



# First United Methodist Church

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Dear Members and Friends of FUMC,

Jesus told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 27:18-20). That is the mission of the United Methodist Church: To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Our world and denomination are in turmoil, and while we are uncertain of the future, we know that Jesus will be with us always. Despite the many unknowns, one thing is sure: *There is always ministry to be done!*

Pastor Allen Stanton, in his book "Reclaiming Rural: Building Thriving Rural Congregations," says that thriving rural churches 1) have a clear theological identity, 2) have a commitment to their community, and 3) practice good stewardship. We at Warren First can claim all of those. Our budget process includes the question, "What is God calling us to do?" Our budget should support our vision of how to carry out the mission to make disciples.

First UMC has a long history of serving others in the Warren community. In addition to financial support for local ministries such as the Salvation Army, House of Hope, Women's Care Center, and The Crossing, our members are involved in ministry with them. We are good stewards of our church building by welcoming community events such as our Preschool program, Scouts, musical group rehearsals and concerts, Christian counseling, and senior lunch fellowship. We also help our neighbors in need through the Samaritan Fund. The United Methodist denomination is connectional, which means we support UM ministries in our Conference and beyond. A few UM ministries currently supported by First UMC include Eastbrook Mission Barn, Ruth M. Smith Center, Olmsted Manor, Wesley Woods, and the Kane District Ramp Ministry. Again, members of our congregation are actively involved in these ministries.

Moving forward with the mission and ministries of First United Methodist Church will cost more due to the current economic situation. Nevertheless, we strive to continue our vital ministry and services to the Warren County Community and be able to meet other needs as we become aware of them. Please prayerfully consider what you will be able to contribute in the next year, not only financially but with your time and talents as well. We want to continue our legacy of ministry and service. As Jesus said in Matthew 25:40, "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'"

Please return the enclosed 2023 stewardship campaign pledge card by November 20, 2022. In addition, if you are interested in online giving, you can visit our website at [www.firstumwarren.com](http://www.firstumwarren.com) and sign up or contact the church office for more information.

May God's Blessings be upon you All,

FUMC Finance and Stewardship Committee

In Consultation,

Reverend Dr. Mark E. Hecht