

November 7, 2023

Dear McKendree Family,

Stewardship has been a growing experience for me. It began soon after moving to Missouri, and our local church asked me to serve as the Finance Committee Chair. I assumed my experience teaching finance at the University of Missouri prepared me for leading in church finances. Was I ever wrong!

I look back and see several ways in which God used this time to bring new life within me.

First, I began to pray for the first time in years. When I saw that church's annual shortfall and mortgage, I realized I could not give enough to make the difference. The situation was out of my control, so I turned to the only person I knew could help. That was God. And that meant prayer.

Second, I began to fall in love with the church. As I looked for ways to save money, I noticed how the church made a difference in people's lives. Instead of looking forward to the end of my term as finance committee chair, I became involved in church ministries like a small group Bible study and mission trips to Mexico. For the first time, I realized how God works through the church to bring hope and healing.

Third, I began to learn contentment about my financial situation. I could only ask others to do, as I believe the Bible asks, to give 10%, if I gave this myself. Ed and I had to make changes. We sold a car with large payments because we believed the money could be better spent elsewhere. We made changes in our entertainment and eating habits. All the while, we reminded ourselves that our worth does not come from what we own. While saving is important, we learned that true security comes from God rather than an amount in an account. We decided that being part of how God makes disciples was more rewarding than impressing our neighbors with new toys.

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I believe that these are among God's hopes for every person:

- (1) we would live a prayerful life,
- (2) we would love and serve God through a church family, and
- (3) we would find worth and security in belonging to God rather than seeking these in things.

That is why I ask you to grow in giving to McKendree United Methodist Church. These are my hopes for you as well.

I invite you to prayerfully examine your relationship with money and how **your giving reflects your relationship with God**. When we give generously, we learn that contentment is not found in purchases or possessions. Security is not found in a savings account. Rather, generous giving leads to the joy of being part of how God is transforming the world.

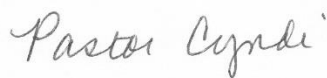
Please commit to pledging for next year and be part of how McKendree helps people connect to one another and God in life-changing ways. Consider making an extra gift or pledge to the Living Grace mortgage campaign.

Enclosed with this letter are two commitment cards. The Annual Stewardship Commitment card is for the 2024 budget. See the back for a giving grid showing different levels of giving based on your income. **What steps would be needed toward growing towards a level of giving that reflects your relationship with God?** The Living Grace card is for those who have not yet made a commitment to help reduce our mortgage debt. Thank you to those who have already committed! Also included is a handout showing the breakdown of our congregation's giving patterns to help you reflect and decide about your giving.

Bring your commitment cards to worship **on November 19 when we place our pledge cards on the altar rail and dedicate these commitments**. If more convenient, mail your pledge card(s) or submit your pledge online at McKendreeUMC.org/give.

I am thankful for the ways you serve God through McKendree UMC. You are part of the salvation and hope that God brings about within our church and community.

In Christ's love,



Pastor Cyndi McDonald, PhD