

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Faith Forward Campaign



1. How did we decide to do this project?

In early 2017, we analyzed our income from 2016 and determined that 37% of our annual contributions was coming from faithful members over the age of 80—clearly not a sustainable situation. The Executive Committee and the Administrative Board adopted a three part action plan: (1) Strive to recruit and include young families in our ministry. (2) Educate the entire congregation better about stewardship and generosity. (3) Encourage giving to the FUMC Foundation endowment funds.

In August of 2017, the Administrative Board hired Horizons Stewardship to conduct a capital campaign in the spring of 2018 and an annual giving campaign in the fall of 2018. The capital campaign is to update the Family Life Center and enhance the endowment. Thus the two campaigns address all three items of the church's action plan.

2. What is happening now?

The Faith Forward campaign has started. A Leadership Team has been recruited and is being trained. Leaders of different small groups will be trained to take a message back to their classes and groups. A mailing will soon go out to inform the congregation about the campaign. A church-wide prayer effort is being launched.

3. What will be involved in the campaign?

There are many elements in the campaign, from prayer to fellowship events. We want to involve a majority of the active membership of the congregation in some aspect of the campaign. Some church leaders will be asked to make commitments to the campaign prior to Commitment Sunday, so that we can build momentum and encourage the rest of the church. The Commitment Sunday for the campaign is April 15, and we should be able to announce our results by May 13.

4. Who is leading this effort?

Forty-two of our trusted church leaders have signed on to help lead this effort. A listing can be found on our website, sfumc.org. Pastors Bud Reeves, Dane Womack, and Sara Bayles are all involved. Our consultant for the campaign is Richard Rogers from Russellville. Horizons Stewardship is the largest Christian stewardship company in the world, based in Arkansas, and founded by a United Methodist pastor. All of this leadership ensures that the Faith Forward campaign will be done with integrity, honesty, and sensitivity to our character, values, and beliefs.

5. What is our goal?

We are hoping to raise in the neighborhood of \$2,000,000. A more exact goal will be formulated as we get a little further into the campaign. Depending on initial developments, it may be revised somewhat upward or downward.

6. How will the money raised be spent?

The first million or so will be spent on the update of the Family Life Center. A team is now working on a finalized plan with scope of work and projected costs, which will be communicated later in the campaign.

Everything over the cost of the FLC update will go into the unrestricted endowment of the First United Methodist Church Foundation. (See separate FAQ below.)

7. What are the needs of the Family Life Center?

The Family Life Center was constructed in 1986, and it has been a number of years since any major improvements were done. The FLC provides facilities for many different ministries of the church: child care programs, Vacation Bible School, Music Camp, Sunday School, Wednesday Night Life, Pacesetters, Men's Bible Study, United Methodist Women, Last Sunday Breakfast, and the Connexion worship service, to name a few.

The worship space for the Connexion will receive updated architecture, audio and video. New paint, flooring, and ceiling treatments are anticipated throughout. Several appliances in the kitchen need replacing. The bathrooms and showers need to be updated. And we will improve the entrance and fellowship space to encourage flow and engagement. However, no major structural changes are anticipated in the building itself.

8. How may gifts be given to the campaign?

The Faith Forward campaign is a three-year effort. Commitments may be made weekly, monthly, annually or as a one-time gift. Contributions may be in cash or appreciated assets such as stock. In addition to the three-year commitments, members may want to consider an estate gift to the Foundation separate from the campaign.

9. What can I do right now to support the Faith First campaign?

The most important thing to do right now is to pray—for the campaign, for the leadership, for all the activities associated with the campaign, for First United Methodist Church and our mission and ministry in the Fort Smith community. The campaign prayer is, "**Lord, what do you want to do through me?**" Get serious about having a conversation with your God about what the Lord wants you to do to help the church at this time.

If you are asked to help with some aspect of the campaign, we hope you will say yes. It will be a great opportunity to make a difference and be part of a historic effort that will strengthen our church for years to come.

First United Methodist Church Foundation

1. What's this I hear about our church having a Foundation?

The First United Methodist Church Foundation was founded as an Arkansas non-profit corporation in 1967. Although it has often operated behind the scenes, the Foundation has been quietly building value and supporting ministry for half a century!

2. What's the purpose of the FUMC Foundation?

The purpose of most church foundations is to support the local and extended ministry of the church through financial support supplied by funds invested by faithful stewards in the

past for the future mission and ministry of the church. The original articles of incorporation state that the Foundation is “to use the assets of the corporation in promoting any Christian cause, principally through the organizations of the United Methodist Church.”

3. How can the Foundation help our mission and ministry?

Distributions from the Foundation can help the mission and ministry of the church by providing funds that may be used to offset expenses that are beyond the regular contributions of the church members. Thus we can maintain and expand a strong ministry and not be inhibited by lack of funds. We can do better what God is calling us to do!

In many cases, Foundation funds can help pay for large maintenance costs of our historic buildings, so that program funds (children, youth, education, and music) are not diminished.

4. How much is in the Foundation?

Currently the principal value of the Foundation is a little over \$9.4 million. About 60% is in funds that are unrestricted or are designated for building and operations. About 20% is designated for missions. The other 20% is designated for other purposes.

5. How may gifts be made to the Foundation?

Through the Faith Forward Campaign, all gifts in excess of the need for the update of the Family Life Center will be deposited in the Foundation’s unrestricted endowment. This category will give the most freedom to the Foundation Board to distribute funds where the need or the opportunity for ministry is the greatest.

Besides the campaign, gifts may be made to the Foundation in several ways. Cash gifts are always acceptable. Gifts of appreciated stock are welcome and often a tax advantage to the donor. Planned gifts may be made in the form of bequests, gift annuities, or charitable remainder trusts. Planned gifts of this nature must be worked out with the donor’s financial and legal advisors, in conversation with the senior pastor of the church.

Donors may consider gifts to the Foundation that would permanently endow the amount of their annual pledge to the church, ensuring their perpetual support of the mission and ministry of First United Methodist Church.

Gifts to the Foundation may be designated for specific purposes. After the Faith Forward campaign, the donation process should begin with a conversation between the donor and the senior pastor, to explore the various possibilities.

6. Will the principal of gifts made to the Foundation ever be spent?

The purpose of an endowment is to hold funds in perpetuity so that the growth and earnings from the fund may provide continued support for mission and ministry. It is the intent of the Foundation by-laws and the leadership of the Board that the original deposited principal will remain intact.

7. Does the Foundation make grants, and how does that work?

The primary distribution of Foundation funds is made annually upon request of the Finance Committee of First United Methodist Church, as they work out the budget for the year ahead. Other groups related to First United Methodist Church may make grant

requests for consideration by the Board of the Foundation. The spending cap per year is 4% of the aggregate principal of the available funds in the Foundation.

8. Why raise money for a healthy Foundation?

We are blessed with a substantial asset in the FUMC Foundation. The function of the Foundation is to support the mission and ministry of First United Methodist Church. For 2018, the support from the Foundation for FUMC will be about \$320,000. We anticipate that the needs for Foundation funds will grow in the coming years as many of our faithful donors enter God's heavenly Kingdom. We want to use our resources to keep the ministry of the church strong and to ensure that we keep our facilities in excellent condition.

In addition, the growth of our Foundation, should it exceed the needs of the local church, can make funds available for ministry in the community of Fort Smith, the state of Arkansas, and around the world. Imagine the impact the FUMC Foundation could have in helping to fund ministries that transform lives beyond our church walls!

9. How has the Foundation made an impact on the ministry of FUMC?

The Foundation has been supporting the mission and ministry of the church since 1967, although in the early years the funds for distribution were minimal. In the last ten years, however, the Foundation has contributed over \$783,000 to the mission and ministry of the church. These funds have supported many forms of ministry:

- Christian education
- Music programs
- Children's ministries
- Youth ministries
- College ministry at UAFS
- Building and grounds maintenance
- Evangelism
- Local mission projects
- Guatemala medical mission team

As we support the FUMC Foundation through the Faith Forward campaign and through future planned gifts, we anticipate that its impact will continue to grow, for the strengthening of our church and for the glory of God!

10. Who runs the Foundation?

The First United Methodist Church Foundation is governed by a Board of Trustees. (To avoid confusion with the Trustees of the church, we usually just refer to them as the Foundation Board.) The Foundation Board reports to the Finance Committee and is amenable to Administrative Board of the church. So there are several levels of accountability built into the structure.

The current members of the Foundation Board include Scott Price (chair), Mary Ellen Jesson, Bob Miller, Taylor Prewitt, Patti Cox, and Ben Shipley. Ron Powell, the chair of the Finance Committee, is ex-officio with vote. Bud Reeves, senior pastor, is ex-officio without vote.