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Letter to St. John's UMC Congregation

On Stewardship, Vitality, and Legacy

Dear Beloved Members of the Congregation,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord, whose enduring love sustains and guides us. As we gather in fellowship and faith, the Finance Committee feels compelled to share a message about stewardship, our church's vitality, and the legacy we have been building for generations yet to come. As we enjoy the 63rd year since the beginning of St. John's United Methodist Church it is important to recognize the generational change that is taking place. Children who once went through our Sunday school programs are now adults. Parents of those children are transitioning out of the support roles that have contributed to the uplifting functions and growth of St. John's. Ongoing financial support is also transitioning. With the future of our church in mind we ask that you prayerfully consider the following as you evaluate your ongoing contributions.

The Call to Stewardship

Stewardship is not merely a practice but a sacred calling. Throughout scripture, we are reminded that everything we possess is entrusted to us by God. From the talents we nurture to the resources we are given, each gift is an opportunity to serve faithfully and generously. The apostle Peter exhorts us: "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace" (1 Peter 4:10).

True stewardship means recognizing that we are caretakers—not owners—of the blessings we enjoy. It encompasses our time, talents and treasures. When we are mindful stewards, we honor God by ensuring that our resources are directed toward the flourishing of our community and the fulfillment of our mission.

As we reflect on stewardship, let us consider the many ways we can give:

- Time: Committing ourselves to worship, prayer, service, and fellowship.
- Talents: Using our unique skills to enrich our ministries—from music and teaching to administration and care.
- Treasures: Supporting the church financially, enabling outreach, maintenance, and growth.

Church Vitality: Building for Tomorrow

As we look toward the future, vitality becomes a guiding principle. It is not enough to simply maintain what we have; we must actively seek ways to strengthen and secure our church for the years ahead. Vitality encompasses our finances, our facilities, our ministries, and our leadership.

Financial Vitality: The health of our church's finances is critical. Through thoughtful budgeting and wise investment, we strive to ensure that the church can continue its work unhindered. Regular giving, special campaigns, and legacy gifts all

play a role in sustaining our ministry. I encourage each of you to prayerfully consider how your financial support can be a blessing now and into the future.

Facility Stewardship: Our church building is a living symbol of faith. Its walls have witnessed baptisms, weddings, funerals, and countless gatherings of worship and community. Maintaining and improving our facilities not only preserves history but creates inviting spaces for new members and visitors to encounter God's love.

Ministry Renewal: Our programs must evolve to meet the needs of changing times. Whether it's supporting children and youth, engaging in missions, or fostering adult education, innovative thinking and new volunteers are needed to keep our ministries vibrant and relevant.

Leadership Development: The church's vitality depends on committed and inspired leaders. Through mentoring, training, and opportunities for service, we need to cultivate the next generation who will carry our vision forward.

The Legacy We Leave

Legacy is the story that unfolds long after our own chapter closes. It is shaped by our choices, our commitments, and the love we pour into this spiritual family. Our legacy is written not just in bricks and mortar but in hearts transformed, lives uplifted, and the unwavering witness of faith.

What kind of legacy do we wish to leave? A legacy of generosity, compassion, and hope. A legacy that welcomes the stranger and a legacy that proclaims Christ's love in word and deed, so that future generations may know the depth and breadth of God's grace.

To ensure this legacy endures, we must take deliberate steps:

- **Share Our Stories:** Pass down testimonies, memories, and wisdom to inspire those who come after us.
- **Mentor and Empower:** Invest in the spiritual growth of our children and youth, encouraging them to take their place as leaders.
- **Document Our History:** Preserve the records of our church's journey, honoring those who paved the way.
- **Cultivate Generosity:** Foster a culture where giving is a joyful response to God's abundance.
- **Plan for the Future:** Establish endowments and bequests so that our church remains strong and resilient.

A Shared Responsibility

None of this is possible without you. Each member and attendee of our congregation is a vital thread in the fabric of our community. Your prayers, your gifts, your service, and your presence matter deeply. The journey ahead will hold challenges, but also endless opportunities for growth and grace.

Let us move forward together, united in purpose and love. May we be found faithful stewards, wise builders, and compassionate bearers of God's legacy. When future generations look back, may they see not only what we built, but the spirit with which we built it. A spirit of humility, generosity, and unwavering faith.

Conclusion: An Invitation to Renewed Commitment

We invite you, dear friends, to reflect on your role in our church's story. Ask yourself how you might deepen your commitment to stewardship, vitality, and legacy. Perhaps it is through increased giving, volunteering, mentoring others, or simply offering your prayers.

Let us gather, not only as recipients of God's blessings, but as active stewards who ensure those blessings flow onward. The legacy we leave is shaped by our acts today. May we be bold in faith, generous in spirit, and steadfast in love.

With gratitude for each of you and hope for all that lies ahead,

In Christ's service,

The Finance Committee