

Sermon Title: **“Stewardship Campaign for 2024: Our Church Finances”**

Bible: **Deuteronomy 14:22-29 & Acts 2:42-47**

When: on Sunday, November 19, 2023

Where: about 30 people (plus YouTube Live Streaming viewers) at Gilroy UMC

Opening Prayer

O Lord, let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts, be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock, and our Redeemer. Amen.

1. Finances of the Faith Communities in the Bible

Today’s message has been prepared for our stewardship campaign for the year 2024. I shared my personal stewardship story last month. You can find it via our church website. Today, I will share our church finances for 2023. Today’s scripture readings are not from the lectionary. I selected them for today’s message in order to look at our church finances. Actually, I tried to find the United Methodist Church or Gilroy United Methodist Church in the Bible. Unfortunately, I cannot find us in the Bible. Are we okay? No worries. We are God’s Children and we are loved by God, and we love our Lord! According to our denomination guidelines and our context, we will take a look at our church finances. But before that, let us look at some finance examples of the faith communities in the Bible.

The first reading is from Deuteronomy. For this faith community in the Old Testament, what was their income? Their income was tithing yearly and every three years! Where did they spend their income? It says “You shall eat there in the presence of the Lord your God, you

and your household rejoicing together,” and “The Levites, because they have no allotment or inheritance with you, as well as the resident aliens, the orphans, and the widows in your towns, may come and eat their fill.” In my understanding, they spent their income for Worship of the Lord and their leaders or staff. The Levites, including the priests at that time, had neither allotment nor inheritance, and the faith community took care of them their whole lives from birth to death, and their families, from generation to generation. They also spent money on themselves for things like ministries within the church such as hospitality, education, children or youth or senior programs. They also helped those who are in need or the marginalized people in their community.

How about the early church in Acts in the New Testament? Acts 2 describes the faith community right after Pentecost or the beginning of the early church! It says “All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need.” What was their income? Their income was all they had together, because they sold all they had and shared it. How did they spend money? They spent money according to what they needed. I cannot imagine how they shared all they had, but if they shared all they had, it made sense to me to use it as they needed.

How about us? Do we follow any of the faith communities’ methods of finance in the Bible? No. The United Methodist Church has our own way of doing church finances. We,

Gilroy United Methodist Church, follow our denomination and conference guidelines, in our context.

2. Finances of the Gilroy United Methodist Church

Now, I will talk about our own church finances. I plan to share many numbers, because financial transparency is the key for healthy church finances. And this church is our church.

We love our church together, right? Sometimes, love means to take responsibility together.

And we want to be good stewards for what we have and for our church, right?

The following is our actual church income in 2023 through the end of October. And I would like to compare the numbers from last year.

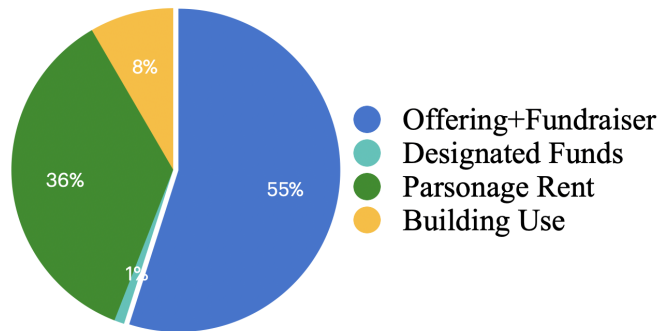
ACTUAL INCOME	by Oct 2023	by Oct 2022
Offering	\$45,550.00	\$52,796.57
General Fundraising	\$0.00	\$55.00
Angel Fund	\$600.00	\$330.00
Fellowship Hospitality	\$175.00	\$148.00
Building Use	\$36,560.26	\$33,235.24
Banking Interest	\$48.08	\$8.52
Others	\$59.00	\$15.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$82,992.34	\$86,588.33

Offering by our congregation is about \$45,000, which is about \$7,000 less than that of last year. We also received \$600 for the Angel Memorial Fund, \$175 for Fellowship Hospitality. For the building use income, the church received about \$36,000, which includes parsonage rental income. This is about \$3,000 more than that of last year. We received about \$48 in banking interest. The total income is about \$83,000, which is about \$4,000 less than that of

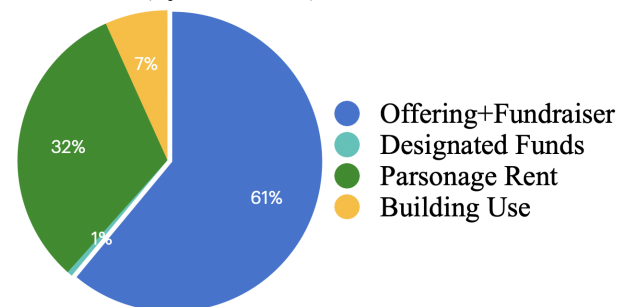
last year.

If we look at this as a percentage, the percentage of our regular offering is 55%. The percentage of designated funds is 1%. The percentage of parsonage rent income is 36%, and that of building use income is 8%. If we compare that with last year, the percentage of our offering is 6% less, and the percentages of parsonage rental income and building use income increased 4% and 1%. But we can roughly say that 2023 income percentages are similar to those of 2022.

INCOME (by Oct 31, 23)



INCOME (by Oct 31, 22)



The following is our actual expense in 2023 through the end of October compared with last year's number.

ACTUAL EXPENSE	by Oct 2023	by Oct 2022
Special Event/Project	\$2,158.38	\$48,405.19
Apportionment	\$6,928.27	\$6,508.46
Pastor Compensation	\$48,759.20	\$49,044.46
Staff Salary	\$14,539.99	\$13,183.72
Administration & Office	\$4,573.06	\$11,251.31
Building	\$10,858.90	\$10,658.58
Ministry	\$3,013.02	\$2,296.17
Outreach	\$4,775.00	\$2,638.23
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$95,605.82	\$143,986.12

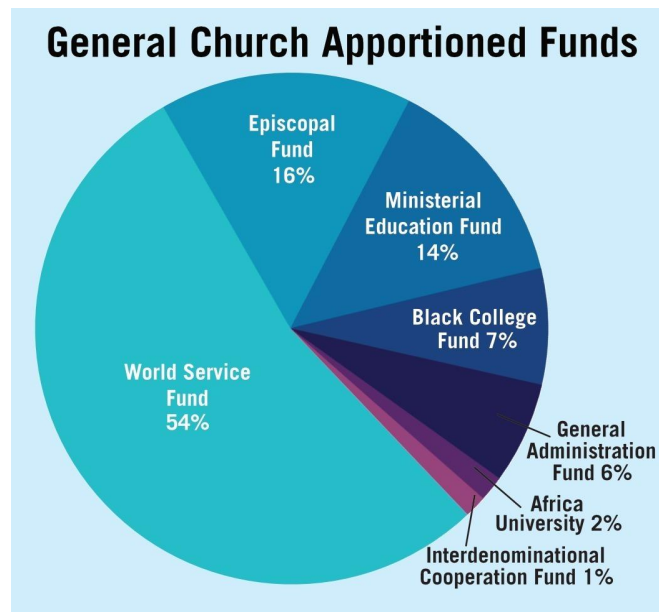
First of all, a Special Event/Project refers to our 170th Anniversary Celebration this year. The church spent about \$2,000. And last year, the church spent about \$48,000 for the new parking lot and the permit fees.

Without these special events and projects, it looks like this.

ACTUAL EXPENSE	by Oct 2023	by Oct 2022
Apportionment	\$6,928.27	\$6,508.46
Pastor Compensation	\$48,759.20	\$49,044.46
Staff Salary	\$14,539.99	\$13,183.72
Administration & Office	\$4,573.06	\$11,251.31
Building	\$10,858.90	\$10,658.58
Ministry	\$3,013.02	\$2,296.17
Outreach	\$4,775.00	\$2,638.23
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$93,447.44	\$95,580.93

We gave about \$6,900 in apportionment—our tithe—10% of our income to our Cal-Nev Annual Conference every month. The church spent about \$49,000 for my pastoral compensation, and about \$14,000 for our staff. For administration and office costs, we spent about \$4,500. But I believe that there will be a Comprehensive Insurance Fee of about \$6,500. For our building, we spent about \$10,000. Then, we can roughly say that our actual expenses are similar to last year.

Why do we give this apportionment? Generally speaking, our church gives 10% of our pure income to the Conference. And this tithe or apportionment is a token of our connectionalism. With these collected apportionment funds, we, through our denomination, do what a single local church cannot do.

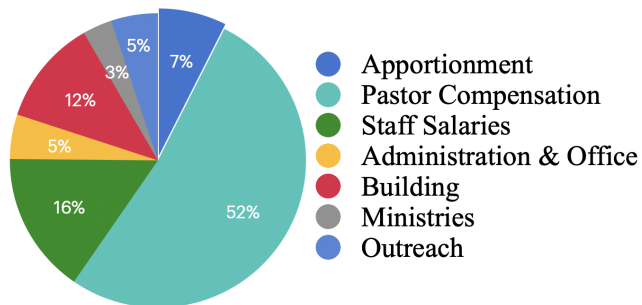


As we know, when we make a donation to UMCOR, the United Methodist Committee on Relief, 100% of our donation goes to those in need. Then, how can we manage UMCOR? The World Service Fund supports all UMC general agencies and supports missionary personnel and administrative costs of many areas. For example, I learned that Katherine Parker, our conference missionary to Nepal, receives her one third compensation from this World Service Fund. The Ministerial Education Fund provides funds for recruitment of clergy candidates and provides financial support for 13 United Methodist seminaries. The Black College Fund supports the programs and ministries of 11 historically black colleges and universities, including one medical school. These gifts reflect the value our Church places on education, especially those who have been historically excluded. The African University Fund supports the first fully accredited UM-related institution on the African continent. The University promotes independence and empowerment through a diverse student body from across the continent. And our church is one of the local churches who

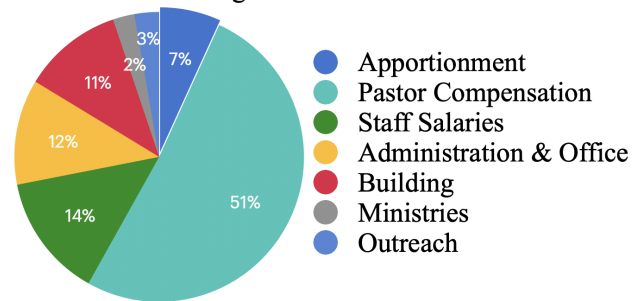
made 100% of our apportionment payment in the last few years, and our Cal-Nev Annual Conference is one of the conferences who made 100% of its apportionment payment in the last few years, even though our church and conference finances are not as good as we would like. Thank you so much for all of your generosity and connectionalism as a whole church!

I would like to show the percentage of our church expenses without special events or projects. Because there will be a Comprehensive Insurance Fee of about \$6,500 in the category of Administration, the percentages will be similar to those of last year.

2023 EXPENSE by Oct
WITHOUT 170th Event



2022 EXPENSE by Oct
WITHOUT Parking Lot



I came to Gilroy UMC in July 2018. And I think that this year will be the first year to have a deficit. We spent more than our income, regardless of our special 170th celebration.

By Oct 2023 INCOME/EXPENSE	WITH 170th Event	WITHOUT 170th Event
TOTAL INCOME	\$82,992.34	\$82,992.34
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$95,605.82	\$93,447.44
BALANCE	-\$12,613.48	-\$10,445.10

But no worries. We are okay for the next few years, because we have saved some money in our checking and saving accounts. Let us look at our checking and saving accounts, and an

investment account that the church has.

Main Checking	\$32,317.35	Angel Fund: \$362.85 Burnson Hispanic Fund: \$4,283.85 Fellowship Hospitality: \$297.44
Parsonage Checking	\$1,853.00	For Parsonage
Parsonage Savings	\$7,873.52	
Trimble Savings	\$15,216.02	No Strings Attached
Vanguard REIT Index Fund	\$116,482.15	Disaster and long term facility and equipment replacement

In our main checking account, we have about \$32,000, which includes about \$300 for the Angel Fund, about \$4,200 for the Burnson Hispanic Fund, and about \$300 for the Fellowship Hospitality fund. The Angel Fund is for those who are in need. The Burnson Hispanic Fund is for Hispanic ministries or outreach. This year, we gave a \$1,000 Elvira Burnson Hispanic Scholarship to a Gavilan College student.

The church has another checking account for the parsonage, which has about \$1,800. Our church has two savings accounts: Parsonage savings at about \$8,000. These two accounts are for the parsonage. And the church has the Trimble savings of about \$15,000, which does not have any strings attached. Our church has an investment in case of disaster and long term facility and equipment replacement, which is a Vanguard REIT Index Fund, and it is worth about \$120,000.

I would like to share our pass through contributions from January to October. Pass through contribution means that contributions are made from our church to a second non-profit

organization, according to the donor's designation. For example, UMCOR, United Methodist Committee On Relief, is an example of this pass through contribution. The following pass through contributions are as of October 31st, 2023.

- For Ukraine Relief Fund via UMCOR: \$1,001.06
- For the Lahaina, Hawaii Fire Victims via UMCOR: \$220.00
- For Syria/Turkey Earthquake Relief Fund via Cal-Nev Annual Conference: \$350.00
- For Native American Ministries Sunday: \$50.00

And our church has donated \$250 per month to St. Joseph's Family Center, since November 2020, for about three years, while we donated 100% of our Christmas offering to St. Joseph's, for a total this past year of \$4,353.00. Thank you so much again for all of your generosity and care for our community and the whole world.

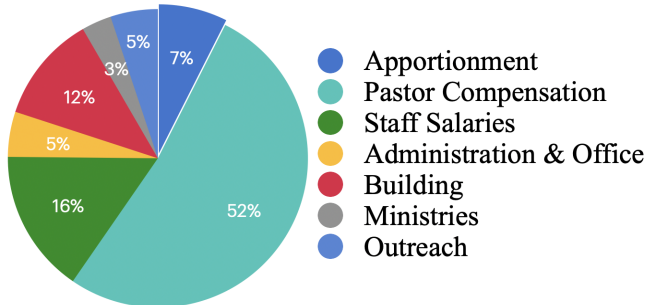
3. Pastoral Message

As I shared before, since I came to Gilroy UMC in July 2018, this year will be the first year to have a deficit. I am so thankful for what God has done through us for the past seven years. And we are okay for the next few years, but we need to think of the long-term plan, as well as the short-term plan.

This is the percentage of our actual expenses. As you saw, the biggest part of our expense is for the pastor. When I took a webinar on "Building a Better Budget," I learned of certain benchmarks by percentage of budget. Of course, every church is different. But it is like the

following. How about our church finance percentages compared to these benchmarks by percentage of budget?

2023 EXPENSE by Oct
WITHOUT 170th Event



1. Analyze distribution of budget

■ Benchmarks by % of budget

- Staff 45% - 55%
- Facility 20% - 30%
- Programs 10% - 20%
- Missions 15% - 20%

In order to pay for the pastor, there is a tendency for many churches to reduce the budget or expenses for the programs or ministries, and missions or outreach. It would work for the short-term plan, because the role of the pastor is essential for the church. However, the church does not exist to pay for the pastor. The church does not exist for the church itself, either. Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. In other words, the church exists for us to share God's love and grace with the community.

As your pastor, as your paid pastor, I take the numbers very seriously. As you might know, I came here as a one-quarter time pastor at first. When I became a half-time pastor, our SPRC and lay leadership team made a difficult decision to remove the position of the church office secretary. Our lay leaders and I have shared the duties of the church office. Now I am a shared full-time pastor who receives benefits of pension and health insurance. I believe that as I grow spiritually and financially, our church grows together. As you feel and experience, I love to serve the church and you. And I am paid. But I do not want to be a financial burden

for the church. When our church decided to have a part-time pastor after a full-time pastor about 10 years ago, I am sure that it was a difficult but necessary decision for the church. I still see the need of the half-time pastor for this church, even though there is a financial challenge this year and next year. But I do not want to be a financial burden. I want to be a joy to you, not a concern for you.

When I submitted my pastoral report, I could express my desire for my next appointment. There were four choices: Yes I want to come back; No, I want to be appointed another church; Either; and Retired. Retiring is not my choice at all yet. After my prayer, I chose “either.” I believe that our church leaders and members have the same mind. Our church hopes to have a half-time pastor next year. But our church finances will have a deficit in terms of operating budget this year and probably next year, too. For the next year, what we can do for the church, for our SPRC, finance team, and lay leadership team, is to show our commitments. Please think about the stewardship campaign for 2024. If you do not give, how about giving? If you give occasionally, how about giving regularly? If you do not submit the pledge form, how about submitting the pledge form? Your support and pledge forms would be a great help for our church lay leaders to plan the next year, and to make decisions, even difficult decisions.

When I came to this church in July 2018, there was a concern about closing the church. But we got through it together. The COVID-19 pandemic was one of the unavoidable challenges. But we got through it together. Actually, we are one of the great churches, not only as a

survivor, but also as a generous giver for the community! This year and the next year will not be easy. It is another challenge. But we will get through it together. That's because this church is my and OUR church. I will make eye contact with each of you. Let us make eye contact with each other. Let us get through it together with God's grace and love!

Closing Prayer

O Lord, we come to you, because you are the sources of who we are and all we have. We come to you, because we need your wisdom, your strength, and your courage. Be with us and lead us and use us. In Jesus' name. Amen.