



SAILING INTO A BRIGHT NEW DAY

2023 Stewardship Booklet Vol.4

40 Days of Prayer for Our Church.



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Into the Deep...

2023 Stewardship Theme Verse: When [Jesus] finished teaching, he said to Simon, “Push out into deep water and let your nets out for a catch.” (Luke 5:4, The Message)

We are kicking off our stewardship season on **October 8 (Stewardship Kick-Off)**. We say “stewardship season” because there is no other way to delineate it. As you know, “stewardship” is not an annual financial campaign, but a way of Christian life. As we begin the stewardship season, we invite each and every member to pray for our church and its ministries for 40 days. We know you have had 40 days of prayer for Lent or other occasions, but have you prayed for 40 days straight for our church and our ministries? We are calling all of you to do that. In our membership vow, prayer is a big part of it! This is a part of our stewardship campaign! I hope this guide will help you pray more specifically and fervently.

It is also a time for you to reexamine your financial gifts, service, attendance/presence, and witness to our faith. On **November 12 (Commitment Sunday)**, we will bring our commitment cards and celebrate God’s many blessings and our faithful responses with a meal with a special video presentation.

As we strive for excellence in life, that is, in schools, work, personal endeavors, let us also strive for excellence in faith. Jesus calls us to go deeper in our faith and in our stewardship. Let us respond to his beckoning.

Rev. Dr. Millie L. Kim

Dan Williams, Stewardship Captain

Day 22

Scriptures: The greatest among you will be your servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. (Mathew 23: 11-12)

Dear Friends,

Jesus challenges us to move from society's norm. To Jesus, greatness comes from serving and by giving yourself to help others. Jesus gave us the greatest examples of what it means to be a servant. When God calls you, he will equip you. You will begin to focus on others and not yourself.

Once I said yes to working with The Kenya Project, my life and the life of my family changed. God has given David and me the opportunity to serve in Kenya and see the building of Mountain Park Academy from the ground up. Mama Robi was given the vision by God to build a school in the tribal war-torn country of Kenya. She knew that the change within that community could only come through the education of its children. Through the first \$1200.00 donation from Mountain Park UMC, the first mission team from this church laid the foundation of the first school. There is now a lower school (grades pre K to 8 th grade) and the secondary school (high school) 9 th through 12 th which was the original school. A trade school was completed in 2019. A well for clean water was dug for the school and the surrounding community. There are now 4 children's homes for orphans, a chicken project to serve one to 2 eggs per week for protein, and a cow project for milk for their daily morning gruel. We have seen children graduate from high school and complete college or a trade school. Some students have children of their own now. The people of this community are our second family. God has been so faithful not only to us but the people of this community.

When we joined this church, we faithfully promised to participate in its ministries through our prayers, our presence, our gifts, and our services so that God would be glorified through Jesus Christ. You are blessed ten thousand times by saying yes when God calls you to serve in any way. Prayerfully examine your financial gifts to God and see what God can do with it.

Asante!

Ann and David Kennedy

Pray for our brothers and sisters in Kenya and students at Mountain Park Academy!

Day 23

Scripture: Give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap, for the measure you give will be the measure you get back. (Luke 6:38)

Dear Friends,

Have you ever been sitting in a worship service and feel your heart beating a little faster because of what was said? I remember being at church camp, at the evening service, when I was in junior high school. A call was given for anyone who wanted to accept Christ as their Savior. My heart was thumping and I knew God was speaking to me, telling me it was time to profess my belief and acceptance of His love. Since that time, I have known that when I feel that sensation, my Father is calling me. I realize I have responded to that feeling the most when I've been asked to serve or give in some way. The liturgist might be reading all the opportunities to volunteer in our church – and there are so many! Or the pastor might be sharing about a family whose needs are great. The Sunday School leader is asking for members to consider teaching. This month, Rev. Millie is preaching on stewardship and our obeying God's instruction to tithe our first fruits.

I have learned that my response to the Holy Spirit's prompting to use the fortunes and talents that the Lord has blessed me with is far more rewarding than the fortunes and talents themselves. Trusting God to use me and what I can give to glorify Him brings me closer to Him. Try listening to your heart. You will hear God's voice there, urging you to follow Him.

Marla Scroggs

Pray for Edita and all those who care for our church.

Day 24

Scripture: But those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:31)

Dear Friends,

Back in 2019, I was recovering from several traumatic losses. My best friend died suddenly on her way home from a church mission trip. I fell on a work trip and fractured my elbow. Around the same time, my family suffered death and loss as well. I was weary, worn, and sad. I was hanging out with Job. One day I looked up at my wall and saw with new eyes a small plaque that had been given to me by the women of a local church during a retreat. It reads: "Remember who you wanted to be." YES, I felt in my bones, seeing it as if for the first time. How, I wondered, how will I do this? Suddenly I remembered the excited voice of a friend who went to the public media forum, Moth Story Hour and told her true story.

Later that same week, without telling anyone, I signed up to tell a story at the Moth Story Hour held in a warehouse in downtown Houston, the largest venue of its type in the country. It was a new and scary context for me. After a lifetime of public speaking, I was surprisingly terrified but anchored as I told a true story that mattered to me and might to others. Unbeknownst to me some church friends were in the crowd. They celebrated my courage, told me how it impacted their own journey, and sent me pictures they took that still travel with me to remind me of how my voice shook as I told my story of grief and hope.

Sometimes in life, it feels like we as a church and a culture are back where I was in 2019. Grieving, weary, aching, frightened: asking for the way forward to new life rooted in abundance that flows from the heart of God.

The practice of inviting a church community to tell our story is life-giving as part of cultivating a culture of generosity. It is a way to follow as disciples of Jesus whose life and ministry center around telling stories. I hope that in this Stewardship season you are excited to open your hearts to generosity by telling the true story of how, who, what, where, and why God has called resurrection life into being in you, in our ministry, and in our church.

Rev. Dr. Rose Niles

Pray for Grant and Brenda Rowe.

Day 25

Scripture: Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear so that I return safely to my father’s household, then the LORD will be my God and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God’s house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth. (Genesis 28:20-22)

Dear Friends,

These are the most recent stats from Nonprofitsource.com, Christianity Today, Giving USA, Philanthropy Daily, etc.

- In America, 17% of families reduced the total annual amount they give to their local church.
- 17% of Americans tithe on a regular basis.
- Christians in the United States offer an average church giving of 2.5% of their net income. In comparison, during the Great Depression, Christians gave 3.3%.
- Of those who tithe regularly, 77% give 11% to 20% (or sometimes even more!) of their income.
- 37% of regular church attendees don’t give money to church.
- Average giving by adults at US Protestant churches is about \$17 a week ([Health Research Funding](#))
- Regular attendees give \$1,737 more per year than those who attend less than once a month ([Philanthropy Daily](#)) However, studies suggest that attendance frequency correlates with higher giving. Those who regularly attend services give an average of \$1,737 more per year than those who attend less than once a month.
- Churches in the US received 27% of all donations in 2021, down from 56% in 1980, 70% in 1954.

Pray for all who are grieving the loss of their loved ones as we celebrate All Saints Day!

Day 26

Scripture: Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies.(1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

Dear Friends:

I enthusiastically say, “God is my salvation, and my dogs are my health.” I love my dogs and love to cuddle with them, but I walk them religiously. To tell you the truth, they walk me religiously. Anyhow, it is a win-win because they stay healthy, and I stay healthy. I also exercise on a regular basis. Yes, it is for my health and for my benefit, but I also do it for you and for our church.

Being in the ministry for 25 years, I have seen many clergy friends have chronic health issues or poor health in general. I did a DNA test a few years ago, and it revealed that I do not have any bad genes. No cancer, no Parkinson’s, no Alzheimer’s, no auto immune, etc., which does not mean that I will not ever develop any of the diseases. It means when I do, it is either environmental or my fault (my lifestyle choices)! Some of our health issues, we have no control over, I understand. But we only have this body that God has given to us, and it is important that we are good stewards of our bodies. When I take care of my body, it is good for my spouse, good for our children, and good for our church! It is a win-win-win!

Being a good steward starts with you and your body!

Rev. Dr. Millie L. Kim

Pray for our Audio/Visual volunteers!

Day 27

Scripture: For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything; the only thing that counts is faith working through love. (Galatians 5:6- John Wesley's favorite Bible verse)

Dear Friends,

Here are some facts about the United Methodist Church. These facts help remind us where we came from.

1. John Wesley wrote one of the all-time bestselling medical texts.

Wesley was deeply convicted that God is concerned about our earthly life as well as our heavenly one. To that end, he wrote a medical text for the everyday person titled *Primitive Physick*. Many of Wesley's tips on healthy living remain widely accepted, including, "drink lots of water" and "eat your biggest meal in the morning."

2. John Wesley coined the term "agree to disagree."

Over the years, Wesley had serious theological differences with another popular pastor named George Whitefield. Though they both argued passionately, Wesley reflected on these differences in a memorial sermon for Whitefield by saying: "There are many doctrines of a less essential nature. ... In these, we may think and let think; we may 'agree to disagree.'"

3. John Wesley rode far enough on horseback to circle the earth 10 times.

Wesley rode 250,000 miles on horseback! He was convinced that it was important for him personally to spread the gospel through relationships and continue to grow closer to God in those relationships.

4. Wesley taught that doubt was part of faith.

Wesley believed that having questions about one's faith should not be disparaged. Doubts are essential to making any belief system one's own. Having questions does not mean that you don't believe.

5. "Methodist" was originally a derogatory term.

Though the origins of the term "Methodist" are in dispute, but it is clear that it was originally used by outsiders to mock John Wesley and his early societies because of their dedication to following a "method" for growing closer to God. Wesley ended up accepting the term, considering it a positive descriptor of their movement.

Pray for 43,409 UMC churches and 13 million United Methodists in the world.

Day 28

Scripture: Yet I am writing you a new commandment that is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. Whoever says, "I am in the light," while hating a brother or sister, is still in the darkness. Whoever loves a brother or sister abides in the light, and in such a person there is no cause for stumbling. But whoever hates a brother or sister is in the darkness, walks in the darkness, and does not know the way to go, because the darkness has brought on blindness. (1 John 2:8-11- from John Wesley's favorite book in the Bible)

Dear Friends,

Here are more facts about the United Methodist Church. These facts help remind us who we are and where we came from.

6. Wesley counseled people to "eat a little less than you desire."

Staying slim was far from Wesley's goal, though he did weigh in around 128 pounds. This was not the result of dieting, but rather of a practice to ensure that people were not ruled by their natural desires, but exercising control over them.

7. Wesley never intended to split from the Church of England.

However, when the revolution happened in the American colonies, most of the Anglican priests returned home. Faced with the fact that none of the Methodists in the colonies could receive the sacraments, Wesley ordained ministers whom he sent to do the same in America. That act was the beginning of the separation that formed the Methodist Church in America.

8. Wesley taught you could not be a Christian on your own.

He said that we needed to be involved in "social holiness." Though some often think this term is synonymous with "social justice," its meaning is quite different. Wesley believed we could only grow as Christians in community.

9. Methodism grew from four to 132,000 members in Wesley's lifetime.

The beginning of Methodism was a group of four who called themselves the "holy club" at Oxford. When Wesley died in 1791, he left behind a movement with 72,000 members in the British Isles and 60,000 in America.

Trivia(But Not So Trivial): Did you know that the United Methodist Church (UMCOR) was the first non-governmental organization to go to Ground Zero after the September 11 attack? The United Methodist Church donated over \$20 million dollars toward the cause through our UMCOR Offering.

Pray for the unity of our church.

Ways to Give:

In Person:

During Worship Service

10:45 -Contemporary Worship (Family Life Center)

11:05 -Traditional Worship (Sanctuary)

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By Mail:

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Online:

www.mountainparkumc.org/give



Text:

Simply text “give2mpumc” to the number 73256

Legacy Giving:

mountainparkumc.org/legacy



