



**Church of the Good Shepherd United Methodist**  
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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

January, 2021

We move into 2021, with great hope and anticipation that the many troubles of 2020 are behind us. Here's an update on the church finances at the end of 2020.

We saw a significant decline in regular contributions at the outset of the pandemic in March. Online worship became the Sunday morning norm, and the congregation became more familiar with providing their offerings either by mail or through e-giving. Contributions gradually moved back up closer to more normal levels. Year-end giving was very good which brought us up to a level that was only 10% below 2019.

From an expense standpoint, many church programs did not require the same level of funding received in years past. Understandably, the normal operating and administrative costs continued at about the same levels as prior years. The early decision to continue to pay Pastor Steve and all other staff members, which was reviewed and reaffirmed throughout the year, resulted in payroll expense remaining at about the same level as 2019. The entire staff had to make massive adjustments in their work schedules and how their work was done. They were able to do it extremely well. We are fortunate to have such great people! The Payroll Protection Plan (PPP) loan, received in late April, was successfully converted to a grant late in the year, thus eliminating any repayment or interest obligation. These funds were beneficial in covering some of the payroll expense, thus allowing us to have all expenses, including Conference apportionment, paid in full at the end of the year. In fact, with the strong contributions late in the year, we ended up with slightly over \$5000 excess General Funds. Finance decided to roll 90% of this into the New Year and tithe the remaining 10% to our mission team for their redistribution to worthy missions of their choice.

Here's our direction for 2021. In November, many responded to the annual request to provide 2021 Estimates of Giving. These help in our ability to properly manage church finances. If you have yet to send one in, it can still be done by contacting the church office. The Church Health Team continues to review pandemic conditions while making and revising plans for the eventual reopening of the Church. It remains unknown at present just how long it will be before we can once again come together for worship and the many other church programs and activities attended and enjoyed by larger numbers of people. That time will come. Until then, on line worship and the other programs available on a virtual basis will continue and become even more refined. The contributions that you are making on a regular basis through the mail and other e-giving are needed and very much appreciated. Please prayerfully consider continuing, or even increasing them as personal finances allow. With everyone's help, your Church will stay up to date with all of its expenses, continue to retain our valuable staff, and continue to bring the Lord's message to everyone. I look forward to the day that we will all be together in worship and fellowship, greeting each other with at least a warm smile and friendly hello, even though handshakes may not be appropriate.

Yours in Service to the Lord,

Ed Bradley, Finance Committee Chairman