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Dear Members and Friends:

You will find enclosed information about our Stewardship/Generosity Campaign for 2012. I hope you will take the time to read through the packet, gain understanding about our philosophy on giving, and prayerfully consider your response for this next year.

I know that this is a unpopular subject among church-goers, but it doesn't have to be. Our focus is on becoming the church that God has called us to be - to give our heart, mind, and strength fully to him, and to be willing to act sacrificially toward that calling. When we are obedient and faithful, God takes our little sacrifices and does more with them than we could ever hope or imagine.

I am asking that you move beyond simply doing what you've always done, and seek God's calling for you in this area for 2012. This is how our faith grows... when we are willing to step out of our comfort zones. I do not have a dollar amount to ask you to give (that's not my place), but I am supposed to help you to evaluate where you are spiritually and encourage you to move forward. So my prayer for our church this year is that we will listen for God's leading, and we will respond obediently to it.

As you read the enclosed information, I want you to take special notice of the 3 integrated areas of our church: Mortar, Ministry, and Mission. None of these stand alone; a fruitful church will blend and leverage each of these for the furthering of the Kingdom of God. While one of these areas may pull at your heart strings, without each of them, the church cannot succeed. Therefore, we hope you will direct your gifts to the General Fund of the church and avoid making "designated" pledges. I realize this requires your trust in our Administration and Leadership - I believe we have made great strides in being responsible, and hope you have seen that as well.

Finally, I want to appeal to you... please don't simply discard this information, and please don't simply do what you have always done. Those actions will not help you in your walk with Christ, and surely will not help our church in our attempts to move forward as a fruitful congregation. Please pray. Please be honest with yourself and with God. Please take a fresh look at your commitment to Christ. Finally, please take a step toward being obedient to God's will. If we will each do this - what more can we ask?

Thank you for your support of First United Methodist Church. Thank you for your prayers and your faith. I believe we can experience a great movement of the Spirit of Christ in our church in the coming months..., but it starts here. I hope you will join us in the journey and be willing to join us in the adventure of faith.

Yours in Christ,

David E. Payne
Sr. Pastor, First United Methodist Church