

October 2022

Endowment Newsletter

Give Thanks!

Give thanks to the Lord who is good,
and whose mercy endures forever.

Psalm 107:1



Through my own journey over the past year and a half, I have come to deeply appreciate this quote from Diana Butler Bass:

Gratefulness isn't easy and isn't all hearts-and-flowers. It can be tough in tough times. But a dogged commitment to the giftedness of life can deepen our spiritual capacity to make it through circumstances that threaten to overwhelm us.

There are circumstance and situations that we encounter in life that are awful, that are life denying and life defeating. I do not believe that we are compelled to give thanks for all things. What we can do is discover and name that amid such circumstances that we experience as gift, as grace. It isn't always easy, but without gratitude I am not sure I would have made it through the last sixteen months.

The theme for our fall Endowment Newsletter is gratitude. Leaving a legacy gift is an act of gratitude, an act of thanksgiving for the transformative impact of this congregation. On the pages that follow, I encourage you to read about how lives are being changed through ministries supported by our endowment.

Thanks be to God for all those who have and who will leave legacy gifts, making God's love real in our community and around the world, today, tomorrow, and for generations to come.

With thanksgiving,

Pastor Shawn

Shawn Lewis-Lakin

Associate Pastor, Planned Giving
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734-717-8947 (cell)
firstlegacy.org

Letter from the PASTOR

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I hasten to share with you how grateful I am to serve as your senior pastor. In 201 years of ministry and mission through First United Methodist Church of Birmingham, Michigan, you have witnessed to your faith in Jesus Christ and have managed, by God's amazing

grace, to change lives for the better and to help make the world a better place. Many of you have stepped beyond the regular sacrifice of this great congregation to distinguish yourselves in generosity. Your generosity is rooted in gratitude for all God has done and is doing in your lives. Gratitude is a gift of God. We embrace gratitude, like the one leper in the Gospel of Luke 17: 12-19, who came back to thank Jesus Christ for healing him when nine others never returned to say, "thank you."

I want to share a story of my life and why I will forever be grateful.

On December 8, 1959, at the Methodist Mission hospital in Ganta, Liberia, two women met in the delivery room of the hospital. One was a pregnant Liberian woman ready to deliver her baby and the other was a Methodist missionary doctor assigned by the Methodist Board of Missions to the hospital. Dr. Hyla Watters had been assigned here after her first assignment in China ended following the emergence of the Chinese Cultural Revolution led by Mao Zedong.

Hyla grew up in the United States. As a little girl she felt God's calling to be a medical missionary to China. After she passed her medical board, she was commissioned and sent to China as a medical missionary. But her excitement was short-lived when she found herself on a plane back to America,

GRATITUDE

expelled by the communist regime. She struggled about her future vocation until other missionaries helped her understand that God's call can be fulfilled anywhere – that whenever one door closes, God will open other doors. With that understanding, Hyla agreed to go to Africa as a missionary doctor. She was assigned at the Ganta Methodist Mission Hospital, and it was there that she attended to this Liberian expectant-mother on December 8, 1959. After the woman delivered her child, she and her baby were released to go home. But on the way home, their pickup truck lost control and tumbled down a ravine to its bottom. Fortunately, although many passengers were wounded including the new mother, her baby was not hurt. The woman was taken back to the Mission Hospital, readmitted with her child, and treated by Dr. Watters. After a couple of days attending to her wounds, Dr. Waters released the mother and her child. This time, they made it safely to their farmhouse. And that was my first week in this world.

The work of Dr. Hyla Watters, who never thought she would serve in Africa, and her providential meeting with this Liberia mother, Mrs. Fannia Wannawon Boayue (my mother), made it possible for me to be born under safer health conditions. Dr. Watters' faithfulness to God's call in her life led to the safe birth of thousands of other children at Ganta. Without her and the sacrificial love of my mother, I wouldn't be here today to be grateful for all God has done and is doing in my life. I am grateful to God for giving me my mother and Dr. Watters.

Gratitude is God's good gift to the world. It helps us appreciate goodness and mercy. It rallies people of good faith and conscience to a higher calling, a greater purpose, and the common good. I join thousands of people whose lives have been changed

for the better by the generosity of those here at Birmingham and Berkley First United Methodist Church to say, "thank you." Your investment in the promises of God will reap eternal fruits and will enable God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. I invite others to join in this worthy cause.

Rev. Dr. Charles S. G. Boayue, Jr.
Senior Pastor

A graphic with the text "Save the Date" in a white, cursive, script font with a drop shadow, set against a solid green background.

Endowment Dinner
Friday, May 5, 2023

Guest Speaker
Rev. Dr. Javier A.
Viera

President, Garrett
Evangelical Seminary

Grants Provided

New Passenger Van



“The new van is really nice! It was fun to be able to sit together as a youth group and not have to separate when we went to Zap Zone.”

– Sophia, age 12

Jen Hatmaker Event



“Thank you for planning this event (through thick and thin). It was inspiring to be with this community of women... Happy 200 Birmingham First!”

-Wendy Kreitz



“The event was a real blessing—to those who attended, the volunteers who participated, the non-profits who received donations, and the patrons of a local hunger program who received delicious food left over from lunch.”

- Susan Ives

Letter from the Endowment Chair

GRATITUDE



There are many definitions of “gratitude”. One of my favorites equates gratitude with feeling grateful for something or someone in your life and responding with feelings of kindness, warmth, and other forms of generosity. It is this gratitude or gratefulness, I believe, that

has been the common precursor of nearly every gift to the Endowment Fund since it was first established in 1996. Those gifts have enabled Birmingham and Berkley First each year to undertake new initiatives, underwrite programs, assist youth trips and adult retreats, and so much more... all of which would not be possible through the Operating Fund.

The Bible has many stories of gratitude that we are familiar with. A few come to mind:

1. King Darius’ officials were jealous of Daniel and convinced the Persian king to decree that anyone who prays to a god other than the King would be thrown to the lions. Despite the decree, Daniel continued his daily praying and giving thanks to God. Sadly, the king had to enforce his decree and Daniel was thrown into the lions’ den. Yet God shut the lions’ mouths and Daniel emerged the next morning not only alive, but without so much as a scratch. (Daniel 6)

2. Hannah was barren. She prayed and promised God if He gave her a son, she would give him back for lifelong service. Hannah kept her vow. Once weaned, she took Samuel to live with the priest in Jerusalem. She did not regret or resent her promise. Instead, she was deeply grateful and praised God. Though she loved Samuel she chose to worship the Giver, not His gift. (1 Samuel 1-2:2)
3. When Paul was imprisoned and put under guard on a ship for Rome, the ship was caught in a violent storm. For 14 days they saw neither sun nor stars and no one had eaten. They gave up all hope of being saved. That night an angel assured Paul in a dream that no one would die. The next morning, while the storm still raged, Paul took bread, gave thanks, and urged everyone to eat to regain their strength. The next day though the ship foundered and was lost all 276 on board made it safely to shore. (Acts 27:1-44)

We all have our own stories of gratitude. Like Daniel, may we offer gratitude to God no matter what we face. Like Hannah, may we offer gratitude to God for who He is over what He gives. Like Paul, may we offer gratitude to God, not after, but amid the storm.

Paul Keller
Endowment Board Chair

Grants Provided

Tapestry Support



“I’m excited to see the Tapestry Church Online studio come together. It has such a comfortable feel, almost like I’m in a friend’s family room. I can’t wait to see the services and small group activities played out from this space!” - Lorrie K.

Christian Life Center Reopening



“It is more than just a walking track. It is a caring community. On one occasion, I witnessed one walker praying over another. I am thrilled that the walking track has reopened. I look forward the CLC growing to truly be the Christian Life Center it was built to be.”

– Anonymous

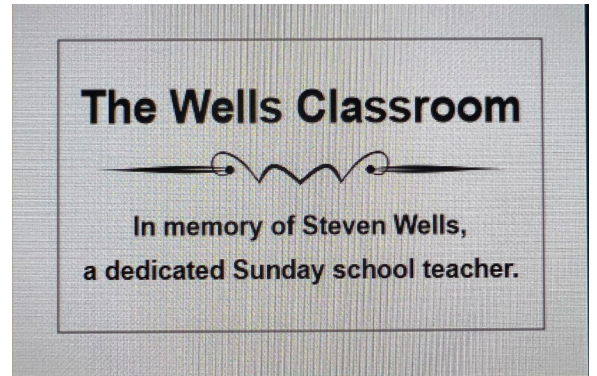
In Memory

Steve Wells

Legacy Celebrated

On September 11, 2022, Room 230 of the Lange Education Wing of our Birmingham Campus was rededicated in Memory of Steve Wells. The Wells classroom was recarpeted and repainted over the summer and a plaque now recognizes Steve's dedication as a Sunday School teacher. Steve was a volunteer Sunday School teacher for over 15 years and was actively teaching at the time of his too soon death in October 2019.

Steve's family has honored his legacy through the establishment of the Steven Wells Fund, a named endowment with the purpose of supporting discipleship ministries (Christian Education) for children and youth. This year, income from the Steven Wells fund is being used to purchase new furniture to provide needed updates in several Sunday School classrooms. We are grateful for Steve's legacy of faithfulness and for how his family has honored him, continuing that legacy for generations to come.



“I am so thankful for the Steven Wells fund to support revitalized meeting spaces at Birmingham First.” - Kim Bowyer, Director, Children & Family Ministries

Celebrating

Susan and Claude Oleson Legacy Builders



Susan and Claude Oleson were invited to attend First Church by John & Liz Stevens. (Susan and Liz are both Speech Pathologists and are friends). At the welcoming luncheon after they were received as new members of the congregation (this was on April

4, 1982), Susan mentioned that Claude had seen in Steeple Notes that morning that they were looking for men to play slow pitch softball. And before that luncheon was over, Claude was a member of a church softball team! Thus began Claude and Susan's history of very active church membership!

Susan has served as a teacher in the Toddler Room, Bill Ritter's 3001 by 2001 committee, Ghana Mission Trip participant, Ghana Shanty leader (raising money for Ghanian women entrepreneurs, AIDS relief, and education for Ghanian orphans) and currently runs the Fair-Trade ministry (Claude is her assistant!). She has also been a leader with Church & Society ministries. Along with Claude, Susan has served as a lay delegate to Annual Conference.

Claude, an architect, served three terms on the Board of Trustees (President in 1996), two terms on the Endowment Fund Board, UMU liaison to the Ad Board, the sole male representative on COSROW, and as a member of the Worship Committee.

He was a member of the First and Second Floor Classroom Renovation (Lang Village) team, the Building Committee for the CLC, had a large part in the Sanctuary Renovation and was the church's representative (along with Zeno Windley) for construction of the South Wing Renovation. As a result, Zeno and Claude were recipients of the 2012 Volunteers of the Year award. Claude's professional expertise has been a gift to our congregation whenever the church has contemplated or undertaken construction.

After Bill Ritter retired as Senior Pastor, and became the Executive Director of the United Methodist Union, he invited Claude to lunch. At lunch Dr. Ritter invited Claude to become a board member. "We need someone who can read building plans". This led to Claude serving for 5 years as Vice President and 4 years as President of the Union. Claude continues to serve the United Methodist Union as a Life-Long Trustee.

Through Claude's service as a Trustee and Endowment Board member, Claude and Susan became very aware of the benefit to the church of an endowment. Claude was the Trustee President when our Endowment was officially chartered with a gift of \$175,000 in February of 1996.

During Claude's architectural career, he saw the deleterious effects of deferred maintenance on buildings. Claude's service with the Union provided more evidence to him of how critical it is to provide funding for building needs. In addition to named funds with specific purposes, endowed funds supporting continuing education; missions & outreach; worship & music; scholarships; children & youth; and buildings & grounds are available as

Grant Provided Youth Choir England Trip

options to those committed to leaving legacy gifts. Because of Claude's experience both in the church and beyond, Susan and Claude's legacy gift (a tithe) is directed to our building and grounds endowment.

Why have Susan and Claude made provision for a legacy gift in their estate plan? In their words:

"We stand on the shoulders of those who have come before us. Look around at our beautiful facility, look around and see the ministry within and beyond our walls. Locally, nationally and around the world, we make God's love real. What better way to support such an endeavor?"



"England was the best experience of my life. I made life long memories and friendships that will last forever. Singing as a group and going through all the challenges that were thrown at us made my faith so much stronger. I loved every minute of it."

- anonymous

Endowment Board

Chairperson

Paul Keller

Advisor & Staff Liaison

Rev. Shawn Lewis-Lakin

Chairperson Emeritus

Gary Valade

Members

Joan Benner
Doug Carvell
Eric Freeburg
Mike Fritz
Tove Jackson
Gayle McGarvah
Claude Oleson
Dick Schoelch
John Stevens
James Valiquett

Investment Committee

Chairperson

Richard Laimbeer

Staff Liaison

Rev. Susie Hierholzer

Members

Brett Bernard
Rob Grabiell
Kevin Heckman
Mark Lachowicz
Colin Lennox
Rick Nauer
Andy Schueler
Frank Schweibold

Making a Bequest

Making a Bequest

Leaving Birmingham and Berkley First a bequest in a will or living trust is the most common way to create a legacy to support ministry and mission for generations to come.

Types of Bequests

There are several ways you can make a bequest to Birmingham and Berkley First.

Specific Bequest. A specific bequest involves making a gift of a specific asset such as real estate, a car, other property, or a gift of a specific dollar amount. For example, you may wish to leave your home or \$10,000 to Birmingham and Berkley First.

Percentage Bequest. Another kind of specific bequest involves leaving a specific percentage of your overall estate to charity. For example, you may wish to leave 10% of your estate to Birmingham and Berkley First.

Residual Bequest. A residual bequest is made from the balance of an estate after the will or trust has given away each of the specific bequests. A common residual bequest involves leaving a percentage of the residue of the estate to charity. For example, you may wish to leave 30% of the residue of your estate to Birmingham and Berkley First.

Contingent Bequest. A contingent bequest is made to charity only if the purpose of the primary bequest cannot be met. For example, you could leave specific property, such as a vacation home, to a relative, but the bequest language could provide that if the relative is not alive at the time of your death, the vacation home will go to Birmingham and Berkley First.

Bequest Language

To make a bequest, you should speak with your attorney. Your attorney can help you include a bequest to Birmingham First in your estate plan. As you work with your attorney, he may ask for the following:

The legal name for Birmingham First, which is The First United Methodist Church of Birmingham.

Our congregation's Federal Tax ID number, which is 38-1393844.

Contact Us

Please contact Pastor Shawn if you have any questions about how to make a bequest to Birmingham and Berkley First or to request any additional information that might be helpful to you and your attorney as you consider making a bequest to us.

If you have included a bequest for Birmingham First in your estate plan, please contact us to let us know. We would like to thank you and recognize you as a Legacy Society Member.

Grants

Provided

Last 5 years

- Outreach/Advertising Support
- Horizons Stewardship
- CLC Projector and Screen
- FORWARD Initiatives
- Financial Peace Curriculum
- Youth Choir Trip to England
- 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 and 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

Named Funds

Summary

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

In addition to our General Endowment, our Endowment Board oversees named funds. These funds are established with specific purposes. Expenditures from these funds are restricted to programs and projects that align with each fund's purpose. If you have a passion for an area of ministry supported by a named fund, please consider a directed contribution to the fund. For more information contact Pastor Shawn.

Fund Name	Purpose
The Christopher Hall Fund for Worship, Music and the Arts	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 in church music
The A.M. Music Fund	Projects related to the music ministry
Concert Fund	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 age
The Steven Wells Fund	Support discipleship ministries (Christian Education) for children and youth
Bob and Mary (Jeffers) Feldmaier Fund	Support music ministry with children, youth and young adults, including music education, music lessons, need-based assistance for choir camps and choir trips, and other like opportunities at Birmingham and Berkley First

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

* 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, at 734-717-8947 or slewis-lakin@fumcbirmingham.org

Peggy A. Walker
Sue Walters
Steven* & Lisa Wells
Dorothy Willison*
Zeno & Ann Windley
George & Julie Work
Gwen & Brad Zimmerman



Your gifts

Make a Difference

IRA Rollover Gift

If you are 70 ½ or older, you can make a gift to us from your IRA.

Gift of Securities

Gift us stock (with a low basis) that has appreciated over a period of time and avoid capital gains tax.

Life Insurance Gift

Eliminate an old or unneeded life insurance policy by making a gift of the cash balance to support our work or consider making our congregation the beneficiary of a policy.

Life Income Gift

Make a gift by creating a gift annuity or charitable remainder trust and receive lifetime payments. Contact Pastor Shawn for a free illustration with your benefits.

Charitable Bequest

Make a gift to support our work that costs you nothing today. Provide for your loved ones first and then our congregation with a bequest made in your will or trust.

and giving can still
benefit you!

While tax laws have changed, there are still many ways you can make a gift to our congregation and make a difference. Even with the changes, making a gift to us can still provide benefits to you. Visit our planned giving site at firstlegacy.org or contact Pastor Shawn (734-717-8947 or slewis-lakin@fumcbirmingham.org) to learn more about ways you can support our work and benefit this year.

Beneficiary Designations

A beneficiary designation is one of the simplest ways to make a planned gift to Birmingham and Berkley First. Retirement plans, IRAs, life insurance, donor advised funds, and annuities distribute assets based on beneficiary forms. With a simple form, you can update your beneficiary designations and specify the individuals and charities you want to support.

Designating Birmingham and Berkley First as a beneficiary is an easy way to leave a legacy of faithfulness.

For more information on planned giving, please contact:

Rev. Shawn Lewis-Lakin,
Associate Pastor for Planned Giving,
slewis-lakin@fumcbirmingham.org
or 734-717-8947 or visit firstlegacy.org



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

...gathered here for good.™

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Birmingham, MI 48009

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