




# **ENDOWMENT**

## Annual Report

 **BIRMINGHAM FIRST  
BERKLEY FIRST**  
A UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

  
**2024**

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## BY THE NUMBERS

### General Endowment

01/01/2023 Balance	\$4,180,497
Total Receipts (Including from Gift Annuities)	\$164,691
Interest , Dividend and Market Appreciation	\$636,200
Expenditures	\$155,619
12/31/2023 Balance	\$4,825,769

### Gift Annuities

01/01/2023 Balance	\$476,744
Total Receipts	\$60,000
Interest, Dividends and Market Appreciation	\$49,373
Expenditures including to General Endowment	\$80,830
12/31/2023 Balance	\$505,287

### Named Endowments

01/01/2023 Balance	\$2,285,711
Total Receipts	\$899,139
Interest, Dividends and Market Appreciation	\$396,392
Expenditures including to General Endowment	\$69,277
12/31/2023 Balance	\$3,511,965

# NEVER ALONE



I learned the nursery rhyme in Sunday School when I was a child:

*Here is the church.*

*Here is the steeple.*

*Open the doors and see all the people.*

In addition to these memorable three lines, I learned the hand gestures to go with them, which included: fold hands, fingers inside, put index fingers up (to make the steeple); move your thumbs apart (to open the doors); wiggle inside fingers (to represent the people). Resume reading after giving the hand gestures a try!

An important lesson I've carried with me from Sunday School is that the people in the church are interconnected. We are bound together, like the fingers of our intertwined hands. In 1 Corinthians 12:26 Paul reminds the church that, "If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad."

As we face challenges as a congregation, challenges which are not unique to Birmingham and Berkley First, this reminder is important. We are in this together. In whatever we face, individually or as congregation, we care for each other.

Beyond the Sunday School lesson I've remembered, there is a deeper truth and that is that God never leaves us on our own. We are bound together as members of Birmingham First. And God is with us all, individually, and collectively holding us secure, leading us forward upon paths that may not yet be clear.

Jesus gives his followers in every age a charge and equips them for it:

*Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20).*

Thanks be to God for those gone before, whose legacy gifts provide resources for the church of today and tomorrow. Thanks be to God for all of you, and for the God who is with us, always.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shawn LeLorain". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Pastor Shawn

# ENDOWMENT BOARD UPDATE

The Endowment Board oversees the General Endowment, Named Endowed Funds, and Charitable Gift Annuities. Combined, these funds produce over \$250,000 in annual revenue to support the ministry and mission of Birmingham and Berkley First. We celebrate the faithfulness of those whose generosity makes possible the tremendous positive impact these funds make.

## General Endowment

The purpose of the General Endowment Fund is stated in Church Conference resolutions originally adopted December 11, 1995, and updated July 23, 2018. The purpose of the General Endowment is *“to generate a fund or funds for use by this congregation to meet ministry and mission needs not included in the operating budget,”* and *“to provide a continuous educational program to encourage and inform our membership of the opportunities for endowment giving through donations, bequests, memorials and gifts.”*

In 2023, our General Endowment generated \$167,962 for uses aligned with this purpose. This was combined with \$70,288 in carryover from 2022, to make a total of \$238,250 available for funding programs and projects supplemental to those supported by the congregation’s ministry plan (operating) budget.

The Endowment Board receives and considers grant requests from various ministry areas. In 2023, major general endowment grants provided salary support for our in-reach coordinator, director of accounting and administration, and a part-time custodian. A general endowment grant also underwrote finance department training costs. Endowment grants provided funding for the July First Taste Africa event and assisted with Sunday Dinner costs.

The general endowment also helped to underwrite launch costs for Pickleball in our Christian Life Center (an activity that is now income generating).

For information on Endowment Board meeting dates and guidance on how to prepare a grant request, contact Pastor Shawn at 734-717-8947 (cell) or email [slewis-lakin@fumcbirmingham.org](mailto:slewis-lakin@fumcbirmingham.org).



## Named Endowed Funds

In addition to our General Endowment, we are fortunate to have fifteen active named endowed funds (and one additional named fund that has been established but is not yet active). These named funds were established with significant gifts to support designated purposes. Their uses are restricted to the purposes articulated in the agreements establishing the funds.

At the beginning of each calendar year, the appropriate committee chairs and staff members responsible for ministry areas able to use revenue from named funds are notified of the funding available to them for the year. This funding is available to support any programs or projects that fall within the purpose of the fund. In 2023, named funds generated \$90,292 for ministry and mission; \$102,644 is available in 2024 from named funds. Committee chairpersons and staff members with oversight of ministry areas able to use these funds have been notified of their availability and are now making plans to put them to work, making God's love real.

## Thanks Be to God!

Thanks be to God for all those whose generosity and faithfulness make possible our Endowment ministry! For assistance with current or planned gifts, visit our website, [www.firstlegacy.org](http://www.firstlegacy.org), or contact Pastor Shawn Lewis-Lakin at [slewis-lakin@fumcbirmingham.org](mailto:slewis-lakin@fumcbirmingham.org) or 734-717-8947.

### ENDOWMENT BOARD

#### Chairperson

Eric Freeburg

#### Associate Pastor for Planned Giving

Rev. Shawn Lewis-Lakin

#### Chairperson Emeritus

Gary Valade

#### Members

Joan Benner

Lon Bone

John Carter

Doug Carvell

Jeff Cort

Eric Freeburg

Gayle McGarvah

Claude Oleson

Holly Pisano

Bob Sutherland

Jim Valiquett

Lisa Wells

### INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

#### Committee Senior Pastor

The Rev. Dr. Charles S.G. Boayue, Jr.

#### Chairperson

Rob Grabel

#### Staff Liaison

Frank Turco

#### Members

Brett Bernard

Diana Freeburg

Rob Grabel

Kevin Heckman

Paul Keller

Mark Lachowicz

Colin Lennox

Rick Nauer

Andy Schueler

Frank Schweibold

## CHRIST-CENTERED LIVES

### Jim and Merry Beth Valiquett



Jim and Merry Beth Valiquett's faith journeys were quite similar, yet different in several ways. Both grew up in Christ-centered homes, one a United Methodist and one a Roman Catholic.

Merry Beth's first recollection of her faith journey was as a child at church family picnics in Mt. Clemens, where her family and the James Wright family picnicked on Sunday afternoons. She remembers many summers at Judson Collins Methodist Camp where her Methodist roots continued to be cultivated and nurtured. After college, when Merry Beth settled in the area, shopping for a church home was not necessary, as Dr. Wright was the Sr. Minister here at Birmingham First and it was

wonderful to reconnect and reminisce. She raised her kids here and they were active participants in MYF, the choir, and her son Jon loved his experience as a Baldwin intern one summer. Yes, the opportunities were boundless and taking advantage of them was easy.

Merry Beth also has documentation that her great-great-grandfather's brother was a traveling preacher in the state of New York, after sailing to America in 1829, bringing with him his quarterly tickets and a desire to transfer from the Church of England and the Wesleyan Methodists to the Methodist Episcopal Church here in America. What a legacy her family has, knowing that one of its descendants was one of the first Methodists to serve in this country.

While Merry Beth was growing up on the east side, Jim was doing the same on the west side of Detroit. He grew up in a devout Catholic family and attended parochial schools through middle school. He had an aunt who was a Sister of St. Joseph and has a cousin who is a Jesuit Priest. Merry Beth remembers meeting and visiting his delightful aunt who seemed to really like her, but she told Jim that she was praying Merry Beth would someday convert.

Their faith journeys merged about twenty-four years ago when Merry Beth invited Jim to attend church with her, and he graciously accepted. He found the services to be uplifting, enjoyable, and meaningful. He continued to attend, and their relationship culminated in a beautiful wedding here with Dr. Ritter officiating. As their blended family (along with divided loyalties, as Merry Beth is a Wolverine and Jim is a Spartan) flourished, they continued to support the church with their time, talents, prayers, gifts, and service. Merry Beth enjoyed working in the Membership Office for ten years, with Ann Windley and then Mary Feldmeier. Jim and Merry Beth enjoyed hiking with Carl and Pat Price and learned that a sanctuary could also be in the magnificence of a natural setting at Acadia National Park in Maine or Glacier National Park in Montana.

Supporting and participating in the Missions Ministry has become something they both enjoy. Merry Beth remembers her first mission trip many years ago to Red Bird Mission in Kentucky led by Rev. Doug Vernon. More recently, they are co-chairs of the StreetThreads ministry which supports The NOAH Project in Detroit, and they also enjoy delivering boxes of food in the Pontiac area for Focus Hope. They both actively support the Rummage Sale, as it continues to support missions in so many diverse and wonderful ways. They have been privileged to attend three Annual Conferences and have learned so much about how the United Methodist Church works and strives to “do God’s will.” They have served on the Administrative Council, they enjoy serving as Ushers, and Jim is currently a member of the Endowment Board.

Like Merry Beth said a moment ago, the opportunities here are endless. There are so many ways to participate in the life of this church, here and now, but only because there were those who came before us and left us such a strong and powerful legacy of faith. What can we do to carry this legacy forward? One way is to prayerfully consider including the church in one’s retirement plan, and there are several ways to make this happen. Jim and Merry Beth made a specific bequest a few years ago but are planning on revisiting and revising their estate plan to make some changes in their overall bequest. What better way to say “Thank you” to all those who came before us, who provided us with such a special place to worship and serve, today and in the days, years, and generations to follow.

## **TOP-NOTCH INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT**

Last year, our investment committee made the decision to use BNY Mellon to manage our endowment investment portfolios. This decision was made after an extensive review of proposals submitted by multiple investment advisors. BNY Mellon’s investment decisions are driven by a top-down approach, starting with BNY’s Investment Policy and Investment Strategy Committees, then flowing down to the firm’s Solutions Strategy Committee; final investment decisions being made by the team that manages FUMC Birmingham’s portfolios. BNY Mellon’s team works exclusively with endowments and foundations, with 137 clients and \$1.9 billion under it’s management. Our investment committee establishes portfolio parameters, regularly reviews investment performance, and serves as the liaison between the Endowment Board and BNY Mellon.

## **CARING MINISTRY PASTOR**

Supported with an Endowment Grant

Acting on a request from the Staff-Parish Relations Committee, the Endowment Board has made a three year commitment to support the position of Ministry of Congregational Care. In 2024, funds from General Endowment will fund fifty percent of the cost associated with this critical ministry role in our congregation. As of the publication of this report, the details of how the position will be filled and by whom are being worked out by the Staff Parish Relations Committee.

# LEGACY SOCIETY

## Members



**Legacy Society members have a current planned gift with the Endowment or have indicated they have planned a gift in their estate.**

Anonymous (3)	Don & Sue Foehr	Mick & Sarah McClelland
Ryan & Shedrick Abney	Lois Gaigalas*	Pauline McClew*
Nancy* & Ralph* Bauer	Bob Gillow	Gayle McGarvah
Barb Baughman	Barbara & Bill Goode	Robert & Sukie* McNutt
Dwight* & Joan Benner	Mary Goyeau	Faye Louise Baker & George Miller
Craig & Debbie Berg	Fred & Judy Green	Gwen Moore
Lon Bone	Chris & Doris Hall	Howard R. "Skip" Neilson*
Linda Buchanan	Gary & Laurie Haller	John & Sharon Newman
Doug & Jane Carvell	John E. & Judy Harnish	George* & Mary Ann Newton
Jim & Katie Davis	Tom Henderson* & Susan Waun	Claude & Susan Oleson
Laura & Tim Dickerson	Esther Heussner*	Bill* & Jane Pettibone
Roy* & Teena* Dickerson	Clare* & Kay Higby	Dawn Pfaff
Carol & Frank Driscoll	Jeff & Mixie Hockman	Barb Pobst
Geri Dunkle	Russ & Sue Ives	Jan Query*
Rachael & Zack Dunlap	Sam & Tove Jackson	Deanna & Duane Ralston
Fran & Janette Engelhardt	Fran Jones*	Doug Reinhard*
Aileen Erdmannn*	Jenny & Peter Kanefsky	Roy Reiterman*
Janice Erichsen*	Jackie & Paul Keller	Carol & James Rillema
Brady & Tiffany Ericson	Anna & Austin Kendall	Kris & William Ritter
Jan & Lynn Evans	Connie & Joe Kenty	Lin & Richard Schoelch
Bob Everson	Greg & Jerry* LaBrake	Toni Segitz
Bob & Mary Feldmaier	Barbara* & Shawn Lewis-Lakin	Richard & Sara Shirley
Amy & Brent Fitch	Candace & Eric Law	Anna & Shane Spradlin
Margaret Fitts	Ann Littleton	Joyce Stanton*
Diana & Eric Freeburg	Greg & Wendy MacKenzie	John & Liz Stevens
Jeanne & Michael Fritz	Charlotte Mahrt	Bob & Ellie Sutherland



# LEGACY SOCIETY

## Members

Chuck & Margy Truza

Gary & Margaret Valade

Jim & Merry Beth Valiquett

Gerri & Ron Vander Molen

Rose-Marie & Tom Venier

Peggy A. Walker

Sue Walters

Lisa & Steven\* Wells

Dorothy Willison\*

Ann & Zeno Windley

George & Julie Work

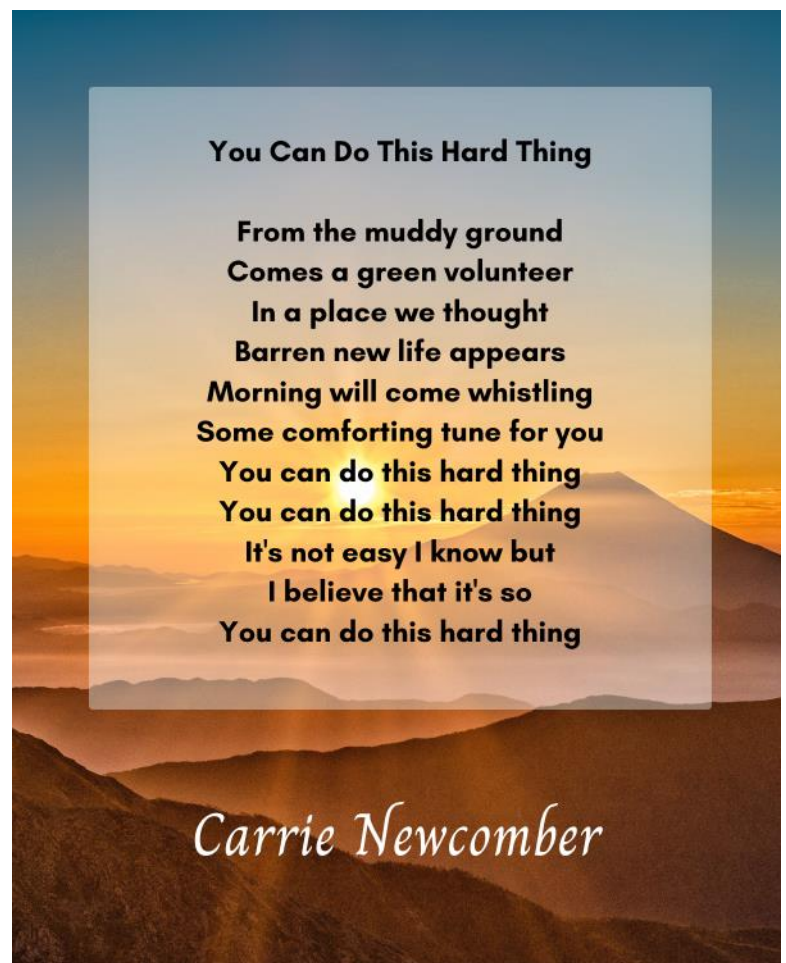
*\*Indicates Legacy Society Members who have passed on to Glory. Thanks be to God for their life and faith.*

If you have already included Birmingham First in your estate plans or would like further information about planned giving, please contact the Rev. Shawn Lewis-Lakin, Associate Pastor for Planned Giving, by phone at 734-717-8947 or email at [slewis-lakin@fumcbirmingham.org](mailto:slewis-lakin@fumcbirmingham.org) or visit our website at [www.firstlegacy.org](http://www.firstlegacy.org).

## SAVE THE DATE APRIL 5-6, 2025

Poet, singer, and songwriter Carrie Newcomer is coming to Birmingham First in 2025! The format of our annual endowment dinner will be modified for 2025, to include a free Saturday evening Carrie Newcomer concert in the sanctuary on April 5, 2025, Carrie singing in worship services on Sunday, April 6, 2025, and following worship an opportunity to participate in an afternoon workshop with her.

Save the dates! And look for more details towards the end of this year.



# GRANTS PROVIDED

## General Endowment Fund



- Cuba Mission Trip Support
- Endowment Dinners
- Men's Retreat (multiple years)
- Women's Retreat (multiple years)
- Planned Giving Software and Webpage
- Discipleship Ministries Support
- Young Adult & Youth Ministries Support
- Livestreaming Equipment Upgrades
- Online Course: *Giving Thanks in Difficult Times*
- Workshop with Diana Butler Bass
- Hybrid Meeting Technology Hardware
- Saving Grace Course Materials
- Podcast Production Equipment
- Haiti Orphanage Support
- Technology Upgrades (tablets and laptop purchases)
- Tapestry (online campus) Support
- 200th Anniversary Committee
- New Passenger Van
- Support for Christian Life Center Reopening
- Support for staff training and salary support in the areas of finance, operations, and in-reach
- Technology equipment for communications ministry
- Salary support for added part time custodian
- First Taste Event
- Lest We Forget Project
- Database, Server, and Sign-in Kiosk Upgrades
- Jump Start Berkley Capital Needs Study
- Sunday Night Dinners

# SCHOLAR IN RESIDENCE

## Underwritten with Endowment support

The Endowment Board was pleased to approve a grant request from our Staff Parish Relations Committee for the support of a Scholar in Residence who will be with our congregation from May 2024 to April 2025. The Rev. Dr. George Klay Weagba, Vice President for Research and Planning of the United Methodist University in Monrovia, Liberia will complete his sabbatical leave with us at Birmingham and Berkley First.

During his time with us, Dr. Weagba will preach, teach, visit parishioners, and speak to small and large organizations and journey groups. He will offer his services, upon invitation, to different ministries of our congregation. An ordained Elder of the United Methodist Church, he is a clergy delegate from Liberia to the 2024 General Conference of The United Methodist Church. His service with our congregation will begin following General Conference on May 5, 2024.



*Rev. Dr. George Klay Weagba*

## ACTIVE NAMED FUNDS

In 2024, Named Endowment Funds will provide \$102,644 to support mission and ministry, including over \$22,000 to support worship and music ministry, \$26,000 to support mission projects, and over \$10,000 in support for ministries with children and youth. Named Endowment Funds provide 100% of the funding for the Duke Divinity School intern program.

FUND NAME	PURPOSE
The Seminary Intern Fund	Support interns at Birmingham and Berkley First preparing for parish church ministry
The Jessie and George Nyhus Memorial Fund	Encourage and provide the means whereby the staff become better servants of Jesus Christ and leaders
The Wesley Ministry Fund	Lay and clergy continuing education
The Littleton Seminary Scholarship Fund	Assist in training of candidates for ordained ministry in the United Methodist Church by providing scholarship assistance for Birmingham and Berkley First seminary students
The William J. Kernan Jr. Fund	Assist Partners in Missions (PIM) activities
The Robert and Clara Hermann Fund	Assist Partners in Missions (PIM) activities
The Catherine Drinkard Fund	Missionally related programs directed toward children and youth who are economically and culturally impoverished
The Christopher Hall Fund for Worship, Music, and the Arts	For programming and new initiatives which will enhance worship, music, and fine arts ministry, with a focus on encouraging persons to consider a call to the ministry of church music
The A.M. Music Fund	Projects related to the music ministry
The Concert Fund	To provide subsidies for special musical concerts
The Claude and Caroline Stevens Youth Fund	Monies for youth projects - any project that will benefit the youth of the church, middle school through college ages
The Steven Wells Fund	Support discipleship ministries (Christian Education) for children and youth
James and Carol (Blades) Rillema Fund	Support locals missions (serving persons and communities in Michigan) prioritizing in order education, health improvement efforts, and hunger
Preschool Scholarship Fund	To provide financial assistance to families who have a child or children attending preschool at Birmingham First
Reinhard Fund	Assist Partners in Missions (PIM) activities

Each spring, a speaker of national prominence is invited to Birmingham First to be the keynote speaker for our Endowment Dinner. This free event, underwritten with endowment funds, is a ministry of the Endowment. The purpose is to gather members and friends of Birmingham and Berkley First for an evening of fellowship and food, with inspiring music, and a speaker that will stimulate conversation and spiritual growth well beyond their time with us.

## ENDOWMENT DINNER

Friday, April 5 at 6:00 p.m.

This year's Endowment Dinner speaker is Bishop William Willimon, long-time Dean of the Chapel at Duke University, retired United Methodist Bishop, author of over 70 books, nationally renowned preacher, and current Professor of the Practice of Christian Ministry at Duke Divinity School. Register now for April 5. This will be a memorable evening. Dr. Bill Ritter, one of our pastors emeritus will be introducing Bishop Willimon. Doors open at 5:30 p.m., with the program beginning at 6:00 p.m.

## WILL WILLIMON

INTRODUCTION BY  
DR. BILL RITTER

Jesus Christ has one big plan to right what's wrong with the world, one program for making his presence known to all, one idea to set things right: Birmingham & Berkley First. This congregation was God's idea before it was yours. You are Christ's presence in his world, his main means for getting back what belongs to him. Birmingham & Berkley First is a participant in Christ's reclamation of the world. It's our job to respond to Christ's invitation to "Follow me," to do all we can to insure that the witness of Birmingham & Berkley First continues into the future.



Will Willimon



Bill Ritter

Registration is open through April 1. you may also register by calling the church office at 248-646-1200 ext. 3121.



## WAYS TO GIVE

There are a number of ways to leave a legacy gift to Birmingham First. The most common are bequests in wills and trusts. You can also name Birmingham First as a full, partial, or contingent beneficiary on retirement accounts or a life insurance policy. Our planned giving website, [www.firstlegacy.org](http://www.firstlegacy.org), includes information regarding planned giving options. Unless otherwise designated, legacy gifts are placed in our General Endowment. The Endowment Board distributes income from our General Endowment to various ministry and mission projects through a grant process. You may choose to designate a legacy gift for use in specific ministry areas, including continuing education, missions and outreach, worship and music, children and youth, and buildings and grounds. The Endowment Board then distributes income from such gifts to those specific ministry areas.

It is also possible to establish a Named Fund to support a purpose as defined by the donor(s). While most Named Funds are set up as endowments, you can establish a Named Fund that is not an endowment, and set a timeline for spending the entirety of the gift.

Charitable Gift Annuities, Charitable Remainder Unitrusts, IRA Charitable Rollovers, IRA Charitable Rollovers to Gift Annuities: these are just some of the additional ways available for making gifts that will support ministry and mission for generations to come. Pastor Shawn Lewis-Lakin is eager to speak with you about the giving strategy that best expresses your commitment to legacy financial discipleship. You can contact Pastor Shawn at 734-717-8947 or [slewis-lakin@fumcbirmingham.org](mailto:slewis-lakin@fumcbirmingham.org).

