

THE SPIRE



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END-OF-YEAR BUDGET

Heather Rhoda, Bookkeeper



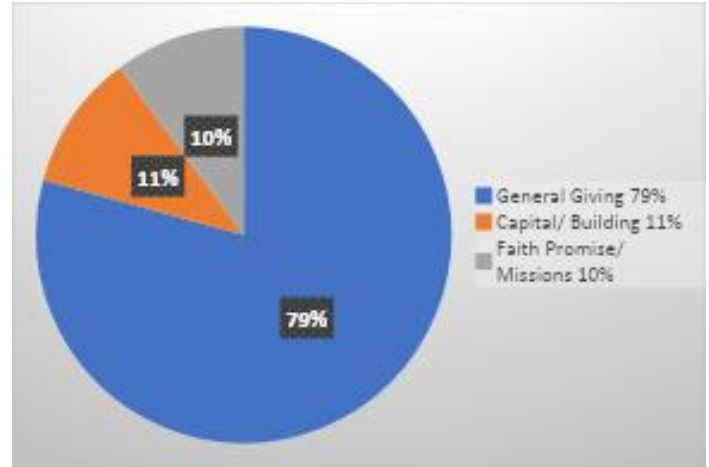
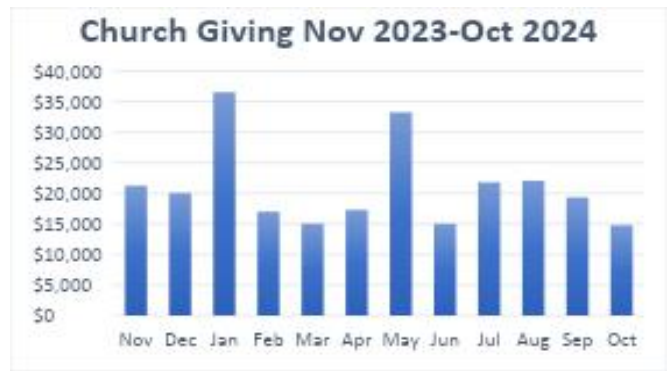
Greetings! As many of you may have heard, in April this year I was hired to be the new bookkeeper for GUMC. It has been such a privilege to work with Pastor Josh, Margaret, and several of you in the congregation. I currently attend St. Paul the Apostle Evangelical Orthodox Church. My husband, Alan, and I have two beautiful girls: Janelle and Hope. I love learning languages and have interpreted ASL for Mount Pleasant services and lived in Germany and Austria for a year. I was

also a violin performance and psychology major in college and became a music therapist for a while, so I play a variety of instruments (not nearly as well as I used to). Feel free to stop in to say hi in the Finance Office.

From November 2023 through October 2024, this generous church has given \$7,862 to the Trustee’s Building & Capital fund and \$5,995 to Faith Promise, which supports a variety of missions in the church such as the kitchen ministry, The Shepherd’s Table, Holy Cow fundraiser for Greenwood Schools, and much more. The Tithes and Offerings during that 365-day period reached almost \$263,000, though our basic overhead was just over \$295,000. GUMC has struggled to meet expenses without drawing down other emergency funds, but I’m so glad to report that the 2024 year-to-date givings as of mid-November 2024 have surpassed the entire year of 2023. Additionally, it is anticipated that our expenses will go down by at least \$16,000 in 2025, even with adding on tithing to the Indiana Conference and to our District.

However, these numbers do not include payroll for in-office staff. Some of the funds from the recent sale of stocks that were tithed by a generous member to the church back in the 1990’s is being used to supplement the payroll for in-office staff.

Regarding the tithing to the General Fund, the Faith Promise Missions Fund, and the Building Fund, below are two graphs of church giving from November 2023 to October 2024. This date range was chosen due to this article is being written in mid-November.



Giving to GUMC General Fund, YTD 2024		\$230,662
Total expenses anticipated for 2024 (not including in-office staff)		\$276,840
Remaining need for 2024 to meet anticipated expenses		\$46,178

We are grateful that members in the past set up extra emergency resources to help support the church through the challenging times experienced in the recent past. These special resources are endowments that have been set up to support specific and defined needs. It is projected that, if financial and membership growth continues on the same trajectory, we will not need to draw nearly as much from the emergency funds in 2025.

I am truly excited to see what the Lord has in store in growing this church and all of its wonderful ministries to the Greenwood community! Thank you all for your generosity. Often, we don’t know how important Tithes and Offerings are to the life of the church, but please know that the whole church is very thankful for your steadfast support. It is a big building to upkeep. We are incredibly grateful for the Lord’s provision, for members in the past who foresaw and prepared for possible church challenges, and for the Lord bringing a pastor to the church who developed a vision with the Leadership Team to pull the church out of the dire financial challenges and back into a once-again thriving community of believers. Thank you for allowing me to be part of this new chapter.

A YEAR WITH THE PRESCHOOL

Brittany Ryan, Interim Preschool Director



Hi, I'm Brittany Ryan, interim Preschool Director!

We've had such a great start to the preschool year! The past 3.5 months have been filled with writing names, learning letter sounds, making new friends and learning of God's love. The kiddos have leaned into routines and are amazing. Field trips have included Waterman's pumpkin patch, where we got to experience a hayride, pick

pumpkins at the patch and feed animals! We visited Kid City at Greenwood Community Center in November. There was a lot of climbing, building, "grocery shopping" and art making!!

December will be equally joyous as we teach the kids the true meaning of Christmas and all about the birth of baby Jesus. The preschool will join the children of the congregation on Sunday, December 15 to sing Christmas songs. We will have birthday parties for baby Jesus, along with gifts from the teachers in class before going on Christmas break on December 20.

Upon returning from break in January, we will jump right into Pre-k students learning to write their last names, making snow-filled crafts, and



a field trip to the Greenwood library. We're having so much fun, learning and exploring and looking forward to a great second half of the year beginning in January! Anytime you're in the church, pop in to say hello!



HOLY COW

Mary Kay Anthony, Christie Vleck

On October 25, the Missions Committee held its annual Holy Cow – It's Spaghetti Dinner. We served over 200 meals and raised \$2,056 to divide among Northeast, Isom, Southwest, and Westwood Elementary Schools. Principal Dave Ennis of Westwood Elementary sent us this message:

"The Greenwood Elementary Schools are extremely thankful for the generosity of Greenwood United Methodist Church. The funds are a blessing to each school's Angel Fund. We use these funds to help students with the unforeseen challenges that our students have to navigate. We have used these funds to help students whose families have been displaced, need financial assistance with clothing, to go on field trips, and with other essentials to help them be successful. We are grateful for the partnership and appreciate your members who support Greenwood Schools."

Holy Cow volunteers, please accept my apologies for not getting thank you cards out to those who helped with the Holy Cow dinner. We would never have gotten this done without you. — Christie Vleck



ILLUMINATION-SANCTUARY DOORS

Barbara Richard, Christie Vleck



Ralph Canter always loved a new project. When Linda, his wife, attended a Town Hall meeting Pastor Lemons mentioned a need to improve

the sanctuary doors. Linda had wanted to do something in Ralph's memory and knew this would be the perfect project. A committee was selected which consisted of Ted Trumbauer, Jorg Stachel, and Christie Vleck at the helm.

Following research and many phone calls, Christie contacted All-In-1 Renovations and Camden Stained Glass. Together these two companies refurbished new life into our sanctuary doors. They stripped MANY layers of paint and stained the doors a beautiful brown, and Kevin with Camden Stained Glass designed and installed the beautiful design of "Illumination" for the new windows in the doors.

"Illumination": The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light...

In the beginning, God creates light and that light shines throughout all of the story. Light can be found in a column of fire leading the Israelites through the wilderness, and found in the lamp in the Tabernacle. The wisdom literature of Scripture reminds us that God's word is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. Ultimately, Jesus himself is the light of the world, and whoever follows Christ will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.

May you walk in the Light, trust in the Light, and point others to the Light.

A plaque has also been installed by Charles Biggs next to the doors to commemorate the life of Ralph Canter. Thank you, Linda, for sharing your vision with Greenwood United Methodist Church.



COOKIE WALK

Julie Penoff, Margaret Stivers

One of United Women in Faith's annual fundraisers is the Cookie Walk! Each year we decorate Suter Hall and invite local non-profit vendors to raise funds for their own local missions.



This year we had an amazing team of volunteers bake cookies, greet the community, and make sure there was a constant flow of sweets for the community. Every year we have a line of people ready to shop for Christmas gifts for friends and family while also purchasing all of their favorite cookies baked by wonderful volunteers who donate them. After all of their shopping, they were able to sit, relax, and enjoy the cafe.

This year we raised about \$1,500 for UWF to allow us to support local missions in our community. UWF appreciates all of the volunteers and local non-profits that committed their time and talents to make this event possible. We are also grateful for our friends and family at GUMC and our community for always supporting us!



LITURGY OF ADVENT

Rev. Joshua Lemons

When we lived in Texas, we had two seasons: hot and less hot. But here, in the promised land of Indiana, we get all four seasons pretty equally. Just when you are sick and tired of summer, autumn pops up. And when you grow tired and weary of the wind and pumpkins, winter blows in.



Winter is a double-sided sword. There are few things that match that first snow fall and few things that match the crisp cool air and silence of the season. It's eerily beautiful. On one side of things, you have the cold beauty of it all (at least I think so), and on the other side, you have the contrast of how... well, how do I say this...dead everything looks. The trees are bare of leaves. The sky is gloomy gray. We almost forget what sunshine and 80-plus-degree temps feels like! But there is a time for everything, and a season for all things, and the season we find ourselves in is one of preparation.

I'm reminded of the dichotomy during this season. I'm reminded that Advent is a time of preparation — yet God is here among us! I'm reminded that winter is a bleak, cold time in the calendar, and yet it is filled with beauty! My prayer for us during this Advent season is that we would not get caught up in the hustle and bustle of Christmas, but that we would slow down and take time to prepare ourselves and our homes for the Advent of Christ. I encourage you to lean in: to light the candles, to say the prayers, to sing the songs, and to allow the season to shape and form you more deeply.



Advent is here and among us. If you've been around or in Christian circles for a while, you may know that Advent is a time of preparation. It literally means: coming or arrival. If this is your first time experiencing Advent at Greenwood UMC, you are in for a treat! The symbols and colors of the season are everywhere. The wreaths come out (reminding us of the continuity of eternity and the triumph of life over death —

they are evergreen after all). The banners are hung high (they showcase the symbols of the season). The advent wreath is lit (each candle representing: hope, peace, love, joy, and Christ). The colors pop and shine (gold for the Kingship of Christ, blue for Mary, purple for royalty, and white for Christ's power over death).

ANGEL TREE

Mary Kay Anthony

Hurray! The Angel Tree is here! Every year our church and the Missions Committee sponsor families through Johnson County's United Way. This year we will help 12 children and their parents have a very, Merry Christmas.



Our congregation selects an ornament off of our Angel Tree that represents the family member. The paper ornament lists what the child wants, like toys or games, and needs, like winter boots or clothing. The donor "adopts" the Angel and shops for items specific to the child. The gifts then get returned to the church. The Missions Committee then gets all of the gifts together for the respective families. The family has the choice to pick up the gifts from the church or have the gifts delivered.



We also have the Mitten Tree outside the choir room doors for gloves, socks and hats. We collect new items throughout the Advent season and distribute the items to Greenwood's elementary schools.

Our Missions Committee appreciates all of the support from our congregation and our community to always make this time of year extra special for the families.

TREES, WREATHS, AND GARLAND...OH MY!

Christie Vleck, Margaret Stivers



The GUMC elves have gathered again for the Hanging of the Greens and have our Church beautifully decorated for this season of Advent. Thank you to all the wonderful volunteers that use their creative vision to prepare the church for the celebration of the birth of our Lord.



WHAT'S IN THE MUSIC OF ADVENT?

Drew Worthen, Director of Music

There is perhaps no other season in the life of the church more ripe with music than Christmas. From G.F. Handel's famous "Hallelujah Chorus," or Franz Gruber's accidental magnum opus, "Silent Night," to secular works sung by Bing Crosby or the ever cringe-worthy hits of Mariah Carey, there's no shortage of Christmas music to choose from. So what is it that drives so much music-making in this season?

No doubt the joy and excitement of the season feed heavily on the music created solely for America's love of mass consumerism; I, for one, can't listen to Leroy Anderson's famous "Sleigh Ride" without having a scant amount of PTSD as it conjures up less than fond memories of fighting the hectic crowds of last-minute Christmas shoppers at the Greenwood Park Mall.

However, the real staying power of music, the real core of what we are celebrating is best captured in much more subtle, fundamental theology at the heart of the season. To understand this, then, we must remember that Christmas is, at its very core, the most essential moment in Christianity, second only to, or perhaps equal to Easter in that the life and death of Jesus mark the two pillars on which all of Christian theology hangs. As such, music has always been used to both praise and reinforce doctrinal teachings throughout the ages, as they have ebbed and flowed over the centuries with each coming and going of scriptural interpretation.



As the church grew, so did its musical forms. Much of what we have come to understand as "music" – our notes, scales, and system of notation – all grew out of the early church. It wasn't until the mid 1700s that the notion of

"congregational singing" entered into church practice – largely in part due to Englishman Isaac Watts, whose prolific output of poems and hymns we still sing frequently. Many of his hymns are found throughout the United Methodist Hymnal. Of his many well-known works, "Joy to the World" ranks as his most popular on the theme of Advent and Christmas. After becoming dissatisfied with the quality of singing and the Psalms he'd become accustomed to, he "invented" the English hymn. That isn't to say he totally neglected the Psalms but decided to reword and reset them to a more modern meter and phrasing, suitable to the English language.

"I have rather expressed myself as I may suppose David would have done if he lived in the days of Christianity," Watts explained, "and by this means, perhaps I have sometimes hit upon the true intent of the Spirit of God in those verses farther and clearer than David himself could ever discover." Watt's archenemy, Thomas Bradbury, was very critical of Watts' songs, which he called whims instead of hymns. (You can always count on the British to interject a little sarcasm into even the holiest of occasions.) Watts defended himself stating, "I am fully persuaded that the Jewish Psalm Book was never designed to be the only Psalter for the Christian church."

"Joy to the World!" is Isaac Watts' interpretation of Psalm 98, which reads: "Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth." As he read Psalm 98, he pondered the real reason for shouting joyfully to the Lord – the Messiah has come to redeem us. The result, despite the criticism of men like Bradbury, has been a timeless carol that has brightened our Christmases for nearly three hundred years.

It was Christmas Eve, 1818, when the now-famous carol "Silent Night" was first performed as *Stille Nacht Heilige Nacht*. Joseph Mohr, the young priest who wrote the lyrics, played the guitar and sang along with Franz Xaver Gruber, the choir director who had written the melody. The carol came to be on the heels of the Napoleonic wars that had ravaged much of Europe at that time. An organ builder and repair man working at the church took a copy of the six-verse song to his home village. There, it was picked up and spread by two families of traveling folk singers, who performed it around northern Europe. In 1834, the Strasser family performed it for the King of Prussia and in 1839, the Rainer family of singers debuted the carol outside Trinity Church in New York City. The composition evolved and was translated into over 300 languages with many different arrangements for various voices and ensembles. It was sung in churches, in town squares, even on the battlefield during World War I, when, during a temporary truce on Christmas Eve, soldiers sang carols from home – & "Silent Night," by 1914, now known around the world, was sung simultaneously in French, German and English in one of history's greatest ironies.

It should come as no surprise that music, having played such a pivotal role in the development of Christian theology, "being well or better able to praise Him than the building of the church in all its decoration; it is the church's greatest ornament," according to Igor Stravinsky. My hope this Advent season is that you will take a moment to reflect and ponder on the music you hear over the coming weeks. I hope you will dig a little deeper into the rich abundance of expression, left to us by those who sought the very same meaning in their own lives hundreds to thousands of years ago – people who worked and labored to help us better understand the meaning of what we so easily overlook and the blessings that are to come.



SUNDAY SCHEDULE

9:00 am ~ Sunday School for all ages
10:15 am ~ Worship Service
1:30 pm ~ Mizo/Burmese Service
All are welcome here! Please join us!

WEEKDAY SCHEDULE

Monday
6:30 pm ~ Cub Scouts
7:30 pm ~ Boy Scouts
Tuesday
11:00 am ~ The Shepherd's Table
Wednesday
11:30 am ~ Bring It All AA
6:00 pm ~ AA Groups
6:30pm ~ Bible Study
Thursday
11:30am ~ AA Group
6:00 pm ~ Bell Practice
7:00 pm ~ Choir Practice
Friday
11:30 am~ GNBB AA Group

December

4 Crossroads Brass Band
24 Christmas Eve Service
25 **CHRISTMAS DAY- OFFICE CLOSED**
26 **OFFICE CLOSED**

January

1 **NEW YEARS DAY-OFFICE CLOSED**
20 **MLK DAY- OFFICE CLOSED**

February

13 Galentine Luncheon

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