



FIRST CHURCH BIRMINGHAM
STEWARDSHIP 2026

enough



In this painting, I have overlaid my empty hand with sets of circles. The guilloché-style patterning is used by treasuries all over the world to secure paper currency by making it too intricate to counterfeit. Here, guilloché circles represent my deeply personal relationship with the money that supports our lives. Some money falls past my hand, some into my hand.

Moses advises the people: take only what you need, one omer each. In this piece, the idea of enough money is layered with the idea of enough sustenance through manna. The manna is portrayed by another set of circles, reminiscent of the wafers that are used in some traditions as Communion bread. Enough. Thank you, God, for providing enough, that I would take what I need.

by Hannah Garrity

INSPIRED BY EXODUS 16:1-18

Digital Painting

INTRODUCTION

As we explore *Our Money Story* in this stewardship season, it is helpful to consider the story that our budget tells. Often we share numbers in a line by line format which does not offer the full scope of what powers and supports each of our ministry areas. It is helpful to think of our finances as an ecosystem, an interconnected community of funds interacting with one another and our physical plant to support the life and faith of First Church. One stand alone ministry or budget line item cannot exist without the help, support, and integration of the others.

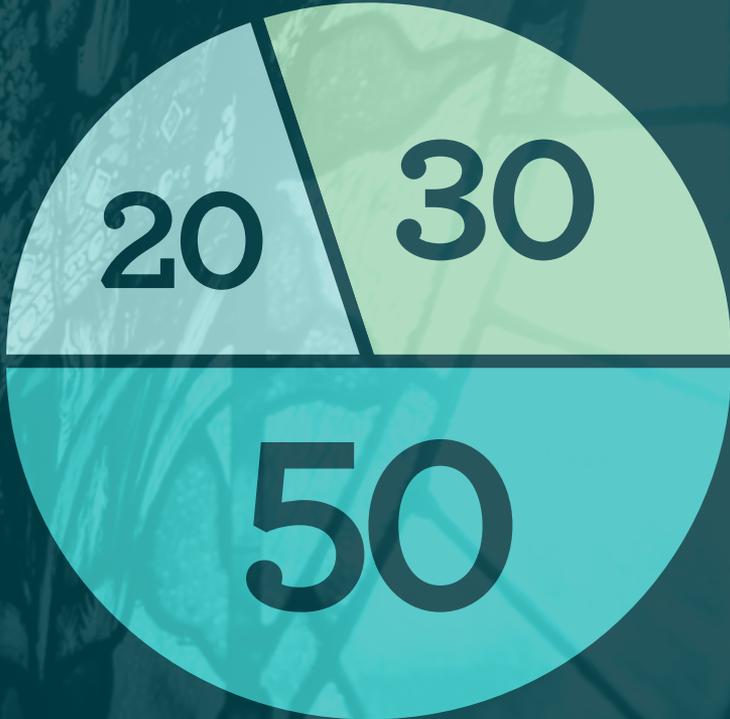
In order to help us more fully understand our money story, we are sharing the numbers divided into the three parts of our mission statement of being an OPEN place for ALL to worship, grow, and serve. We invite you to explore the ways that your giving supports the ministry of First Church and is making a difference in our city and in our world.

WORSHIP

Worship is an essential part of our story as it brings rhythm and ritual to our lives. It encourages spiritual nourishment, learning, connection, beauty, warmth, and wonder. At First Church we celebrate that worship is expressed in different styles and preferences by offering both modern and traditional services. We give thanks for beautiful and welcoming worship spaces as well as music that invites us into deeper connection with God and with one another.

Worship requires not only the particular budget line items for the Loft and Sanctuary but also the support and resources from our staff, our buildings, our security teams, care for our organ, virtual worship, and all of the equipment and technology to run our services. In 2026, we look forward to this area of ministry also including our live stream services which will expand our reach and impact beyond the walls of our building.

LOFT & SANCTUARY



Ministry Budget



Building Costs



Staffing Costs

APPROXIMATELY \$400,000

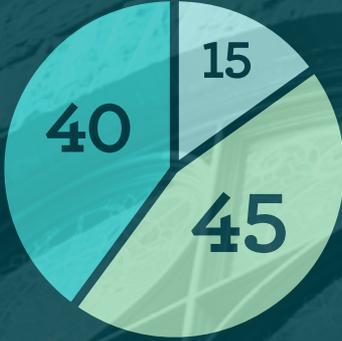
GROW

Growth has many meanings and purposes here at First Church. In our mission statement the word grow refers first and foremost to spiritual formation and development. In this area we focus on our children's and youth ministries, on small groups, and church-wide opportunities. Growing together means we are exploring our faith, embracing tough questions, building community and connection, and seeking to expand our understanding together.

In addition to faith formation, the word grow also represents our desire to grow the circle wider. This includes ministries that help welcome new visitors, share our message of love and inclusion, and offer unreasonable hospitality to all who find their way here. It also includes our communication both internally and externally.

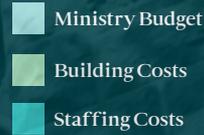
As with worship, our ministries around growth require not just the specific budget line items for Children or Youth, Wednesday Dinners, Ministry of Invitation, or the Retreat, but also the cost of the buildings where we regularly meet to learn and grow as well as the staff team that helps to plan and facilitate all of these opportunities.

CITYKIDS



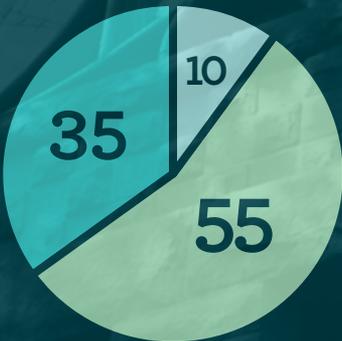
APPROXIMATELY \$200,000

YOUTH



APPROXIMATELY \$170,000

FORMATION & DEVELOPMENT



APPROXIMATELY \$160,000

HOSPITALITY & COMMUNICATIONS



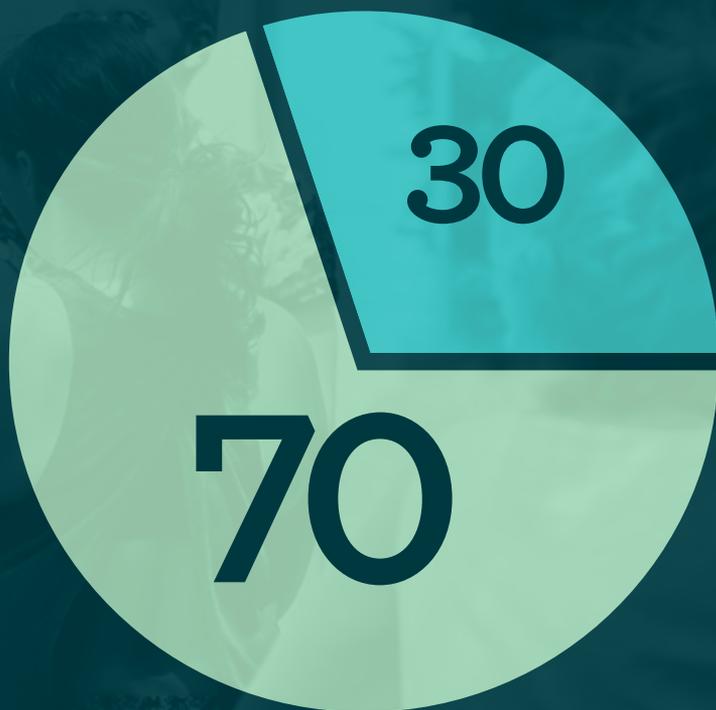
APPROXIMATELY \$155,000

SERVE

Justice and Mercy is part of the DNA of First Church. We are known to be a place that practices what we preach. One of the ways we put our words into action is by giving a portion of our annual budget to our ministry partners.

This year we also celebrate that for the first time in recent history, we paid our full 10% apportionment calculation to the North Alabama Conference. These are funds that are given back to the United Methodist connection and distributed across a variety of ministries and programs at a conference and national level which allows the UMC to respond in tangible and meaningful ways.

OUTREACH



APPROXIMATELY \$180,000



FAQ

We know that the whole story cannot be told in the categories listed above. Here are a few other questions that you might have about our money story in recent years.

What about all of the other expenses in our budget that help to keep our church running smoothly?

While we have tried to include most of the building costs associated within each heading, it is difficult to account for some of the more administrative costs that we incur to provide safe and welcoming space for our ministries. These include costs like insurance, water, sewer, gas, HVAC maintenance and repair, trash pick up, pest control, alarm systems and monitoring, payroll services, computer and network services, and our outside accounting services. These costs total approximately \$200,000.

What about all of the projects that we have seen or heard about in the last year to update our facilities as well as moving to live stream?

Over the past year we received a large estate gift which has enabled our Trustees to move forward on a handful of projects that were needed to update our buildings and extend our reach virtually. These projects have included a renovation on the first floor of the Office Building, a new roof on the Office Building, as well as the installation costs associated with live streaming worship. Currently these projects together total approximately \$350,000.

If our buildings are so expensive, why are we not leveraging all of that space as income?

Over the past year we have also welcomed new tenants into our space that will help supplement our budget alongside pledged income. Our tenants now include the Early Learning Center, CAP Ambassadors, Gradient Dance, and a new parking company which allows us to utilize our back parking lot as a flex lot to generate more income than our previous company. We welcome your ideas about other ways to leverage our space to generate income.

Why is making a pledge important?

Turning in a pledge card for the coming year allows your staff and lay leadership to be good stewards of your gifts as we utilize this information to build our budget for the coming year. Your generous commitments are an essential part of the financial health of First Church. Please remember that a pledge can always be changed when necessary. This is simply your best estimate of what you plan to contribute. There is no gift too great or too small as it is all of our contributions together that will help us move into our future. We are grateful for your generosity.



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