



November 5, 2007

Dear friends of Middlebrook Pike United Methodist Church:

By now, I hope each of you has heard of our “Paving the Way” stewardship campaign, and I hope you understand how important it is to both the short- and long-term health of our church. One component of the campaign is focused on raising the money we need to support our annual ministries that enable us to continue our children and youth ministries, offer adult programs and Christian education opportunities, and reach out to help our community and our world.

But today, I’d like to focus on the other part of our stewardship campaign—the need to raise money that goes beyond keeping MPUMC open and operating in 2008. We need to address the future of our church as today we find ourselves well and truly “at the corner, where faith and life meet.” For 85 years, we have been a beacon on this corner, calling out to the surrounding community to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ. Just as our founders paved the way for us, we need to do some paving of our own, both literally and figuratively. We need to lay down a financial pathway that lets us continue—and improve—to serve Christ from this corner for the next 85 years.

To do this, we must remain financially strong by paying down debt we have accrued for various projects we have undertaken over the last decade. We must prepare for the future by expanding our parking areas and possibly our educational facilities. We must look at improving our nurseries so families visiting us feel comfortable entrusting their children into our care. And we must ensure that our current buildings, sanctuaries, and classrooms keep pace with the evolving ways people want to study and worship in today’s and tomorrow’s modern culture.

I hope the enclosed brochure will answer some of the questions I’m sure you must have about this capital campaign portion of our stewardship effort. You will also hear more about it during our ongoing Paving the Way get-togethers and the worship services on November 11. You should also feel free to ask questions of either Eric or me, Dale and Carolyn Allen, or Mark and Molly Troutman—the Paving the Way Campaign Directors.

These are critical days of decision in our church. Let us covenant together to know and to do the will of God, that we might continue to fulfill our purpose here on the corner. I ask each of you to prayerfully consider the role God is asking you to take in paving the way for future generations of disciples of Christ.

In His love,

Pastor Wil Cantrell

**Q.** *How many ways are there to donate?*

**A.** The church will work with you to accept donations in almost any form imaginable. Cash, checks, and electronic funds transfer are of course easily handled. We can also accept assets such as stocks, bonds, automobiles, boats, property, and endowments. Pledges may be made on a weekly, monthly, or annual basis.

**Q.** *How can I know what and how much to donate?*

**A.** This is between you and God. We can only suggest that you read through the various stewardship materials you will be receiving throughout this campaign. Those will help you better understand the Biblical basis for sacrificial giving and for tithing. They will help you understand that—as much as the church needs your gifts—giving is more about your relationship with God. The act of giving is good for your soul in so many ways.

We also ask that you search for the answers to this question through diligent prayer. Pray with the confidence that God will reveal to you both the method and substance of your pledge. Through prayer, you will know what you should write on each of the pledge cards when Commitment Sunday arrives on November 18.

If you have a prayer request during this stewardship emphasis period, please pass it along to Elaine Ruth or Joyce Haas, our Prayer Emphasis Team Leaders.

85 years ago, a community came together to build what has today become Middlebrook Pike United Methodist Church. Now it's our turn to "pave the way" for future disciples of Christ by securing the financial future of our church.

Please, we need your help!



For more information,  
please contact:

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Middlebrook Pike United Methodist Church  
2008 Stewardship Campaign

**FREQUENTLY  
ASKED  
QUESTIONS**

Enabling us to be and make  
disciples of Christ!

**Q.** *What is the stewardship campaign? I hear about annual ministries budgets and sometimes a capital campaign?*

**A.** The 2008 Stewardship Campaign has two components: 1) an annual budget component to fund our annual ministries through our tithes, and 2) a capital component to raise funds to retire debt and to provide monies to fund our visions for the future of our church. The annual budget needs will be underwritten by pledges to be paid during the calendar year 2008. The capital component will be funded from pledges spanning 3 years (2008 through 2010).

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**Q.** *What will be done with the money raised through this capital campaign?*

**A.** The goal of the capital campaign is to ensure MPUMC can continue to fulfil its mission to make disciples for Christ well into the future. Depending on the amount raised, our church leaders will evaluate paying down our existing loan, building more parking, investing in additional land should it become available, renovating our nurseries, improving educational facilities, or enhancing other facilities that will help the church always meet our growing needs, and our need to grow!

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**Q.** *How much debt does the church currently have? Where did it come from?*

**A.** In 1998, we borrowed \$2.5 million to refinance existing debt and fund the construction of the Family Life Center—and through the good stewardship of our congregation, we have been steadily paying off the loan since then. In August 2007, the balance was \$1.23 million including \$125,000 we added to the loan to build the church offices, and \$174,918 and \$144,539 to buy the McGuinness and Caruso properties.

**Q.** *Why is it so important to pay down our debt at this time?*

**A.** Our church leaders launched this capital campaign to address several critical needs faced by MPUMC. One reason is to reduce the roughly \$66,000 in interest we pay on the loan each year through our annual ministries budget. For comparison, this is more than we spend on the Children's, Youth, College, Education, and Family Ministries combined (not including staff salaries). Imagine what more we could do in those areas—and in new areas—if we didn't have to pay that interest!

The other major issue we face is better positioning our church to grow. Did you know that 66% of the people within a 5-mile radius of MPUMC are basically un-churched? Our Visioning Team has been doing lots of research and has a solid grasp on what it will take to bring more of our church neighbors through our doors—and then keep them coming back. They have crafted an exciting vision that enhances both ministries and facilities including more parking, renovations to both the old and new sanctuaries, additional nursery and classroom space, and several new ministries. You will hear more about these ideas in upcoming publications. To implement these plans, we want to raise the money first so we can grow and serve without incurring more debt and therefore more interest.

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**Q.** *Didn't "Answering the Call" pay off the debt from the Family Life Center?*

**A.** "Growing by Grace" originally raised about \$1 million to offset the cost of building the Family Life Center. "Answering the Call" then reduced our loan by another \$473,000. All of the funds raised through these campaigns have been paid upon the principal of our loan. In addition, we have

received periodic gifts that have been applied toward reducing the balance of our loan. The 3-year capital campaign we are embarking on replaces the "Answering the Call" program.

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**Q.** *Will there be any other major fundraising campaigns conducted during this 3-year capital campaign?*

**A.** We must continue to have a yearly stewardship campaign that raises the funds needed for our annual ministries and operating expenses. But for the next three years, this will be the only time we plan to ask for a commitment to both the annual ministries campaign and the capital campaign (subject to God's redirection of course)!

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**Q.** *Wait, did I just hear that I need to make two pledges?*

**A.** We hope so, but that is up to you. You will be given two pledge cards, a beige one for the annual ministries budget and a pink one for the capital campaign. We ask that you prayerfully consider what you should give to either or both campaigns. Our top priority is to fund the 2008 annual budget. Gifts to the capital campaign should be over and above your pledge to the annual budget.

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**Q.** *Why is it important to pledge now for donations that I won't make for a year or two in the future?*

**A.** Each year, your church leaders rely on pledges to create operations budgets and plan our ministries. Without a similar understanding of the amount expected to be generated from the capital campaign, we cannot properly plan to fund the vision for the expansion of our ministries and improvement of our facilities.