



First United Methodist Church, Missoula, Montana

PO Box 7646, 300 E. Main St., Missoula, MT 59807

406-549-6118

fumcmissoula@gmail.com

Rev. John Daniels, Pastor

406-396-8966

john@fumcmissoula.com

Dear Members and Friends of the First United Methodist Church of Missoula, Montana,

Each fall, our church holds its annual stewardship campaign. There are many components to this campaign – a mass mailing of pledge cards, information about our financial plan shared during worship, appeals for support, dialogue sermons sharing why we give as individuals and as a community of faith -- and, of course, letters like this one!

This year may seem as if it is completely different, and it is in many ways, with a pandemic forcing our lives into a strange routine of online connections, not to mention one of the most challenging times our nation has faced. **But our ministry remains committed to its purpose of helping us remain centered in Christ.** It is a commitment which has not diminished but adapted, and we find ourselves not only solvent, but strong in both our congregational connections and positive community impact.

We all know that it takes effort to make our ministry what it is. It takes our prayer, presence, gifts, service, and witness to make a difference in our own lives and in the lives of others. The “presence” part may seem to be missing these days, but it is perhaps more changed than reduced; it is amazing to me that the involvement of most of our members and friends has been retained through our online platforms, and I delight to see names and faces (and cell phone numbers!) of people I have never met becoming interested and involved in our church.

If we consider what our faith says about the resources of our lives, we hear once again that all good things come from God. Life itself, its material, even its wealth, has its root not in our own exploits, but in what God has first provided. God is, first and foremost, the Creator and Sustainer of our lives.

Stewardship is about recognizing that Christ’s ministry doesn’t happen without the giving of ourselves. But it is also about acknowledging that we each have an inner need to give of ourselves to worthwhile purposes. A life that knows it can positively impact the life of another is a life twice blessed – blessed first with the ability to give, and second with the desire to share. Both lead to a deepening sense of life’s value and possibility.

We sometimes put the cart before the horse. We sometimes say, “I give, therefore I am a Christian,” when in reality, it’s just the reverse. It is because we are followers of Christ that we give. We do so to support and encourage the life-changing messages of, and opportunities for, redemption, grace, and possibility – messages that the world is hungry to receive.

Let us remember that what matters most is not the amount that we give, but the spirit in which we give it. May God bless us in our ministry together.

God’s Grace Be With You,

Scott Bixler, Finance Team Chair

Pastor John Daniels