



THE JOURNAL

UPDATES FROM THE MINISTRIES OF FAIRHOPE UMC

155 S SECTION ST | FAIRHOPE, AL 36532 | WWW.FAIRHOPEUMC.ORG

JANUARY 2024



TABLE OF CONTENTS

AGENDA

PAGE 2

NURTURE, OUTREACH AND WITNESS MINISTRIES

Children's Ministry

PAGE 4

Missions / Church Life

PAGE 5-6

Caring Ministries

PAGE 7-8

Student Ministries

PAGE 9

Recreation Ministries

PAGE 10

Music Ministries

PAGE 10

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Associate Pastor Report

PAGE 12

BOS Minutes (September 2023)

PAGE 13-16

FAIRHOPE UMC BOARD OF STEWARDS AGENDA JANUARY 7 ~ 12:30 PM, CLC

- Approve the minutes of the September meeting.
- Receive an update of stewardship for 2023.
- Approve the 2024 Ministry Budget.
- Confirm two nominations from the Committee on Lay Leadership for the new year.



FAIRHOPE
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

GROW LOVE SERVE

beyond our limits beyond ourselves beyond our walls

NURTURE, OUTREACH AND WITNESS MINISTRIES



CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES REPORT

Submitted by Jenna Hood, *Director of Children's Ministries*
jenna.hood@fairhopeumc.org

STELLAR VBS

We had a great time at our annual summer VBS. We had 250 kids participating and 145 volunteers. It was out of this world! We are looking forward to 2024's VBS, SCUBA – June 3rd-7th.

PJ PARTIES

Our summer PJ party movie nights were a great success with over 75 different children attending throughout the summer. It is a ministry looked forward to by both our parents and our kids.

CAMP X

We had 33 children attend Blue Lake Camp X in July! Blue Lake did a fabulous job and we had the best counselors. Many thanks to the 6 chaperones who attended this high energy week!

FALL SUNDAY SCHOOL

We have had a slightly slow start to our Sunday School year, but our teachers and kids are loving our themed series for the fall! Stop by the kids' hallway on Sunday morning to check out our Hawaiian themed Christmas décor as we continue our December series, Christmas Vacation!

PIER KIDS & SWIFT

Pier Kids enjoyed a great kick off for the month of August by combining with SWIFT for a series of kickoff events: a Splash Bash, Nerf Nite, and Let's Kick It (game night). We had 137 different children attend these events which has seemed to help our Wednesday night programs grow! SWIFT has completed a few service projects this fall including cards of encouragement for church members, a treasure hunt for staff members to show appreciation, and creating and working a trunk for Trunk or Treat.

WINTER RETREAT 2024

We are so excited about Winter Retreat at Blue Lake this year! Our church has been asked to head up a kid-led worship team for the event and the theme is "Daily Bread." We currently have over 30 kids from our church registered.



LOOKING AHEAD:
CREATED BY GOD: WONDERFULLY MADE – JAN 18-20
WINTER RETREAT – FEB 2ND – 4TH



MISSIONS / CHURCH LIFE MINISTRIES REPORT

Submitted by Jennifer Myrick, Director of Missions

missions@fairhopeumc.org

LOCAL MISSION OUTREACH

FAMILY PROMISE: We continue to serve alongside this great community organization by meeting the needs of local families who are experiencing homelessness. We have hosted several times during 2023. Our next host week will be January 28th-February 4th, 2024! We are in need of volunteers to help provide meals and serve as dinner and overnight hosts.

COMMUNITY CAFE': We continue to serve 260-270+ meals each week. We provide meals 50 weeks out of the year. Our cafe' is open 11am-1pm. Meals are also delivered to our church and community homebound. Additional food that is leftover is taken each week to the Fairhope Jail. Please let us know if you would like to serve by preparing desserts. We serve 140+ homebound each week. Volunteers are needed to help prep food and deliver meals each week. We are very grateful for the amazing support from the special November Give for Community Cafe'.

THANKSGIVING DAY COMMUNITY MEAL: We served close to 360 plates on Thanksgiving Day this year. We are so thankful to all who provided food items, served and delivered meals. We provided meals to Ecumenical Ministries Meals on Wheels program, law enforcement, our Community Cafe' homebound and others who came to eat here at the church.

LOCAL MISSION ASSISTANCE: Over the last several months we have seen an increase in families and individuals needing emergency shelter or transportation. Local Missions provided hotels room (extended stay) for families/individuals. Missions also provided gas cards, funds for power bills, rental assistance etc. We are also helping to meet a huge need by providing shelter for families entering the Baldwin Family Village while they wait for background checks to clear.

LOCAL FOOD NEEDS: Missions continues to help support local food needs through our connections with local schools. We have been asked by several schools to help with weekend backpack meals. Fairhope UMC continues to be a resource for our local schools throughout Baldwin County.

SCHOOL UNIFORM DISTRIBUTION: Our Back to School Bash was a huge success. Over 300 children started the school year with new uniforms, back packs and lunch boxes. Several families were also provided with hair cut vouchers. We continue to provide uniforms to several families during the start of this school year. We are working very closely with the local school to provide additional uniforms for their school uniform closets. *Uniforms were also provided to our partners at CareHouse and DHR.

FOSTER CARE OUTREACH: We continue to partner with our friends at DHR providing various items needed for children in Foster Care.

ANGEL TREE CHRISTMAS GIVING: We have an established relationship with Ecumenical Ministries, DHR and local schools to help provide Christmas to those in need. We provided Christmas items to 100+ children and elderly this Christmas season.

INTERNATIONAL MISSION OUTREACH

We had a great time serving on our missions trips to Costa Rica and are so grateful for the continued support of these on going mission trips.

Methodist Children's Home Trip: We served at the Costa Rica Methodist Children's Home in April alongside our friends from Loxley UMC. The team worked hard laying the ground work for a security wall that will border the property.

Amor en la Calle May Trip: Our May team partnered with Nativity Episcopal Church from Dothan and Brantley UMC. Together we had 42 people serving on the team. This was our 21st year for Fairhope UMC to send a team to Costa Rica to serve alongside the Amor en la Calle Ministry. We provided VBS, painted, served food, repaired chicken coups and the tilapia ponds, visited the juvenile prison, provided an activity day for the elderly in the community and mixed TONS of concrete.

COSTA RICA CHILDREN'S HOME MISSION TRIP - SPRING 2024 DATE: TBD
COSTA RICA MAY 2024 TRIP - MAY 24/25-JUNE 2/3 2024

MISSIONS/CHURCH LIFE MINISTRIES REPORT CONTINUED...

DISASTER RESPONSE

We have responded to help meet the needs of several disaster events throughout 2023 (Selma Tornadoes). We continue to serve alongside our district and conference disaster response teams. We currently serve as a district location for cleaning buckets and other disaster supply needs. We will be gearing up for Hurricane season starting in February 2024. We also have a great relationship with the local Fairhope Rotary Disaster Response Team. Stay connected for more information.

CHURCH LIFE MINISTRY

BLUE LAKE CHURCH FAMILY CAMP: We hosted our annual Church Family Fall Retreat September 15th-17th with speaker Matt Armbruster from Ransom Ministries.

DINNER ON THE GROUNDS, BACK TO SCHOOL KICK-OFF, TRUNK OR TREAT AND ADVENT WREATH CHILI NIGHT were all great events that brought our church family together throughout 2023.

.....

UPCOMING DISASTER RESPONSE OPPORTUNITIES: We are exploring opportunities to serve alongside the Conference Long-Term Recovery Team in Selma Spring 2024.

UPCOMING LOCAL MISSION OPPORTUNITIES:

HOUSING FIRST POINT IN TIME/TOILETRY BAG OUTREACH: January 23rd. We will be collecting toiletry items etc.

POINT IN TIME COUNT: We will be sending teams out in the community to help “count” those who are homeless.

FAMILY PROMISE HOST WEEK: January 28th-February 4th. We will have a Family Promise Training January 9th @ 6:00pm.





CARING MINISTRIES REPORT

Submitted by **Dr. Ann Pearson**
ann.pearson@fairhopeumc.org

CONNECTIONAL CARE

- Preparations and deliveries of Easter gifts for our 780 families were done in March & April.
- Caring Ministries provided gifts for Confirmation Class & Senior Class of 2023.
- Spring, Summer & Thanksgiving mailings to congregation were sent in May, July & November. Christmas cards were sent in December.
- Caring Ministries prepared a luncheon & ice cream social following Mission Sunday, August 27.
- Home delivery gift bags to member's homes in October.
- Coordinated LifeSouth Blood Drive for church family on October 15. We were able to collect 17 donations which will impact 51 lives. Great response!
- Made daily telephone calls and monthly nursing home visits to our members.
- Kinga and Duke Low, new members, have stepped forward to help with visitation in our local nursing facilities.



BIBLE STUDIES

- On-going drop-in Bible study meets in Wesley Hall every Wednesday at 1:30pm. We average around 20 persons a week in this class.
- First Corinthians 4 week bible study was offered in March in the sanctuary. This short term study offered insights into the scriptures and how Paul faithfully attempted to share the gospel with the people in Corinthians.
- 2 Corinthians a 4 week Bible study was offered from September 25 to October 16, 2023. Twenty two persons participated in this study.

STEPHEN MINISTRY

Stephen Ministry Supervision meets bi-monthly to continue in giving support and guidance to the Stephen Minister – Caregiver relationship. Stephen Ministry has been doing continuing education each meeting on the book “Good Boundaries and Goodbyes”. Our church is truly blessed to have this dedicated ministry. Organizational plans for the class of 2024 began in August with recruitment in September and October.

FOOD MINISTRY

- Mission Friends Group met May 8 & October 30 and prepared casseroles and soups for Bread of Life Ministry to be given out for persons in situations of need. These meals are kept in the Caring Ministries white freezer in Wesley Hall kitchen and are available for anyone to use.
- Lord's Pantry boxes are given out several times a week to persons coming to the church asking for food. New Team Leaders who have stepped forward to lead this ministry are Bob and Sharon Bond, Lynn Barnes, Audrey Barr, Carol Cowan and Linda Florence.



CARING MINISTRIES REPORT CONTINUED...

KNIT AND CROCHET

The team has returned to meeting in person for their gatherings this fall. They meet each Monday from 10:00 am to 12 Noon in the Church Library. The new team leaders are Lynn Barnes and Suzan Christensen.



SUPPORT GROUPS

All support groups, Grief, Survivors of Suicide, Caregivers Support Group and Tough Dogs Cancer Support meet weekly and bi-monthly to be consistent in our care.

SUPPORT OF CHURCH MINISTRIES

Representatives from Caring Ministries in the areas of Stephen Ministry, Durable Loan Closet and Connectional Care participated in the morning worship services on October 22. Caring Ministries has two more representatives from Tough Dogs and Knit & Crochet that will be making videos that will be shown in the days ahead.

TOUGH DOGS CANCER CARE

Tough Dogs/Tough Pups meets regularly to prepare chemo bags for cancer patients at local treatment facilities. Each month, 20 bags are prepared for adults and 10 for children.



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS AND SERVICE

- Serve as chaplain for Thomas Hospital.
- Serve on Thomas Hospital Daisy Award Team.
- Meet monthly with local church leaders and pastors.
- Weekly devotional at Country Place Senior Living.

FUNERALS

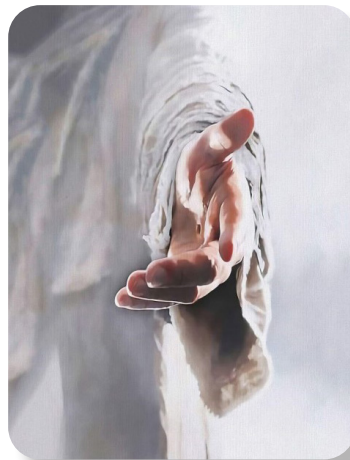
19 member funerals Lois Alspach, Leon Chambers, Vera Culver, Dick Davis, Chuck Dumas, Betty Edgar, Bill Hart, Ray Hartwell, Pat Hess, Rita Higbee, Andy & Vergie Huggins, Bobbie Hughes, Butch Hughes, Matthew Lawrence, Joyce Liukko, Mary Moles, Jodie Mullins, Juanita Smith.

VISITATION

- Daily visits to hospital for church family and those connected to our church.
- Home visits continue as a way to reach out to our membership.
- Daily calls to check in & encourage our church family.

COUNSELING

Counseling sessions available to members & community upon request.





STUDENT MINISTRIES REPORT

Submitted by Rachael Waldhour, Director of Student Ministries

rachael.waldhour@fairhopeumc.org

YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL // Sundays @ 9:45-10:40 am (7th-12th grade)

SUNDAY NIGHT YOUTH // 6:00-8:00pm (7th-12th grade)

Sunday Night Youth takes place almost every week and includes: worship, games, free time in the gym, snacks and so much more. We provide an opportunity for every student in grades 7-12 to worship together with one another and we give them space to build relationships. We can't wait to see you there! There's no need to register and you can always bring a friend.

WEDNESDAY COMMUNITY GROUPS // 6:00-7:30pm (7th-12th grade)

Community Groups are for students in grades 7-12. We provide an opportunity for every person committed to attending C-Groups to grow deeper in their faith with a community of believers their own age to support & pray with them. Every C-Group will have 2 adult leaders committed to walking their faith journey with them. Our C-Groups are on Wednesday's from 6:00-7:30pm. All grades meet on campus to with their adult leaders.

7TH GRADE GIRLS SMALL GROUP // Tuesdays @ 4:00 pm (CLC Attic)

UPCOMING DATES:

FUMC COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS APPLICATIONS DEADLINE

Sunday, January 14

DISCOVERY WEEKEND 2024

Friday, January 26-Sunday, January 28

CONFIRMATION 2024

Begins Sunday, January 21

CONFIRMATION SUNDAY

Sunday, April 14 @ 6:00 pm

SENIOR SUNDAY

Sunday, May 5, 2024

9:00 am (Senior Breakfast)

11:00 am (Senior Recognition)

STEPPING UP BRIDGE PROGRAM

(Rising 7th graders)

Wednesday, May 1, 8, 15 6:00-7:30 pm

MIDDLE SCHOOL SUMMER MISSION TRIP

June 16-21

HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER MISSION TRIP

June 30-July





RECREATION MINISTRIES REPORT

Submitted by Jamie Waldhour, Director of Recreation Ministries

UPWARD BASKETBALL

2023-24!!!

Upward Basketball is underway! We started practices in November and are two games into the season!



PICKLEBALL
 Tuesdays & Thursdays
 8:00am-noon
 Sundays
 2:00-4:00pm



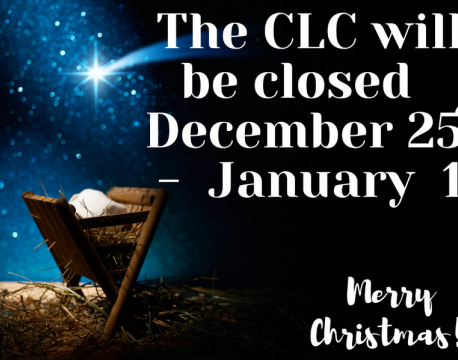

COMING SUMMER '24

DATES TBD

As the best introductory to golf learning program, kids 4-9 will learn the fundamentals of golf and character-building virtues to create thriving, life-long citizens in sport and life!



**The CLC will be closed
 December 25
 - January 1**



Merry Christmas!



MUSIC MINISTRIES REPORT

Submitted by Tom Hood, Music Minsitries

tom.hood@fairhopeumc.org

It has been a great year for our music ministry! Here are a few of the highlights to celebrate:

- Handbell Choir is up to six ringers.
- Lighthouse Kid's Choir (15 children) performed Christmas Musical, *Red Letter Christmas*.
- Magical Melodies Concert was very successful and raised \$1700 for Baldwin Family Village!
- Our 2nd annual Summer Choir Retreat at Camp Beckwith was spiritually rejuvenating.
- The Christmas Cantata, *Tidings of Joy*, involved 17 local musicians and a choir of almost thirty singers!
- The Christmas Celebration service in the CLC ended the year with a joyful sound.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS



ASSOCIATE PASTOR REPORT

Submitted by Rev. Laura Parker

We hosted a Welcome Lunch on June 16th & a Welcome Dinner on December 13th for visitors and new members. Thank you for the support of BOS members who helped serve and acted as hosts and hostesses for both event. We welcomed close to 50 guests at the June lunch and close to 25 guests for the December dinner. If you are interested in serving at a future Welcome Dinner, I welcome volunteers to help with final food prep, welcome guests as they arrive, help serve drinks and dessert, host a table and visit with our guests AND our favorite, hang around after and help us clean the space and prepare it for the next activity.

ADULT DISCIPLESHIP HAPPENINGS:

- We have taken advantage of available classroom space to begin a new adult Sunday School class this fall. This class is geared toward parents of college students and early empty nesters and meets in B209. My thanks to Robyn and Scott Koser for taking a leadership role in getting this class off the ground.
- We have reorganized our Four Seasons Supper Clubs for the year. We have started 11 new groups and have several that have continued from last year. Many of these participants are new members and regular visitors.
- I am enjoying facilitating Covenant Bible Study with a group of 10 disciples. Emily Garner and Michelle Graham have facilitated a study on Jonah this fall. A very large and dedicated group of women meet together on Tuesday mornings facilitated by a teaching team led by Janice Walters studying Men of the Bible. Pastor Darren has been leading the Wednesday evening faithful through a study of Galatians. And Dr. Ann Pearson continues to meet with students weekly who are pursuing the Bible in a Year challenge, as well as offering other occasional Bible studies.

GROW *beyond our limits.*



ADULT DISCIPLESHIP





BOARD OF STEWARDS MINUTES - SEPTEMBER 21, 2023

Submitted by Tiffany Beasley, BOS Recording Secretary

ATTENDEES: Dr. Darren McClellan, Rev. Laura Parker, Lee Turner, Emily Garner, Doug Garner, Mary Corbitt, Steve Pearson, Lee Turner, Tiffany Beasley, Vicki Studstill, Jerry Forte, Michelle Graham, Cairo Plauche, Tom Slone, Phil Webb, Greg Tapscott, Kristi McClellan, Noah Funderburg, Reed Givens, Jamie Waldhour, Tom Hood, Ann Pearson, Trey Canida, Gene Lammers, Cathi Parish, Mark Woodrow, Lany Simmons, Ken Cooper, Katie Turner

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Stewart Nobles, Jeff White, Michael Chambless, Al Earnest, Derek Boulware, Steve Delamore, James Buckholz, Michelle Butler, Adelia Phillips, Elizabeth Jones, Parker Roe, David Stringfellow

Minutes below include written reports and comments as attachments. Informal questions and a summary of comments are included in the minutes. Any corrections to these minutes can be presented at the next Board of Stewards meeting.

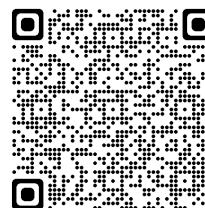
STEWARDSHIP UPDATE – COMMITMENT SUNDAY

Dr. McClellan discussed the normal process of the budget and how it is projected. He noted that this year the budget would be created in response to the faithfulness of the congregation in respect to pledging. He noted that fewer and fewer are pledging, and this is a trend here and at other churches for different reasons.

Dr. McClellan noted the following figures: There are 750 households in FUMC as giving units, how many pledge cards are distributed. Last year 223 pledge cards were received out of 750. In 2019 we had about 293. That was the highest ever. He noted that he asked Jeff how many households contribute in any way via any financial record of giving in the church, and the number of giving is 716. That is pretty high. Also, the percentage giving to operating budget to the church is 544. Out of 750 households, 544 have fulfilled that covenant; 544 gave to the operating budget. 716 gave in other ways, such as Wednesday night supper, camp, youth group, payment for services, etc. Of our households, 76 percent of the church is engaged in the operating life, and 20 percent are doing “transactional” giving (you do this for me, me for you). He noted it is okay, but transactional. The others are those who are giving toward transformation beyond what they are receiving.

Dr. McClellan noted that the purpose of the cards is part of the covenant that the members make. He discussed how designated gifts that come in, in lieu of operating gifts, there is no one here to receive that gift, no one to distribute, that if everyone gives in that way, it's an unsustainable plan. He further explained that he understands that when you are out there bearing witness or thinking of your own stewardship, the daily maintenance is not as motivating as the designated projects. 76 percent of the church is living into the covenant that we have made; we're not in an unhealthy place. This is just participation, not amounts. He noted when we are working on nominations for leadership, we're looking for people engaged in worship, prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness. Dr. McClellan noted that we want to grow and nurture people in this, but this church has been operating where some leaders who are making decisions have never given to the church. He explained that this is not an unusual or radical idea, that we are looking for people who do what they say they will do. He appreciates those who help us hold that as a standard for our own faith development. Not to shame people but to encourage them with our greatest good. He invited everyone to do so tonight. By doing this, the board members who are ready to submit their cards tonight, this will allow him to say to our congregation, your leaders are leading.

We will have cards and QR codes Sunday. We want people to feel good about what they're doing because they believe in the life of the church.



BUDGET PROCESS (2024) – Tom Slone, Finance Chair

Mr. Slone reported that the committee has done two quarterly updates to the church that went out in the Link giving a financial update. The finance team is transparent and wants to bring everyone along. He shared context to add value to what was communicated. The church is financially healthy. Not at risk of not paying bills or underfunding the ministries we've committed to in 2023. We do have some opportunities and concerns for 2024 and beyond. Past finance committees identified a need to establish an operating reserve for the church, a 90-day operating reserve that would be available to bridge temporary gaps of income or overages in expenses. We have that fund in place; we have fully funded the 90-day reserve. It gives confidence that you can meet obligations in the near term.

Where we are for 2023, Jeff reports in the bulletin that we have received 59 percent of planned income for the year. We had anticipated that we were going to need to supplement the income with 98,000 in order to meet a level budget, the expense budget. We were not anticipating greater income coming in this year, and we thought we would be short. We have had a flat budget four years in a row, our expense budget.

be short. We have had a flat budget four years in a row, our expense budget. That's concerning in that we've seen 20 percent inflation, so money is not going as far as it once did. The ministers that manage their budgets have had to be extra smart in how they allocate their money to bring the greatest value to God's people. 57 percent of our planned expenses are covered. Through the month of August, we had historically hit 62 percent of our annual income. We've received 62 percent year over year. This year, we're falling short of that. Using the 62 percent historically, if we apply 62 percent to our 2023 budget, we will be about 210,000 short in income this year. We are blessed to have some resources that we can apply against this. Some have been accumulated since we encountered Covid. If we look at 2019, Covid hit, then 2020 shut down in-person for five months, so a lot of our ministries were not able to conduct activities -- those funds were set aside as a favorable variance that year. This is partially what's gone into creating the operating reserve. Also, there were some opportunities in terms of Covid relief funding, the Payroll Protection Program that helped fund our church and reduce our expenses. We have accumulated some excess cash that we had not planned on spending. That is bridging the gap now, as our income is short of what we've anticipated. If 2023 income comes in the way we think it will, 62 percent, we will run out of reserves. We will be without zero extra cash other than 90-day reserve. The policy is we go in fully-funded into operating reserve because it addresses variances and cash flow.

If you look at how the income flows into the church (December is the biggest month, probably at least a month and a half comes in during December, and January is also a big month) so throughout the year, our expenses don't wait until December. We have a negative cash flow for the first half of the year. The cash flow issue after December comes back to zero. We are left with just the variances that come from the budget. We refund those, bringing them back to full measure in the following year. We have used \$485,000 of the reserve in the last three years to fund negative income variances for the church. 2023 with our reserves (which are soon to be fully consumed) -- we are not going to shut down for 2023, but we have concerns and opportunities for 2024 and beyond.

This year's budget came in as it was last year, \$4,000 less -- \$2,376,000 -- we are going back to the staff -- finance is working with the budget manager and looking for incremental money that is not productive that we could remove from the budget without compromising the mission and ministry of the church. We're going to revisit those issues and take money out of that. We have a pledge campaign that we pray will deliver a great deal of relief for our concerns over 2024. One of the places where -- we're having commitment Sunday five weeks earlier and that was at the request of finance, to get our arms around how much is coming into the church to send a proper and balanced budget going into 2024. It takes four or five weeks for pledge cards to come in. By first of November, we'll have 95 percent of cards returned to the church. Using statistics, we can project what our total income will be next year. If we look at history, we need 65 percent of our operating budget to be funded by pledges to have adequate funding for our expense budget. Recently 55 percent of our budget by pledges -- but two or three years ago we were hitting in the 70's. Trend seems to be less and less pledging and giving without commitment. We are comfortable; we are convinced that we have no concerns for 2023 in terms of meeting obligations. For 2024 it is not that easy because we have consumed reserves, and pledges are the key indicator for us for 2024. We are looking for 65 percent of our budget, \$2,376,000; we will have the pledge cards returned by Nov 1. At that point we will look at the budget (that is flat with the prior year) and determine if we need to make adjustments to the budget.

Some of you may wonder what the impact of disaffiliation had on our income this year, but looking at the numbers, the income numbers dropped off appreciatively during Covid and we've not quite recovered. We're still struggling to get back to normalization. After that, there was tremendous inflation and broader economic concerns, so that put doubt and concern in people's minds. On top of that, we had the concerns over denominational issues. But I can tell you that that plays a minor part in the shortfall of funding. The money that we've lost due to disaffiliation has not been a tremendously-significant amount. It is not the reason why we are here talking about concerns for 2024. All these issues, Covid, economy, disaffiliation, are short term disruptors, things that at some point down the road will be resolved. This church has continued to care and nurture -- spiritually nurture the congregation. Programs have not been cut back. We have continued to do what God has called us to do. That's what we want to ensure for 2024.

With your leadership and the congregation, we can do that.

BOARD OF STEWARDS MINUTES CONTINUED...

(Mr. Slone asked if there were any questions.)

Lee Turner - \$600,000 is three months, 480 the past couple of years. Has that been paid out?

Tom Slone - the 600,000, that's the operating that remains intact today. We have consumed the cashflow portion of it, but the variances have been funded from excess cash accumulated over the years. We are fully funded on the 90-day piece. We are going to look at program expenses that we could potentially eliminate, is this delivering the value - is it something we could defer to a later date? One of the other resources we want to look at - in 2008/2009 during the Great Recession, I'm told that we tapped into designated restricted funds to help the general operating budget of the church. That's not a long-term solution. That is something that we may be compelled to do potentially, but that buys you some time. At the end of the day, we've got to get to a balanced budget. We've got to build our expenses around what we project as income for the year. Income is where we need to place our focus. We can manage the expenses, but the income is tougher to project, to show people the importance of it. I've never attended a church that has an impact on the community -- not just local, but total impact on the community of God -- I'm proud to pledge - I turned mine in the day the church website would take it.

We do plan as finance this year to have a conversation, when the committee meets, to systematically go through the giving. 11 percent of total income has been designated gifts, and we want to make sure those gifts are appropriate - gifts can't be made to an individual; they have to be to the organization, they have to be in the form of property that does not require more maintenance on it or upkeep than the value of the church if it's real property. We need to make sure that the gift is acknowledged by the church and that the donor gets a written acknowledgment. But we also want to make sure that if the - if we have to tap into funds on the balance sheet, designated gifts, that we have a vehicle in place that we can reach out to the donor and explain to them that the restrictions on the gift, in spite of our gratitude, that we would consider them altering the restriction of the gift so it could be used for the operating budget during dire needs. I envision that this would be inclusive of getting Board of Stewards approval before we tap into restricted funds because it's a departure from the norm, but that framework needs to be there. I have read suggestions that going back to the donor to get written permission is integral to a successful program there. We want to collaborate with the staff in refining our policy, making sure it addresses the church body's needs and put it in policies and procedures of the church. We want to prepare for that eventuality, to ask permission to use those funds to bridge a short-term gap so that we can maintain the ministries that we've got.

CHARGE CONFERENCE 2023 - LEE TURNER, BOARD OF STEWARDS CHAIR

Dr. Darren McClellan invited Lee Turner as chair of the Board of Stewards to speak, explaining that Linda Smith made the decision to step down from the role and said it's not without grief that we received her note. He explained that we are grateful for Lee Turner and that we have one thing to vote on and would be shifting gears to responsibilities for charge conference, to be held October 29, 2023, at Providence UMC at 2pm. He informed that all members are welcome to attend.

(Lee Turner invited Vicki Studstill to present the report for the Staff Parish Relations Committee.)

(Vicki Studstill read her report and thanked Dr. McClellan and Rev. Laura Parker for their leadership.)

(Lee Turner asked if there were any comments or additional discussion required.)

(No comments or discussions.)

(Steve Pearson made a motion to accept the recommendations, and the motion was seconded. The motion passed unanimously.)

Darren McClellan noted that we are grateful to those on the nominations committee. We are two-thirds of the way done. Dr. McClellan reported that nominations for Trustees, Finance, Staff Parish and for members at large, class of 2026 for three years -- once we get those slots filled and the nominations team looks at it and we send it to the district office, he will send the names to the committee to look at, and he looks forward to sharing those names with the committee.

Dr. McClellan noted that Charge Conference will be October 29, General Conference, April 23. He and Dr. Gene Lammers were elected as delegates at charge conference. They will be in Charlotte, North Carolina, those days as research assistants for voting members. There will be 14 different legislative committees. He noted they will try to figure out what's going on. For Annual conference, a week later, it may be in Montgomery June 15-19. Jurisdictional Conference will be at Lake Junaluska for electing bishops and for consideration of bishops. There will be no elections for bishops this year but enormous interest around consideration of redrawing conference lines for budgetary issues. November 12 is a special session for voting on those remaining churches who disaffiliated. I think it's around 60 or so churches coming before us. That's the starting number. Dr. Gene Lammers is a member of our conference trustees, all those applying for disaffiliation -- Gene is sifting through those cases and eligibility claims.

The AWFUMC.org announcement about a policy to Paragraph 2549 (because it got a lot of interest), the understanding if a church didn't disaffiliate, there is a sunset clause -- our church elected to wait until after General Conference. It was the bishop's desire to give churches an opportunity -- we had a commitment from Bishop Graves and Olivia Poole that they were going to work to extend the same options using a different paragraph. They have kept the bishop's decree of intent and provided -- essentially what it says, if something changes and if the General Conference decides you no longer have the right to decide who your clergy is and the trustees no longer have a right to decide who gets married, if all of those things are rescinded, then you can begin to talk about disaffiliation under 2549, which is the recognition that the Staff Parish still has consultation, the Board of Trustees still has the responsibility of who has a willing -- pastors, who is fit for marriage. If all of that changes, then you can have a conversation and 2/3 vote. What I love about the policy it holds the reality of our context in place and allows the bishop to keep his promise and to be alleviated of distractions.

Gene Lammers noted that if any one of those things happens, then we can have a conversation.

Steve Pearson noted they also have to provide in their statement why they are disaffiliating.

Lee Turner noted he is a fourth-generation member of this church and loves the church. In closing comments, he reminded the Board that Jesus was out with the people. The more we do in the community, the more our church will grow. He believes in chainsaws and barbecue grills. He is happy to be here and will do his best to be active for the Board of Stewards.

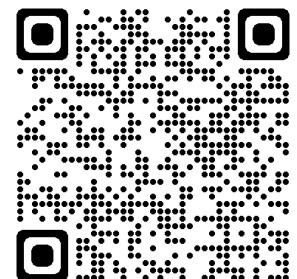
(Lee Turner asked for a motion to adjourn. Phil Webb made the motion, and the motion was seconded. Motion carried.)

Dr. McClellan offered one additional announcement. He introduced Cathi Parish is coming on staff in the role of Minister of Evangelism, vacated by Tom East. He noted we have members joining every week and we are very excited about Cathi taking on this part-time position. Cathi was a local pastor in the Indiana conference.

(After closing in prayer, the meeting concluded at 7:09 p.m.)

CALLED TO *serve?*

**Find out ways to CONNECT to Fairhope UMC.
Scan the QR code or visit www.fairhopeumc.org today!**





FAIRHOPE

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

155 S Section Street
Fairhope, AL 36532

 251-928-1148  office@fairhopeumc.org

 www.fairhopeumc.org

WE EXIST TO LOVE BOLDLY, CASTING THE LIGHT OF JESUS INTO THE WORLD