



# For His Glory

JANUARY 2021 NEWSLETTER | TROY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

## A Message From Pastor David

Each year, the day of Epiphany is January 6. It is the last day of the Christmas season. Typically, Epiphany marks the coming of the Magi. The “wise men” who traveled over great distances all on the promise of the light of a star. In Matthew’s Gospel, the Magi enter into the chaotic world of Herod, the puppet king of Israel. When these Magi arrive in Jerusalem and announce that they are seeking the newborn king of Israel, the chaos and brutality of Herod’s reign are only amplified as he sought to keep and consolidate the power he bore. The story ends in utter depravity and violence as Herod slaughters the innocent male children of the land, hoping that the Christ-child was one who was put to the sword. Not to be thwarted by the evil of humanity, the wise men and Joseph are warned in a dream to flee from Herod, and the light of salvation to be offered to all humanity through Jesus was preserved. In the opening chapters of Matthew’s Gospel, the intersection of earthly kingdoms and Christ’s kingdom is stark and sobering. On the day of Epiphany over two millennia after the wise men sought Jesus, and Herod brutally sought to keep his kingdom, we witnessed again the stark intersection of our own earthly kingdoms and that of Christ Jesus. On a day Christians celebrate the revelation of the light of Christ that illuminates a darkened world - on a day Christians celebrate the revelation of the gospel to all peoples, our earthly kingdom offered the dark contrast of a man seeking to retain power, no matter the cost, and the resulting mob overrunning the halls of our nation’s Capitol.

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## A Message From Pastor David Continued...

We stand now in the days following Epiphany as a shaken and troubled people, and the scripture I shared earlier from Matthew's gospel and its all too recent parallels haunt me. We inevitably turn our discussion to and point our fingers and seek to find answers in or place blame on the typical things: republican or democrat, Trump or Biden, capitalism or socialism, but ultimately we miss the point of it all when we do so. For all these things and all these people represent the kingdoms of humanity. The good news of Epiphany and the revelation of Christ Jesus is that we are invited to participate with Christ in something far greater, His Kingdom. For too long many of us who live in the United States of America and who also follow Christ have sought to wed our earthly political kingdoms with Christ's heavenly kingdom. Christ rebuked Satan and his disciples each and every time they attempted to get him to be a ruler of an earthly kingdom. Why would we expect Jesus' response to be any different today than it was 2000 years ago? For Christ's Kingdom is eternal, and our own kingdoms are not. As much as it pains me to say it, one day (I hope many many years from now) the United States of America will cease to be, just as the great worldly kingdoms of the past. What will be left, what will never fail, what will always endure, is Christ.

Where do we go, what do we do from here? Absolutely participate in the governmental life of our nation. As Abraham Lincoln said in his Gettysburg Address, when we are at our best our government is, "of the people, by the people, and for the people." Yet this, and everything else is secondary to our place with Jesus and the kingdom He calls us to live into. We face a choice between the kingdoms we live in and support each and every day. Whose are we? Who do we follow? Where do we find our place of belonging? What defines us? Where does our purpose in life come from? In what or who do we find hope? May we place Jesus, and him alone at the center of all we are and do. Then, and only then will the true light be seen in our lives, our nation, and our world.

### Mowing Help Needed

We are blessed with a group of men in our congregation who volunteer their time to mow our church grounds. We thank them for their hard work throughout the year which keeps our properties looking beautiful. Currently, there is a need for additional volunteers to help with the task of mowing the property around our church building. If you would like to assist, or wish for more information about what volunteering would entail, please contact Pastor David.



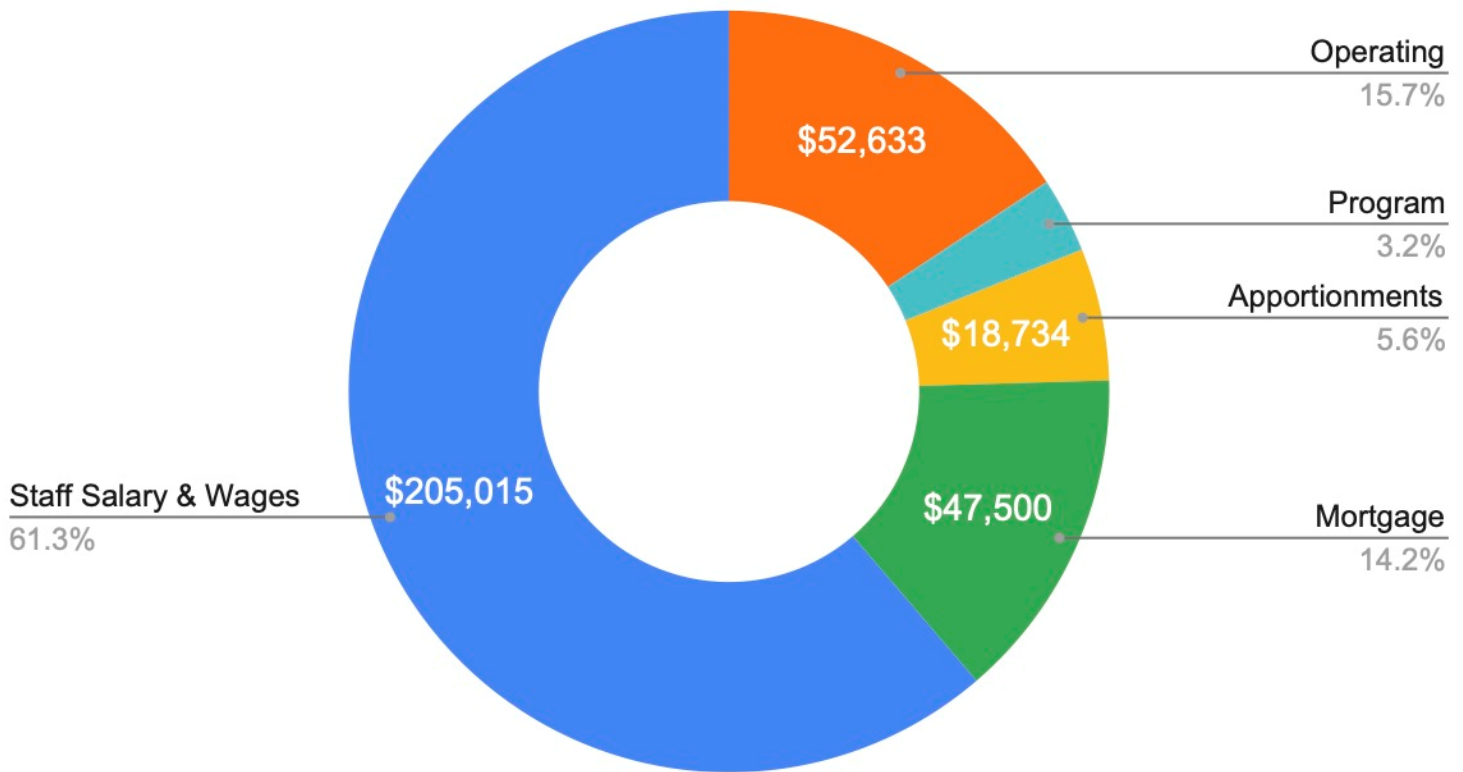
As we embark on a new year, our Finance Committee has recommended a budget for 2021 which has been approved by our church council. Our budget for 2021 is \$334,582 which is only a \$219 increase over our budget for 2020. We have sought to largely keep the total figure of our budget the same leading into the new year, given the current uncertainty regarding COVID-19's continued presence in our world and the future of the United Methodist Church, which will be decided at General Conference this November. We also were reticent to preemptively cut our budget, choosing to continue, in faith the ministries, staff support, and obligations we currently have.

While we are looking forward to 2021, we want to look back briefly to 2020. As we all know, 2020 was an unprecedented and trying year. As was to be expected, when we transitioned to online only worship and the effects of the pandemic intensified our giving decreased. Yet, even though we worshiped online only for seven months, your faithfulness was seen. Many churches have had to make difficult financial decisions that we have not had to make. This is due to your financial support through this difficult year and in past years that has enabled us to build a financial reserve that has thus far allowed us to weather this storm. We also celebrate our most successful Fall Festival in recent years! Thank you again for your support this past year.

We ask for that same faithfulness in giving as we enter into 2021. As has been stated, our budget remains largely the same, with one change of note which we will explain here. Our Apportionments (money paid to the Annual Conference to fund Conference and General church administration and ministries) fell by \$8,000. This was due to our Conference drastically restructuring in recognition of the financial impact of COVID-19. All churches were asked to keep the money saved by the decrease in apportionments in their budgets to be used locally. At the request of the Staff-Pastor Relations Committee, we chose to give all staff a 5% raise. It has been a few years since we have given raises and this decrease in our apportionments matched the requested staff raises almost exactly.

We have included a chart of our major budget categories and their corresponding line item totals and percentage of the total budget. You'll notice that just over 61% of our budget is used for staff salaries and support. Beyond this, our operating expenses (utilities, supplies, maintenance, etc.) and mortgage payments comprise the next largest elements of our budget. One thing to note, is that our budget for program expenses (ministries, literature, etc.) seems low at 3% of our total budget. The dollar figure for program expenses is just over \$10,000. As a church we spend much more than this in supporting and engaging in ministry. However, much of the money spent for ministry and programs is given directly, rather than budgeted. From youth to missions, most of our support for these ministries does not come from what is given in offerings on Sunday mornings, but in special gifts, fundraising, and support.

## Troy United Methodist Church - 2021 Budget



We thank everyone again for your financial faithfulness. We pray that we as a church are great stewards of the gifts we receive, that they may be used for Christ's glory in all things.

The Staff-Pastor Relations Committee (SPRC) has a great joy to share with our congregation. ShaShawna Bush has received a call to enter into ordained ministry! We have been blessed by ShaShawna as she has led LYFE Groups, our Women's Ministry, and our Stephen Ministry. She is starting the journey of ordination as a Deacon, which is a calling to specialized ministry and focuses on the servant ministries of our churches. This past fall she began her seminary studies at Iliff School of Theology in Denver. The SPRC calls upon our congregation to lift ShaShawna in our prayers over the coming years in her journey of ordination. The SPRC along with the Finance Committee are also establishing a scholarship fund for her. Seminary is a major expense and we wish as a church to help offset some of the cost of that expense. If you would like to make a donation to her scholarship fund, you may send a check in the mail with ShaShawna Scholarship in the memo line or see us in the office. Most importantly, we celebrate with ShaShawna in what God is doing in her life and through her for our congregation and our world!



## January Birthdays

- 7 June Payne
- 8 Susan Creech
- 9 Teresa DeLeon, Peyton Stermer
- 10 Josh Pauswang
- 12 Kaiden Rodahl
- 13 Wes Hart
- 14 Tooter Creech, Billy Hobbs
- 16 Christina Porter, Hannah Maedgen
- 17 Bill Ledger, Breanna Medrano, Tony Medrano
- 18 Terry Cavanaugh
- 19 Matt Lynch
- 21 Kelly Gerath
- 23 Richard Hester, Brandon Lindberg, Kacie Tedrow
- 25 Tammy Cavanaugh, Megan Havens, Kylie Allred, Everly Gresham
- 26 Amy Pyle
- 27 Billy Joe Ledger, Linda Knight
- 28 Larry Stewart
- 30 Sandy Vargas, Bill Maedgen, David Willis

## January Anniversaries

- 7 Michael & Karen Lindberg
- 13 Kevin & Kellie Johnson
- 22 Burnell & June Payne

### REMINDER!!!

- Quilters will not meet until February
- Church office will be closed on Monday, January 18th in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.
- LYFE groups will not meet until February

## ~ Memorials ~

*In memory of Tommy Ross* by Richard & Betty Hester, Tim & Janice Kirkscey, BJ Finch, Mike & Nancy Mercer, Barbara Thompson, Katherine Maedgen

*In memory of Ruth Knudson* by BJ Finch

*In memory of John Morris Houston* by Allene Cook Hardt, Mike & Nancy Mercer, Steve & Brenda Cook, T.A. & Kathy Cook

# Thank You Notes

Dear Troy UMC,

Thank you so much for the very generous Christmas gift. It really was unexpected and is greatly appreciated.

On top of your generosity to the staff, you went above and beyond and were able to donate more than \$2000 to Aware Central Texas in order to provide children in foster care with gifts this Christmas.

I want you to all know how proud I am to be a part of such an amazing congregation who focuses on how to be the hands and feet of Christ within their families, community, and the world. With all the upheaval 2020 has brought, I feel Christ's presence in the congregation more than ever.

Thank you again for your thoughtfulness and generosity.

In His service,  
Christin Ivey

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Words are so inadequate to express my gratitude for the more-than-generous monetary gift at Christmas. This has been a difficult year for everyone and your thoughtfulness in giving for end-of-year staff gifts goes beyond anything that was expected. I am so blessed by this wonderful church and all the people in it. Thank you all so very much.

My prayer for each one of you is that the coming year will be a happy, healthy one.

With much love and appreciation,  
Betty Hester

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I would like to thank the church for the Christmas gift. I appreciate it and it means so much to me. Thanks again. I want to also say thanks for being so good to me throughout the years I've been working at the church.

Edward Mendoza

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Thank you so much for the generous monetary staff gift at Christmas. Also thank you for all the prayers for our family and the many sympathy cards we received on the recent loss of my father-in-law. We are so blessed to have such a loving and supportive church family.

Love,  
Jill Ross