



# CELEBRATIONS

LEXINGTON FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
SUMMER 2020

# PASTOR'S NOTE

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**Todd Nelson**

Sr. Pastor



## **We have much to celebrate.**

Of course we need to do a Covid-19 Celebrations edition! The past four months have been a historic time in our world and indeed First United Methodist Church of Lexington. As odd as it may seem, we have much to celebrate.

The church, unbound from our normal patterns, has been the church on the move. We experienced a new way of doing small groups, serving, caring along with worship and Holy Communion. We honored the lives of members who died and have done our best to care for one another. There have even been additions to our church family in the way of births, baptisms, and new members.

The church never closed. The church simply pivoted to a new way of being Christ's hands and feet in the world. In some ways, the ministry has never been more vibrant and the love we have for God and one another more cherished.

## **We also have much to mourn.**

As of writing, over 140,000 persons in this country and over 600,000 worldwide have lost their lives to Covid-19. Unemployment is at historically high levels and the impact of quarantine may not yet be fully realized on our mental health. Isolation leading to depression is often unspoken but no less tragic.

And also recently, our streets have been filled with cries reminding us that injustice anywhere is injustice everywhere. Every aspect of our personal and corporate lives is being re-examined as we look deep into the abyss of racism and are confronted with its impact.

And we as a church have been part of this public lament. In solidarity with others, we have faced the events of the past few months being reminded whose we are and for what purpose we exist.

## **We have much left to do.**

It has been difficult. It continues to be uncertain. It is our generation's moment to be reminded that life is a gift and it is best shared with others.

I have no doubt that we as a church family will continue to be faithful. And I grow more convinced that we will be stronger on the other side due to Christ working in and through us.

I could not be more honored to be part of your pastoral team than I am at this moment.

You continue in my prayers!

A handwritten signature of Todd Nelson in black ink.

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**Front cover:**  
Graduation celebrations in a time of distancing require creativity. Corrie Thomas, a 2020 graduate of Ohio State University, receives her blanket as the Andover family has a drive by celebration.



**Carol Cooper**  
Downtown  
Assistant Campus Pastor



**Sarah Flannery**  
Offerings  
Assistant Campus Pastor



**Chad Foster**  
Andover  
Pastor



**Todd Nelson**  
Sr. Pastor/  
Downtown Pastor



**Sarah Neubert**  
Andover  
Assistant Campus Pastor



**Teddy Ray**  
Offerings Pastor/  
Pastor of New Communities  
and Leadership  
Development

# OUR PASTORS

# OUR TEAM

**CASSIDY BAAS**

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Organist, Andover  
william.webberiv@windstream.net

# Offerings Community

At the Last Supper, Jesus told his disciples, “This is my body, which is for you.” And the apostle Paul later told the gathered church, “Now you are the body of Christ.” Any kind of private spirituality is a foreign idea to the Bible. Leave out our shared communion and our corporate gatherings and you leave out the body of Christ. I’d imagine that most of you have felt that loss over the past few months. We’re grateful for what we can do with technology now, but it pales in comparison to our physical gatherings.

At Offerings, the communion celebration has been an essential part of our weekly worship for the past twelve years. And we’ve given our worship gatherings our highest priority. These are the places where the church is most the church--the things we do that would make no sense if Christ has not been raised.

The past few months have been a challenge for all of us, especially as we try to identify priorities when most of what’s normal has been removed. At Offerings, our biggest challenge has been about communion and gathered worship. We’ve been committed to following the guidance we receive from the state and denomination and also to offering people an opportunity to continue participating in communion and gathered worship. I’ve never been so grateful for our leaders--their thoughtfulness and creativity and devotion.

Our leaders have found creative and safe ways to continue offering communion each week throughout the quarantine. That has included park communion distribution sites and a period of “Door Dash”-styled communion when these were all that was possible. And our leaders have spent hours discussing creative ways that our community can gather for worship in responsible ways. Once state guidelines allowed it, we had a few masked-and-distanced Sunday afternoon gatherings outdoors to sing and distribute communion. And we’ve now moved to a regular in-person worship service on our Regency property parking lot and front lawn.

To be sure, these still aren’t what we hope for. We’ve learned just how important it is to sing together, and that remains difficult with masks and distance. We have many community members still unable or uncomfortable joining us. But we’re grateful for these gatherings that we’re considering as firstfruits--early signs of a time that we’ll be able to gather again fully.

Teddy Ray,  
Offerings Pastor



# OUR STRUCTURE

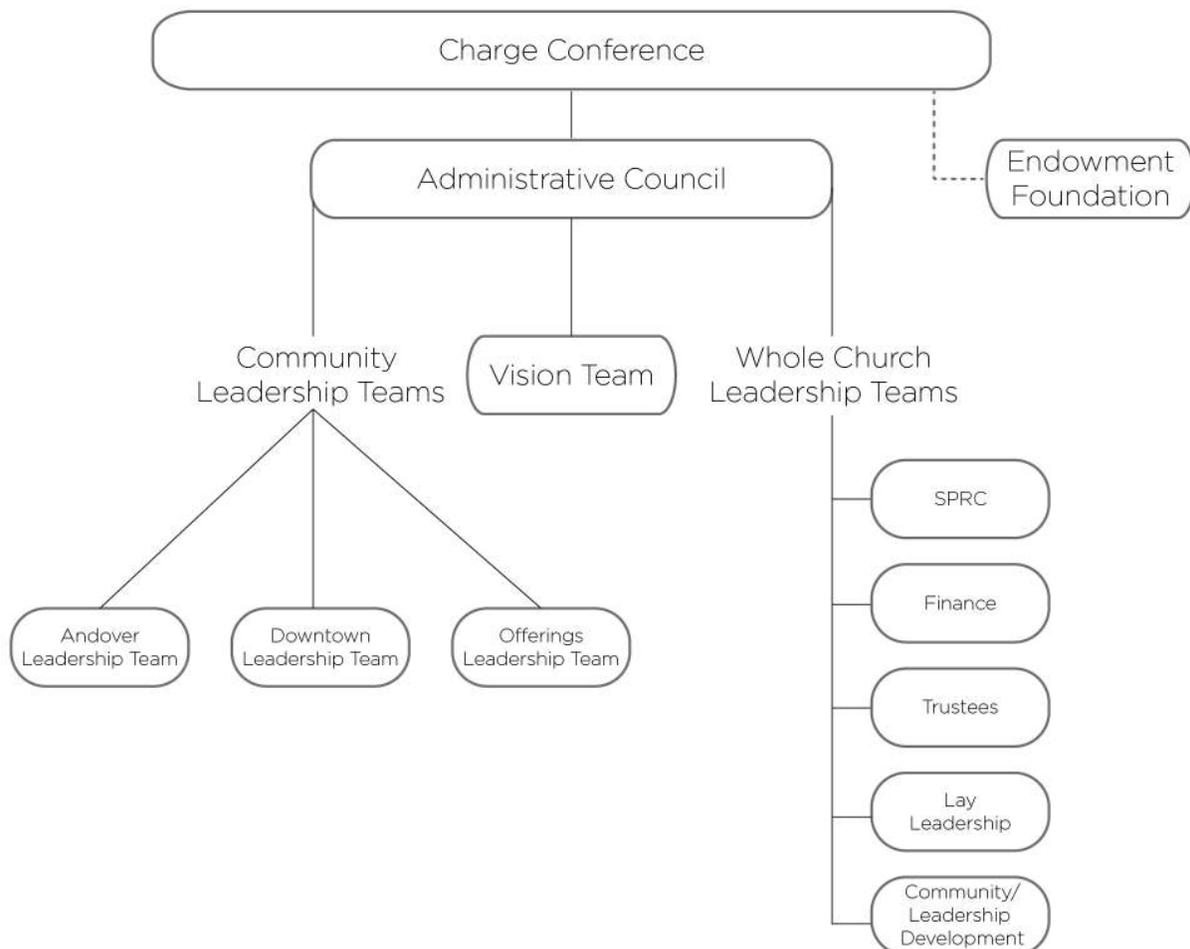
## First United Methodist Church is “One Church” with “Multiple Expressions.”

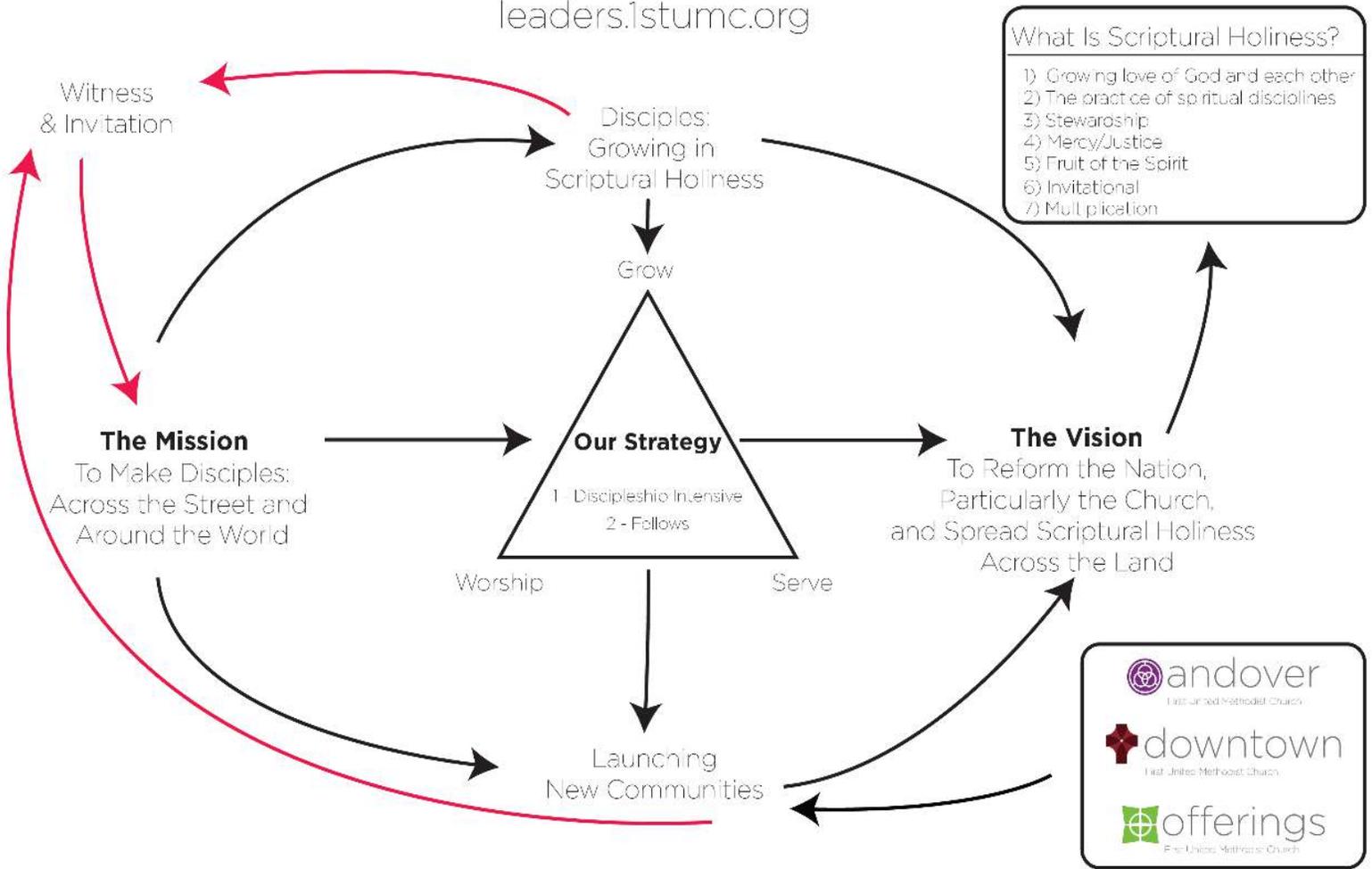
Our structure is unique in the multi-site model of church growth in that we have a shared administration, yet we have empowered each community to live out our vision as appropriate for its context. Each community is empowered to develop plans for Worship, Grow, and Serve as appropriate for that community.

These decisions are made by the community leadership teams, which have been blessed by Lay Leadership and the Administrative Council.

Our Resource Leadership teams are whole-church teams made up of representatives from each of our current three communities. These teams are part of the shared administration of First Church and they look at how to advance our vision, mission, and values.

The vision team is a non-authoritative team made up of representatives from each community leadership team and from the various resource teams. This team looks at the broader ministry of First Church and reports to the Administrative Council.





# OUR WHITEBOARD

This whiteboard grew out of a series of conversations around who we are, what we do, and why we do it.

For some time we have leaned into our mission and have made the saying “we make disciples across the street and around the world” part of our common speech.

But for many of us that left us lacking. Why do we make disciples? How do we make disciples? What does a disciple look like?

This is our unashamedly complex representation of all of those answers. But don't panic and think that you have to understand it all just yet.

At [leaders.1stumc.org](http://leaders.1stumc.org) there is a video walking through this graphic. And there is a podcast where we explore the various sections.



# Downtown Community

## They Paved Paradise

Many of you may be old enough to remember the song Big Yellow Taxi by Joni Mitchell. You younger folks may know the Counting Crows version. The chorus goes like this...

Don't it always seem to go  
That you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone  
They paved paradise  
And put up a parking lot

About two weeks into the Covid-19 pandemic, I started to miss church. The music, the sermons, and even the children's message. What I missed the most was my Sunday School class. That time when we were together laughing, praying, sharing life, and just enjoying the community and support of the class. Someone had paved paradise and put up that parking lot. It was then that I sent out an email to the class sharing verses from Romans 1:11-12..."I long to see you so that I might impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong; that is **that you and I might be encouraged by each other's faith.**" That said it all, we need to be together to stay strong.

The writer of Hebrews almost mandated that we assemble in community with one another. "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." (Hebrews 10:24-25)

So how are we doing Downtown? While we cannot meet like we used to, thanks to the leadership of our church and the wisdom of many others, we are doing great. We are now into our second small group gatherings studying the book *TEN* by Sean Gladding. Multiple groups are gathering in community and fellowship encouraging each other. These small groups have been joined by not only members of our church but others that are just looking for just this kind of community.

Sunday Schools may be doing even better. Through the miracle of Zoom (it's a miracle that I can get on it!) most all of our classes meet weekly at all different times and days. In all cases I hear that they share with each other, have time for prayer, and most have some lesson or devotional.

The Contemporary Issues class is led by Ross Stinetorf, who is always dressed in dress shirt and tie but cannot confirm whether he has on long or short pants below the camera of Zoom. It is not below him to show up with a Derby hat on "not the derby this year" weekend or other forms of face masks!



BLT class shared pictures of each other from college days or senior years. I got to admit the girls seemed so mature and ready to handle the world and the guys, well, the guys just looked goofy!

The Journey class has had in-person meetings at Shillito Park while the BLT class has met in the backyards of members in groups of 10 for a meal. Social distancing, bring your own chairs and meal of course, face masks encouraged.

The Young Professionals have been meeting on Sundays before the 11 am service as well as checking in with each other via emails during the week.

Mike Powers has been streaming his Foundations Class at 10 am on Sunday mornings open to everyone. He has heard from not only his class being in attendance but many other classes as well. He has heard from strangers in other states and from families that do not usually attend a Sunday School class. What a wonder ministry Mike is sharing not only with us but with the nation!

In addition to all of this you can join in community prayer three times a day via zoom. Links can be found on our website.

Yes, they might have tried to pave paradise, but until what we had was gone we didn't know what else was available! That parking lot can be used for a lot more than just parking cars.

So, are you missing being together and in community? If so, any of the above-mentioned classes would love to have you join them. The easiest way to join is to contact Carol or other pastors of our church and get the zoom link to the group you are interested in. I can assure you that you will be welcomed with open arms and virtual hugs! I can't wait to see ya.

Dulaney Wood,  
Downtown Lay Leader



### Church in the Time of Covid

When the pandemic reached our shores and we moved into Holy Week, one of my first moves was to the Psalms of Lament. These Psalms greet us in our disorientation and then help us reorient towards the God of the Universe. I've lived in this idea of disorientation and reorientation since then.

We have had to adjust almost everything about how we as a community live out our discipleship. Yet, at the same time, it has helped us to clarify and simplify much of what we do. I've asked two folks to share brief testimonies about areas that they have found meaningful in their discipleship journey during this season: our rhythm of daily prayer, and our push to covenant groups.

Chad Foster,  
Andover Pastor



### Dr. Jan Colbert on Daily Prayer

What a blessing the Zoom prayer meetings (8 am, Chad; noon, Carol; 9 pm, Todd) are to me and the others who gather remotely to share joys and sorrows! It has been a privilege to make new friends with folks from the other campuses while surrounding each other with prayer day after day. Especially during this disorienting time, I find these times of fellowship and prayer so heartwarming and comforting. I hope you will join us!

To connect, go to [1stumc.org](http://1stumc.org), scroll to the bottom, and click on the link for the appropriate time.



# ANDOVER

## Community

### Kathy Edwards on Covenant Groups

Acts tells us that it is our duty to be active Christians. But for many of us, we rely on our pastor to preach, teach and evangelize. I affectionately call this pew-sitting. For years I was an active pew-sitter. I attended church regularly and felt quite accomplished that I could pull it together and make it to Sunday service with an infant. When my son was old enough to participate in Sunday School, I found a class of my own, mostly filled with moms and dads who, like me, needed a place to be for the next hour. And by no accident at all, that small group connection has proven to be invaluable over the years. I can independently study a Scripture and fully understand its meaning, only to be humbled by someone else's unique interpretation. This participation got me out of the pew, and I became an active listener, eager to hear God's hidden message written just for me.

Actively listening, supporting and encouraging others has strengthened my relationship with God. So, after months of ignoring Pastor Chad's not-so-subtle hint that I lead a Covenant group, I find myself exploring a new path on my faith journey. And to be honest, it wasn't something I wanted to do. My two boys are in college and elementary school. I work full time. I'm over programmed! Who has time for another weekly meeting?

Then enters COVID-19 and my schedule came to a near halt. Life's uncertainties introduced a desire to dig deeper and grow my relationship with God. And hey, I can't even sit in the pew now! I found myself on the phone with Jennifer House, another Covenant recruit, "What will this group even do? Are you doing this? How can we do this? Okay, Chad, let's do this!"

And to no surprise, God perfectly engineered my group of seven. We are in different stages of life, have different backgrounds, different views, and by design are learning so much from one another. We are entering our second month of weekly Zoom calls and have explored how we experience Grace, avoid evil, and have reflected on choices that have impacted our health and happiness. We rarely have a time that all seven can join, and wouldn't you know it, God masterfully brings the right people to that week's topic of conversation.

As a Church, I cannot think of a better way to grow disciples and fulfill our mission of becoming more like Christ, than growing Covenant groups. If our duty is to be active Christians, we must be more than pew-sitters. If you want to participate in weekly conversation about how to be a better Christian, no preparation required, no expectations and absolutely no guilt allowed, sign up to join or lead a Covenant Group. You won't regret it!



# FINANCIAL UPDATE

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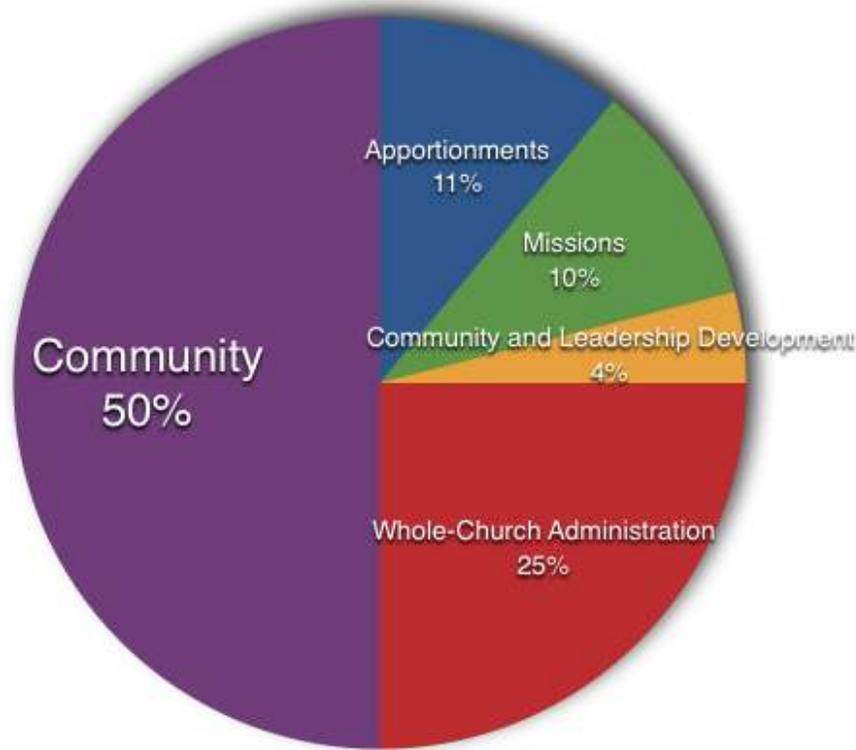
I think we can all say 2020 has been anything but normal. When planning for this year our leadership teams, in conjunction with the Finance Committee, made big plans for the coming year. However, here we are over halfway through the year and nothing has unfolded as anyone expected. Yet, as I look at our Finances and Community Budgets, I can't help but feel grateful. In a year when we have spent more time physically apart than together you have continued to support the Church. In spite of everything that has transpired this year, your continued faithfulness and generosity during this unprecedented time has helped each community continue to operate under a new normal. Thank you! I don't know if that can be said enough, Thank You!

In addition to closely monitoring our expenses, we have pursued another avenue of funding that was made available due to the pandemic. The Payroll Protection Program (PPP) Loan, which was part of the CARES Act, provided funding for small business loans, which can be forgiven if used for payroll costs, utilities, mortgage interest, and rent/lease payments. The Finance and Trustees Committee brought a motion before a Called Charge Conference in April to apply for and receive a \$130,300 PPP loan. This loan has provided a small, short-term measure of financial stability and allowed us to continue to pay our hourly employees who have not been able to work due to the closure. We have been continuing to monitor the PPP guidance and are working with our bank to ensure we are able to seek 100% forgiveness.

Between your continued faithfulness, the PPP Loan, savings passed on from the Conference and other savings from changes in building use, we have been able to maintain operations and virtual programming, continue to pay our apportionments, and maintain our commitment to our mission partners in Lexington and around the world during an extraordinary time. Going forward, we continue to look for ways to be good stewards of your tithes and offerings, recognizing that the future is more uncertain than ever.

As always, you can give in many ways at First Church: mailing a gift to the church office, giving online (<https://1stumc.churchcenter.com/giving>) or transferring stock to First Church. If you have any questions regarding giving, please do not hesitate to contact me, [jennifer@1stumc.org](mailto:jennifer@1stumc.org), or Ryan Barr, [ryan@1stumc.org](mailto:ryan@1stumc.org).

Jennifer Gibson,  
Business Administrator



# FINANCIAL MODEL

Every time you give to the budget, you are supporting five different areas:

## Community

50% of all that you give stays in your local worshipping community (Andover, Downtown, or Offerings) to be used for ministry in that setting.

## Whole-Church Administration

25% goes toward church wide needs. This includes our Business Administrator, Office Manager/Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Administrative Assistants and other staffing. This also includes our insurance, all of our printing and copying expenses, office supplies, the costs associated with Rokeby Hall, maintenance on our bus and vans, and much more.

## Missions

10% goes immediately to our missions fund. The list of missions this fund supports is long and growing.

## Apportionments

11% goes to the Kentucky United Methodist Church to support our inter-connectional ministries. Some of the special ways these funds are used include support of ministries like Aldersgate Camp, Wesley Foundations on college campuses, and new church starts, along with a global evangelism effort and outreaches like Imagine No Malaria.

## Community and Leadership Development

4% goes towards funding new communities of First UMC and towards investing in both lay and clergy leadership through the Discipleship Intensive and First Church Fellows.

**In contrast to budget giving, 100% of every dollar you give in a special offering to a capital campaign goes to that specific purpose.**

# FAMILY NEWS

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## BAPTISMS

### ABBHEY HELSBY

daughter of Michael and Hannah, was baptized on December 29, 2019. She and her parents are part of the Downtown community.

### LIVY RUTH HELSBY

daughter of Michael and Hannah, was baptized on December 29, 2019. She and her parents are part of the Downtown community.

### PETER KOOIMAN

son of Jason Kooiman and Abigail Van Patter, was baptized on February 23, 2020. He and his parents are part of the Andover community.

### CAROLINE SCHUMACHER

daughter of Katherine and Carter, was baptized on January 19, 2020. She and her parents are part of the Downtown community.

### SADIE SCHUMACHER

daughter of Katherine and Carter, was baptized on January 19, 2020. She and her parents are part of the Downtown community.

### CATE THORBERRY

daughter of Michael and Abbie, was baptized on June 14, 2020. She and her parents are part of the Downtown community.

## BIRTHS

### CELIA LEWIS BROWN

daughter of Hannah and Andrew, was born on June 30, 2020. She, her parents, and siblings Ellie Kate and Rhett are part of the Downtown community.

### HENRY WILES FOZZARD

son of Drew and Sarah, was born on April 30, 2020. He and his parents are part of the Downtown community.

## BIRTHS

### PHILIP FORTNEY HARDEN

son of Jay and Mary Ellen, was born on March 5, 2020. He, his parents, and big sisters Rory and Betty are part of the Downtown community.

### PETER KOOIMAN

son of Jason Kooiman and Abigail Van Patter, was born on November 27, 2019. He and his parents are part of the Andover community.

### GEORGIA ROSE MOORE

daughter of Stephen and Rachel, was born on November 26, 2019. She, her parents, and siblings Sadie and Boaz are part of the Offerings community.

### RIVER JOSEPHINE WILSON

daughter of Stephanie McKinney and JR Wilson, was born on May 26, 2020. She, her parents, and big brother Ben are part of the Downtown community.

## LOVINGLY REMEMBERED

### IRVING BELL

Downtown community, July 5, 2020

### GINNY DENMARK

Downtown community, April 25, 2020

### JEFF MILLER

Downtown community, November 26, 2019

### JOE NALLY

Andover community, March 23, 2020

### DR. JAMES ORR

Downtown community, December 31, 2019

### COLEMAN WHITE

Downtown community, January 1, 2020

### DR. BILL WITT

Downtown community, June 20, 2020

# NEW MEMBERS



**Jim and Montell  
Buckles**  
Downtown



**Robert  
Burton**  
Downtown



**Marjorie Grove  
Easley**  
Downtown



**Jeff and Sherri  
Fultz**  
Downtown



**Josh and Susan  
Gordon**  
Downtown



**Jason Kooiman and  
Abigail Van Patter**  
Andover



**Tauras and Susann  
Liubinskas**  
Downtown



**Bill and Betsy  
Pickens**  
Downtown



**Bryan, Laura, Wesley  
and William Timm**  
Andover



**Joyce  
Wilmoth**  
Downtown

# CONGRATULATIONS!

After 25 years of faithful service to the United Methodist Church as an Ordained Deacon in Kentucky Annual Conference, Rev. Martina Ockerman retired in June. She received her call to ordained ministry from the private sector three decades ago and never looked back. Surrounded by her supportive family and a host of mentors and colleagues, Martina served appointments in the Kentucky Annual Conference at Nathaniel Mission, The Rock/La Roca (now Embrace UMC), First United Methodist Church of Lexington, and most recently with the United Way. While retiring from the Kentucky Annual Conference, Martina will continue her work with the United Way serving our community with her gifts and passion. Congratulations, Martina, on your journey of service.



*"The congregation of First Church has been the inspiration, encouragement, and support on my journey of responding to God's call to ordained ministry. I will be forever grateful for your unconditional love and spiritual friendship. I pray that together we can continue to transform the lives of those we serve in the name of Jesus Christ."*

Rev. Martina Ockerman

# ENDOWMENT FOUNDATION

## 2019 Annual Report

The FUMC Endowment Foundation Board of Stewards is pleased to provide to the congregation the 2019 Annual Report of the Foundation's investments value and performance and funding for church programs.

Created in 2001, the Foundation accepts, manages, and distributes funds to promote and support existing and future programs at First Church. **The purpose of the Foundation is to enhance the mission and outreach of our church beyond the annual operating budget.** Foundation funds are entirely separate and distinct from the funds that support the day-to-day operating budget of the church.

In 2019 the **Foundation was able to approve and distribute funds to the church in the amount of \$52,418 for programs, activities and projects.** Each fund has its own distinct policy for determining the distribution amount as a percentage of the fund's value. **Since its inception, the Foundation has distributed \$974,046 back to the church.**

After an initial investment of \$356,000 in 2001, the generosity of our members and solid management by our investment committee, **the Foundation portfolio has grown to \$1,246,324 by the end of 2019.** The funds realized a **27.96% return for the year.** The Foundation continues to invest in equities for long-term growth.

Please take an Endowment Foundation brochure located in convenient locations at all three campuses to learn more about the FUMC Endowment Foundation and Heritage Society. You can also go to our website, [www.1stumc.org](http://www.1stumc.org) (click on Giving and scroll down to FUMC Endowment Foundation) to learn how you can participate.

Adam Peterson,  
Board of Stewards Chair



# First United Methodist Church Endowment Foundation, Inc.

December 31, 2019

## Investment Position

### Mutual Funds

S&P 500 Index ETF (IVV)	\$270,875
Nasdaq 100 Index ETF (QQQ)	\$464,978
Core S&P US Vlu ETF (USV)	\$188,241
Kraneshares TR Boser (KBA)	\$148,421
DBX ETF Trust Xtrack (ASHR)	\$149,741
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Total ETF's	\$1,222,256

### Cash Holdings

TD Ameritrade money market	\$24,068
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Total Cash Holdings	\$24,068
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**Total Investment Position** **\$1,246,324**

## 2019 Funds Distributions and End-of-Year Values

Fund	Approved Distribution	Actual Distribution	Fund Balance 12/31/19
Mission Fund	\$3,632	\$3,632	\$222,083
Church Needs Fund	\$2,891	*\$0	\$3,636
Bachmeyer-Stilz/Smith Parsonage Fund	**\$0	**\$0	\$280,970
Scholarship/Fellows Fund	\$5,130	\$5,130	\$123,381
Nancy Roszell Stephen Ministries Fund	\$6,439	\$5,000	\$23,960
Church History Fund	\$5,487	*\$0	\$6,902
Albin C. Whitworth Music Fund	\$5,694	\$5,694	\$346,329
All Equities Church Fund	***\$0	***\$0	\$13,557
Administrative Fund	\$1,098	\$1,098	\$355
New Communities Fund	\$1,085	\$1,085	\$26,083
Judy Strickler Hoffman Memorial Fund	**\$0	**\$0	\$11,822
Infrastructure Support Fund			\$183,773
Downtown Community	\$24,029	\$24,029	
Offerings Community	\$6,750	\$6,750	
Unallocated Asset Fund	*\$0	*\$0	\$3,473
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<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$62,235</b>	<b>\$52,418</b>	<b>\$1,246,324</b>

\*\$0 since not requested or hold for special needs      \*\*\*\$0 2018 balance less than \$150,000

\*\*\$0 since 2018 fund balance was negative

# WITNESS

## Discipleship Intensive A Deeper Dive

A wise man once said “There are no accidents.” How true it was in my case. My move to Lexington 5 years ago, finding myself caring for two parents in my home as a change in occupation, finding a church home, bible study, becoming part of a small group...things just fell into place. Somewhere in this process with readings especially from Richard Foster’s *Celebration of Discipline*, and others, this concept of Spiritual Formation, hearing God, being in His presence, through the disciplines of prayer, study, fasting and others somehow made me realize that there was more to learn, more to do. There was slowly, ever gently forming a desire to learn more, grow more, and this series of classes seemed to be a way to start.

And so it began—several books, projects, a syllabus, and deadlines. All the makings of a “class.” But spoiler alert: here was not the lecture, outline, grading scale or finals of my past. Oh to be sure there was facilitating, leading of study techniques, things to be learned. There were projects, assignments and timeframes. We dove into books (some tougher than others), and projects like any other class. Initially, I attacked it all in my usual way, methodically reading and working through assignments. My husband said I was taking the assignments to a whole new level (not necessarily a positive thing), but in truth I was engaged and didn’t know how NOT to give it my all.

As the class has evolved, I have realized several things. First, the effort I made was proportional to the discoveries I made. I learned things about myself weekly, not just solely because of the texts, but because of the dive I made into my heart and soul with that information.



Secondly, the group think tank gave the words new meaning, punctuated thoughts, and gave camaraderie in the difficult assignments. I had as many “Aha” moments from them as I had on my own, sometimes more. I was awed by stories and struggles of life’s journey and realized I was not alone. We all want to understand our purpose, and how to proceed. There is a call. Though not entirely finished at this point, I look back and realize how much I have learned and grown. I wasn’t sure I was “getting it” as I was going along. Then I am reminded of a quote from one of the books by Os Guinness. “We live life forward, but understand it backward.” Perhaps it’s true when we take a deeper dive.

**Holly Mattingly**

*We are currently forming our next cohort. If you are interested in participating, please contact your community pastor.*



**Caroline Dudek**



**Parker Hodge**



**Betsy Mullins**



**Brendley Nathaniel**



**Melisa Nelson**



**Tanner Peck**



**Sam Scott**



**Richard Stinetorf**



**Claire Tippey**



**Kathryn Wells**

First United Methodist Church  
200 W. High Street  
Lexington, KY 40507

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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Permit No. 5



Members of the Downtown community share smiles and have quick visits as they drive through to receive communion elements.