FIRST FOUNDATION:
Funding our Piece of God's Creation



Caring for God's creation is part of our mission as a United Methodist church, and fulfilling our mission work often requires funding donated by generous congregation members. First Foundation is, in its own way, a form of financial sustainability. This year marks the 40th anniversary of the first donations made to the Foundation, and those gifts are still with us today due to the Foundation's model of investing the gifts and giving the investment's earnings to the church. A gift given to the Foundation 40 years ago helps to sustain the church today and will continue to fund its missions for decades to come.

Environmental justice is one of the United Methodist Church's social missions. This means, among other points, that the church strives to both address the causes of climate change and help alleviate the effects of it, while also seeking "a world where all God's children share in the abundance of creation." (Visit www.umcjustice.org/ for more on this.) Members of First Church have some big ideas for how to serve this social mission, beginning with our Green Team's important work. How can our sustainable and sustaining financial model support the climate mission work our congregation wants to engage in?

Several of our existing funds expressly serve our local piece of God's creation: caring for and beautifying the landscaping of the property. Are there any opportunities there to help balance out our ecological footprint? Other funds are specifically earmarked for the care and maintenance of the physical property. When building utilities need to be replaced, we have an opportunity to upgrade to more energy efficient options, and Foundation funds could absolutely support that. What ideas do members of the youth group have? There are Foundation funds that exist solely to support the church's youth ministry, and they could potentially be used to support green mission works that the youth wish to carry out.

Some of the big ideas members come up with could require creatively interpreting how funds are supposed to be spent, but it's important to know that if you have an interest in specifically supporting the church's environmental justice mission and have the means to give $50,000 or more, you could create a fund in your name that is expressly for that purpose. First Foundation currently maintains 18 Donor Named funds.

No matter the size of your gift, there are many ways to give to First Foundation now, or you can include First Foundation in your estate plan to give later; either way, your gifts provide a sustainable legacy of financial support for First Church for the next 40 years and beyond.

Laura Kittslar,
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First Church