

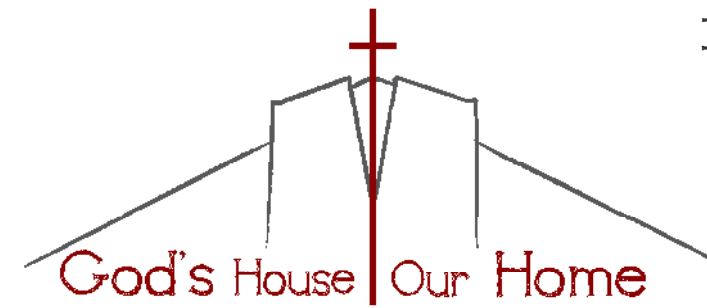
Children & Youth

It is so exciting to see the children and youth take an active roll in the God's House, Our Home campaign. Since the campaign began in March, our children and youth have been learning about faithful stewardship in their Sunday school classes through specially designed curriculum and activities.

On May 1, each person in worship that day will receive a special prayer bracelet made by our children and youth. The bracelets are to serve as a reminder to pray about God's direction for your family in the campaign. On May 8, children ages 3-5th grade will present their God's House, Our Home offering banks during services. They have been working hard to remember their special campaign offering each week and can't wait to present it to their church family.

The youth have been learning each week during their Upper Alley Live Wednesday worship about the importance of taking care of God's house through their tithes and offerings.

Thank you, children and youth, for being such great examples of faithful stewards.



Inside: Children's and Youth Campaign Activities
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What the Bible Says About Giving

Opening doors to endless possibilities through Jesus Christ

"But Christ, as the Son, is in charge of God's entire house. And we are God's house, if we keep our courage and remain confident in our hope in Christ." *Hebrews 3:6*

Get in the Know: Campaign Gatherings are in Full Swing

I know you have already heard about our debt reduction campaign "God's House, Our Home – Opening Doors to Endless Opportunities in Jesus Christ", but I am equally sure you have a lot of questions about it. That is why two of our campaign team members, Dave and Laura Omholt, are scheduling several "gatherings" to answer all your questions. Many of these gatherings will happen in your small groups. The Omholts have been talking with Sunday School classes, Bible Study Groups, men's and women's groups, etc. and are setting up times that a few of our campaign team members can come and speak. For those of you who are not in a small group or are unable to attend your small group's meeting, there will be two casual Q & A sessions on April 18 and May 1 at 10:30 a.m. and 12 p.m. in the Upper Alley.

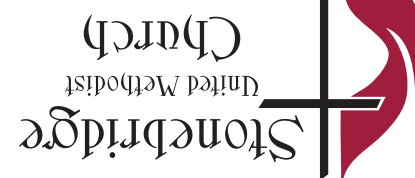
Also, along with the information you receive at the gatherings, you will get a prayer journal. You will be blessed by your participation in praying for our campaign.

As I have said before, over the next three years our church will not be involved in anything more important than this campaign. It can truly open doors to endless opportunities of serving our Lord through this church. Please do everything you can to be present at one of the gatherings.

Grace and peace,
John Mollet

**Q & A Sessions: April 18 & May 1
10:30 a.m. and 12 p.m. in the Upper Alley**

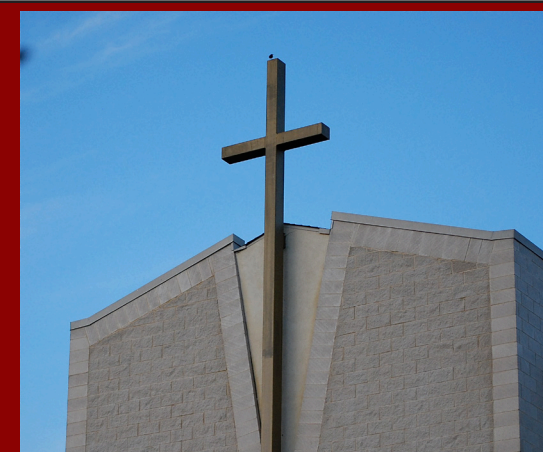
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Commitment Sunday Celebration

Planning is underway for an exciting morning of worship and fellowship on May 15, Commitment Sunday. Mark this special day on your calendar now!



Prayer

Lord, we thank You for Stonebridge United Methodist Church. We thank You for this amazing house of worship.

This church is so much more than a group of buildings. It is our church home. It is where we meet and fellowship with our church family, study your word and where we feel the presence of the Holy Spirit and come to worship You with joyful praise. This is the place where our children grow up learning of your love and grace through Sunday school, preschool, VBC, confirmation and youth groups. This is the place where we find opportunities abound to serve your people. This is the place where we invite and welcome those who are searching so that they may hear the good news of Jesus Christ.

From worship, to sports, to musicals, to all of the wonderful men's and women's groups that gather here, Father, you so creatively use us and use this space to reach your people. We humbly thank you, Lord, that you include us in your kingdom-building plans. We thank you for your steadfast guidance and for walking alongside us through the growth of this church and each new building phase. Father, may our hearts be open to your will during this campaign. May we answer your prompting to use the resources you have given us to help secure the future of Stonebridge UMC as a place of truth and hope for this community and for generations to come. May the glory be Yours alone.

Amen

What the Bible Says About Giving

Giving is rooted in God's very being. Jesus taught us that giving is important. In fact, He talked five times as much about money as about prayer. Until we have committed our finances to God, we have not fully committed ourselves. Our attitude towards money can either be a stumbling block to our faith journey or a means of growing in grace. Giving is a matter of the heart, not the wallet.

Attitude

- God does not want us to worry about material things (Matthew 6:25-32; Philippians 4:7-8)

- Our motive in giving is as important as the amount (Matthew 6:1-4)

- Everything we possess has been given to us by God as a sacred trust (Psalm 24:1; Deuteronomy 8:18; Haggai 2-8)

Amount

- God is more interested in the portion (the percentage) we keep for ourselves, relative to the portion we give, rather than simply an amount (Mark 12:42-44)

- Making up our minds about giving and being sacrificial (2 Corinthians 9:7)

- We are admonished to give 10% (a tithe) of our income as an acknowledgement that everything we have belongs to God (Leviticus 27:30-32; Malachi 3:8)

Why

- We always get back more than we give (Acts 20:35)

- We are laying up treasures for ourselves in heaven (Matthew 6:19-21)

- God blesses those who are faithful

stewards (Proverbs 3:9-10; Mark 10:28-30; Luke 6:38; 2 Corinthians 9:6)

Over-and-above giving

Sacrificial giving, or extraordinary giving, is really what is meant by "over-and-above giving." There are at least two foundational passages in the Bible that give guidelines for over-and-above giving:

- The first is 1 Chronicles 19:1-9 where David raises the resources necessary to build the temple

- The second is 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 where Paul challenges the church leaders in Corinth about their over-and-above collection for a specific need, to help the saints in Jerusalem. He also identifies the profound spiritual motivation for their kind of giving and how it enriches one's relationship with God.

Campaign Q & A

Q: Is it realistic to think we can raise enough money to pay off the full \$5.7 million debt when economic times are so tough?

A: We do not choose when God calls us into action. We simply must respond to God's call and trust that He will bless our efforts. Over the past years, we have been led as a church family to expand facilities and grow in our service to each other and the community. If we are truly seeking God's will with this campaign, then we must have deep faith that God will work through our church family to make it possible.

Q: What kind of commitment will I be asked to make?

A: The first commitment is to pray for God's direction. On May 15, we will respond to God's direction by making a three year commitment over and above our regular tithing to the church. Your decision is between you and God, and will be kept completely confidential. We ask that you pray for God to help you decide what your commitment should be and that each of us is a steward of His money. It is not how much money we have, but what we do with it that is important in God's eyes.

Q: I already tithe, why isn't that enough?

A: There are three areas of giving in the church; operating fund, capital fund and endowment fund. Weekly tithes and offerings support operating funds, which support the church's daily operations (bills, utilities, salaries, programs, etc.) Capital funds are raised periodically to

either build new buildings, renovate current facilities and/or reduce debt of already constructed facilities. Endowment funds are invested and the interest earned from these funds are used to enhance various areas and ministries of the church. This capital campaign is very important as it will free up more funds to be allocated back into the operating budget so that our programs and ministries can continue to flourish.

Q: What gifts other than cash can I give and are my gifts tax deductible?

A: Stonebridge United Methodist Church may receive non-cash gifts of stocks and/bonds transfers. At this time, we are not structured to receive gifts of land, real estate, or vehicles. All contributions to the campaign are a charitable contribution in the year in which the payment is made, just as are your regular gifts to the church.

Q: When will I have the opportunity to respond?

A: Commitment Sunday is **May 15**. A special morning of worship and fellowship is being planned as we speak! The week before, you will receive a commitment card in the mail. Please fill out this card and return it services on May 15 or you may mail your card to the church office. Please pray about your pledge to God's House, Our Home. Special prayer journals are available that have been created to help you discern God's call for you in this campaign and are available in the church office.

