will not pay any tax on the amount contributed. This might be a second giving, this might be your way of stepping up to tithing without feeling it, or it just might be a way for you to give to your church and save tax dollars at the same time. You can decide how you want to distribute. If you have a special cause, like the food bank, shoe bank, choir scholarships, prayer garden, etc., you can designate to that or to the operating fund or any combination of the above. Please prayerfully consider this as another way to step up to giving.



Jackie and Jimmy Billings