

Where Does My Giving Go? June's Money Minute

*Have you wondered how your giving affects daily ministry here at Nativity?
Would you like to know how some of our budget line items relate to our mission?
Here's a part of how your giving is currently Making Christ Known!*

For June, we'll explore the Learn Ministry budget line item. Milestones, Campfirmation, Christian Education, Vacation Bible School, Faith at Home, and Youth all fall under Learn

I find the Milestone ministry to be a special part of Learn, as our Milestones often culminate in worship. In honoring Milestones during worship, we all take part in one another's faith journeys, and we grow together. Over the course of a year, we celebrate so many milestones: Baptism, Kindergarten Bibles, Communion, 3rd Grade Bibles, Confirmation, Graduation, and more. The Milestone budget pays for learning materials and markers of these Milestones – Bibles, books, and other gifts – which grow and inspire faith. This year, 7 of our young members celebrated their Communion Milestone. To prepare, Abby, Miles, Juliet, Noah, Adeline, Katija, Bella, and their parents met to talk about Sacraments and their faith, and to enjoy fellowship over dinner. This line item paid for materials and for dinner, which was full of sharing and excited conversation. It was a holy experience to see the joy these children had in learning about the Eucharist, and I hope that you all felt that joy as you surrounded them at their Milestone!

Christian Education, or Faith Formation, is probably what comes to mind when you think "Learn." This line item pays for things like Sunday morning Faith Formation curricula, which enable members of our congregation to be both leaders and participants by providing age-appropriate, engaging materials for classes. This fall, we'll be using purchased curricula for our younger classes, though all ages benefit from these kinds of materials. These funds also cover materials like Play-Doh, markers, colored pencils, paper, rubber stamps, ink, and glue, all of which we've used to grow in faith. This line item lets us be creative in the ways we learn and grow in our faith; many different people, through many different learning styles, engage in learning that Makes Christ Known.

Faith at Home is the smallest line of the Learn budget, but it's by no means a lesser ministry! This line supplements the Christ in Our Home booklets, as well as the weekly devotional materials that are available at the Welcome Desk (this week, we'll start using Taking Faith Home). This helps to show that we "Learn" in more places than in the Nativity building; this line item helps us Make Christ Known in our homes.

Then there's our Campfirmation line item. While our Youths' families pay for part of their week at camp, Nativity supports their faith journey by offsetting some of the cost, as well as covering the expense of Nativity's leader(s) who staff the week. If you've never talked to a Youth who's been to Campfirmation, I encourage it! Our kids experience an incredible amount of learning and growing in those 6 days; it's definitely money *invested* rather than merely spent.

Vacation Bible School (VBS) is always an exciting time in the life of the church – it's a once a year experience of moving, dancing, singing, creative faith where our kids (and adults!) come together for a week of formation. VBS makes up 1/5 of our Learn budget. However, this year we'll be collecting a Noisy Offering to help offset the cost of VBS, and using the budgeted amount as a secondary source. This is an act of good stewardship. The staff watches Nativity's income and expenses carefully, and we do our best not to spend money that isn't there – just like you do in your house. Because we're experiencing some shortfalls in income, we'll use June's Noisy Offering to ensure we can have a vibrant, faith-filled VBS without spending over our income. It's my hope that, as we continue to learn about and grow in stewardship, we'll be able to cover all our budgeted expenses through income.

And finally, the Youth line item – likely the most varied in terms of what it covers. The Youth budget allows us to host Lock-Ins, where the Youth spend hours eating, learning, doing service projects, and having fun together. This budget also supplements our Beach and Fall Retreats, which are

opportunities for our kids to grow in their faith through intentional time apart. This year, Young Youth became part of our Youth ministry – it's been exciting to see this new group become an important part of our young member's faith lives. A look at the most recent Young Youth receipts shows that we purchased plastic cups, ping pong balls, and balloons, which became one of the most fun games we've played all year: Ping Pong Dodgeball! I'd encourage you to ask a Young Youth about that great fellowship experience.

The Learn line item touches nearly everyone at Nativity. Whether we're participating directly in these ministries, or being part of the faith community that supports those who do, through worship, gifts, and presence, we're all part of Making Christ Known through Learn. Thank you for your generosity in giving which makes these meaningful ministries possible!

Peace,
Pastor Rachel