



Central United Methodist Church

30 Church Street N, Concord NC 28025

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October 14, 2024

As we consider our Generosity Emphasis in the month October, I invite us to consider giving from our money and resources in the greater context of discipleship – what it means to follow Jesus Christ.

Followers of Jesus have a particular motivation to SERVE, PRAY, UNITE and GIVE in the context of who God is in us and who we are in God! These frame our worship in the four weeks of October based on John 15:1-17 (Jesus is the true Vine, we are the branches) and 1 Corinthians 3:5-9 (for we are God’s servants, working together; we are God’s field, God’s building).

Since 2021, when we and all congregations began emerging from the pandemic malaise that significantly altered everything – work, school, home, family gatherings, church life and our financial life - we have experienced a steady, but slow growth in our financial generosity. Commitments and actual giving increased in 2022, then in 2023, and again in 2024. So our doors have remained open, bills paid, building maintained, care given, mission and ministry work offered, and connections in our community sustained.

However, we have done so by utilizing about \$200,000 of *income* from our less restricted endowments per year and by utilizing about \$60,000 from special, unrestricted funds. Remarkably, our endowment totals have continued to grow in the strong economy! We are indebted to our Finance and Endowment Committees.

So, about 30% of our 2024 operating ministries budget has been supported by sources beyond our regular tithes and offerings. This is not a sustainable, long-term plan!

And, our Staff, missional work and programming have struggled to do more with less. As someone has said, “What a shame to have all the pieces in place for vital mission and ministry, but have to say ‘no’ because we didn’t have the money.”

So, here is the challenge: For 2025, would you increase your giving to Central UMC by \$1000? If this is not feasible, then would you make a 10% increase in your annual giving to Central UMC? This means that if you are giving \$1200 per year, make it \$1320. This would enable us to put a serious dent in our dependence upon endowment interest and special funds. Pray about it. Perhaps some can do more!

Enclosed please find a commitment card and some important information. We will have moments in each service on October 27 to bring the cards forward as an act of worship. Additional Generosity packets will be available in the Church Office and in the Narthex.

Pastor Tom Latimer