

First UMC
301 N. Main St.
Ada, OH 45810

March 29, 2021

Dear Members and Friends,

What a year it has been! This past year was nothing we ever could have anticipated or prepared for. With the virus came loss beyond comprehension. Many lost loved ones and even more have felt the effects of isolation, grief, economic hardship, loneliness, and the list could go on. As I write this letter, I am fully aware that we are not out of the woods yet, but there is light and hope breaking in all around us and that is worth celebrating!

I have no doubt that even in the midst of the tragedy and grief we have all experienced in one way or another over the past year, we were never really alone in our struggles. God was moving and working in extraordinary ways even when we could not see it. I know this to be true because I saw it in each of you, in our church, and in our community. Just over one year ago, when our schools, businesses, restaurants, and even our church were forced to suspend in-person gatherings because of the virus, life didn't stop. We learned and adapted. We listened and responded.

Last March Ada Schools asked if we would help deliver lunches to the children in our community when our schools moved to remote learning. And, nearly every day for eight weeks, you showed up at dawn, loaded your cars with sack lunches, and delivered the meals to hundreds of children in our community. Our staff and leaders here at the church pivoted on a dime to address the needs of our congregation in a new, digital world. Our worship services, committees, Bible studies, Sunday school classes, and other ministries moved online so that we could remain connected even when physically distant. When we began to realize that Covid wasn't going away anytime soon, we continued to adapt. We offered virtual VBS, Zoom small groups, created drive-by birthday celebrations, recorded weekly devotion videos, updated our online presence, invested in equipment for streaming our worship services, created a Christmas Eve service that was viewed by nearly 500 people, hosted our annual Drive-Thru Ash Wednesday service, began calling, sent cards, and continued meeting needs and connecting in meaningful ways even when so much uncertainty obstructed the path ahead of us. Not to be forgotten, when unexpected expenses hit and we worried how we might make it through another month, your generosity and commitment not only pulled our church through, but allowed us to thrive.

Speaking of exciting developments, many of you have been asking where we are on our parking lot project. I am excited to share that our trustees are meeting this week to vote on a parking lot design that will then be submitted to the Village for approval. This step will now allow us to obtain an updated cost estimate. Currently, we are projecting that we have about half of the costs in-hand and, with our continued support, it is our hope to be parking our cars in the lot by fall!

Ada First UMC, you have, without a doubt, "embraced the uncertain" over the past year and we have come through a difficult time stronger, more deeply connected, renewed in faith and prayer, and committed to doing God's kingdom work in ways we never could have dreamed of a year ago. There is still much work to be done, but there is new life on the horizon, a new normal that will force us outside our comfort zone, and hope for the future. God is calling us to a new way of being the church! Are we ready?

Your Servant in Christ,
Rev. Brandi Grant-Rigsby

To the Congregation of Ada First UMC,

As noted in the pastor's letter, your financial support rallied the church to accomplish so much of its mission throughout the pandemic. All of our financial obligations were met, including our connectional support through the Northwest Plains District, West Ohio Conference, and global United Methodist Church, which totals \$35,554. Locally, the church supported the Beatitudes ministry with its \$10,000 pledge, in addition to the numerous gifts you passed through the church with specific designation to Beatitudes.

Our employees were never furloughed, although some employees experienced a change in their duties and thus that was reflected in their salaries changing. The church applied for, received, and has had forgiven a Paycheck Protection Payment (PPP) loan forgiven in the amount of \$22,000. These monies assisted the church with its expenses at a time when many struggled with their own household expenses. Our 2020 salary expenses totaled just under \$120,000, against an expected budget of \$125,530.

At the end of 2020, the general fund balance was much higher than its typical value near \$10,000. Due to the reduced programming needs and strong financial support, more than \$25,000 was moved to operational reserves. Other financial highlights for 2020 include:

- The receipt of over \$21,000 via online giving through the church webpage, adaumc.org
- The establishment of the Charles and Barbara Wood Music Endowment of \$20,000. Some of the growth of this endowment will annually be used to support the purchase of new music for the choir. This will then free up those monies to be used to support other programming initiatives.
- The investment of the video streaming system for our worship services, which totals over \$5,000 and is made possible by a generous supporter.
- The sponsorship by a family to pay half of the monthly rent to support the Ready, Set, Grow preschool.
- The completion of almost all the Parking Lot Pledges. The trustees are actively finalizing drawings, working with the Village, and desire to complete this project in 2021. We have raised nearly \$50,000 in pledges, capital donations, and operational reserves thus far. Look for additional information from the trustees and finance committees as the project unfurls this year.
- An update or repair to several facility systems, including the replacement of the pressure relief tank on the boiler system (\$2,000), updates to the computer controller software for the heating and air conditioning system (\$3,300), the replacement of the controller panel for the church chiller plant (\$3,600), replacement of the exterior sump pump controller (\$1,200), and repairs to several motors in the heating and cooling system that were damaged by an electrical power surge in September (\$2,100).

Ada First is blessed by all your support, whether it be through your prayers, service, witness, or financial generosity. If you have any questions about the nearly \$240,000 budget at the church, please don't hesitate to talk to a member of the finance committee.

Bryan Marshall, Chair of the Finance Committee
Julie Hurtig, Treasurer