

Together in Christ



Today
we are
starting the
campaign to

commit our monetary gifts to the University United Methodist Church. It is called Together in Christ. As we dare each other to love God and our neighbor, we also dare to financially support the operation and outreach of our church. 2017 has been a financially trying year. Primarily through the deaths of some of our members, we found ourselves \$35,000 short of meeting operating budget expectations. Thanks to members who raised their estimates of giving, the postponing of some desired capital expenditures and the expected savings from energy reduction efforts, we have met the challenge. Next year will be equally as challenging with our loss of income from English as a Second Language. It was a program that had to be supported by a school system and none would volunteer.

I'd like to address the two aspects of our financial commitments: our mortgage and operating budget.

With us being able to maintain our current monthly mortgage payments, our debt should expire about the year 2022. For the 2017 budget year, however, our mortgage estimates of giving fell short by 15%. A 17% increase would put us back on track. It is imperative that all of us maintain a continuing commitment to support debt retirement. If you are not participating, please consider joining in this effort. Fortunately, inflation concerns don't apply to our loan payments. As of today, there is a mortgage balance slightly under \$1,000,000.

Our operating budget is a shade under \$600,000 and covers our operating and mission expenses. Our staff consumes 62% of our budget. Staff includes the pastor, associate pastor, Children/Youth Ministries Director and Assistant, Secretary, Finance and Church

Administrator, Facilities Administrator, Custodian, Music Director, Organist, and Choir and Hand Bell Directors. Maintenance, equipment, utilities and insurance take 18% of the budget. Conference and District Ministry Shares, missionary and work area support are 14%. Office costs are 3%. Education, music and worship programming also are 3%. We certainly have been generous when it comes to funding special offerings. It is a long list which includes church camps, Christian education, golden cross, human relations, native American ministries, One Great Hour of Sharing, Peace with Justice, Racial Ethnic Local Church, Rural Life, United Methodist Students, Volunteer in Mission, World Communion, the Flint water crisis, Stop Hunger Now, Heifer project, Saint Vincent Catholic Charities, Haiti Artisans for Peace International, and the Greater Lansing Food Bank. We also have supported Thanksgiving baskets and dedicated our Easter and Christmas offerings to mission causes. Cumulatively these amounted to over \$58,000 in 2016, which was over and above our commitments to building, operating and ministry shares. Although inflation has been low, it affects our expenditures and should be a consideration as you decide your support. We would hope to provide salary increases accordingly.

Today, my presentation has been from the prospective of a member of the finance committee.

In the remaining Sundays leading up to commitment Sunday on October 22, you'll be hearing from one of our members about their involvement in the life of the church.

Now is the time to start thinking about your support in 2018. Hopefully your response will assure a viable and active program.