



October 2017

Dear Friends of Skyland United Methodist Church,

The fall is a season when we take time to consider our shared life together with our church family. Our church is a family. We have been adopted into God's family through God's Son, Jesus Christ. So truly we are brothers and sisters.

God is a God of relationships. You and I were created for relationship - - - relationship with God and relationship with each other. We really are a family. I want to thank you for letting Linda and myself into this amazing family called Skyland UMC. We have found the last three months to be filled with exciting new relationships and generous words of welcome!

This is a sign of an open and healthy family, one that welcomes others to come in and join the family!

A part of any family is sharing in the work of the family. In our homes, maybe each person has regular chores. Maybe the children help set the table for dinner or take out the trash. Maybe one person organizes the trips to the grocery store. Someone else handles the laundry. You get where I'm going.

The same is true in the family of God. Each of us has unique interests and talents that God has given to us, to be used in the work of God's family. Each of us has a ministry. Each of us has a calling.

St. Jerome of the 4th Century, said that baptism was the ordination of all people to God's ministry. Our Baptismal vows are an invitation to "Step into the Waters" of God's work.

Everyone counts. Everyone has a calling. Everyone has a ministry.

In this season of Response, consider where you feel called to serve. Perhaps you have been content to "watch from the shore" and have yet to step into the waters of ministry. Or perhaps you've been doing the same thing for a long time; God may have a fresh new call to you. Stop, pray, listen and respond to God's still, quiet call to step into the waters of His work. Look over the enclosed brochure of ministry opportunities and see what you're drawn to. Attend our Ministry Fair on Sunday, November 5 and explore, ask questions. If you feel drawn to something not listed, maybe you are to be the birther of a new creative ministry. Let's talk. Come by the office. Let me sit and listen to your passion - - - it may be a call from God.

Along with Response of Time is your Response to Giving Financially

You may have noticed that I am not shy about talking about money. I have worked with many Christians whose relationship with money has become unhealthy. I have had my own struggles,

growth, and healing in this area of life and I am still learning. Money can be a blessing. Money can become twisted in our lives. Money can be an area of our lives that is redeemed and healed. It can be a source of amazing freedom!

Just as each of us is given a calling to share in the ministry of our church family, so too each of us has the opportunity to share in the growth of Skyland UMC in a financially healthy way. We want our ministries to have adequate resources. We want our staff to receive a fair wage for their hard work. We want our buildings to be adequate and in good repair. We all share in these tasks.

God is generous. He is a giving God; it is God's very nature. He has given each of us so and we are to be generous as God is generous. I am drawn to Paul's words in **2 Corinthians 9:7**:

"Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

I hear Paul saying to make a purposeful plan not out of compulsion or fear but out of joy. Respond out of your joy in a cheerful way. Give out of gratitude! God promises to bless those who bring their share of life's harvest into the house of the Lord. Step into the waters of His generosity. Step in as deep as you will. And see what God will do in your life.

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Make a plan for your giving in 2018 and present it to God on Sunday, November 12 during our commitment time, or return it to the office in the enclosed envelope. As always, your pledge remains confidential between you, God, and our financial secretary, Terri Miller.

If you have struggles in this area of your life, let me help. I am your pastor. And I know that money is a challenging area of life in our complicated world. I am available to you.

We look forward to 2018!

We will be amazed where the waters of God's generosity will carry us. And carry us together with a much grander impact than we could have alone. Thank God for the gift of this family called Skyland UMC.

Peace and Love to you and your household and to our family of God at Skyland UMC,


Pastor Wes Sharpe