



FIRST FRUITS

2024-2025



**First Methodist
Church**

302 North State Street
Geneseo, Illinois 61254

Dear Church Family,

We are blessed. It is rare these days to find a congregation teeming with life, filled with all generations, and having a growing impact. But you are making this happen through your prayers, faithfulness, and generosity. When unexpected challenges arise, you step up to keep our ministries strong.

As we put together our ministry plans for 2024 and 2025, my challenge as your pastor is to continue to keep First Methodist fruitful. The best way to do this is by putting our Lord Jesus FIRST in our lives. This includes our Time, our Talents, and our Treasure.

This little brochure outlines our investment in ministry for the next two years. We will glorify God and lift high the name of Jesus. By God's grace, new people will come to faith in our Lord Jesus. Children will be trained in the faith. Youth will find God's call on their lives. Marriages will be strengthened. Long-time believers will discover the joy of a deeper walk with Christ. Along the way, we plan to have some fun and fellowship, too.

Why pledge? This process gives us each an opportunity to prayerfully reflect on what God might be asking us to do toward the mission of His church. It also helps us plan our ministries most effectively.

Because People Need Jesus,

**Rev. Dr. Chris Ritter
Directing Pastor
First Methodist Church**



A First Fruits Prayer

Come, Lord of first fruits, Lord of rejoicing. Join in our celebration as we taste the joy of your immeasurable love. We pray to you, who have given us these fruits of the land. Make our service redound to your glory. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



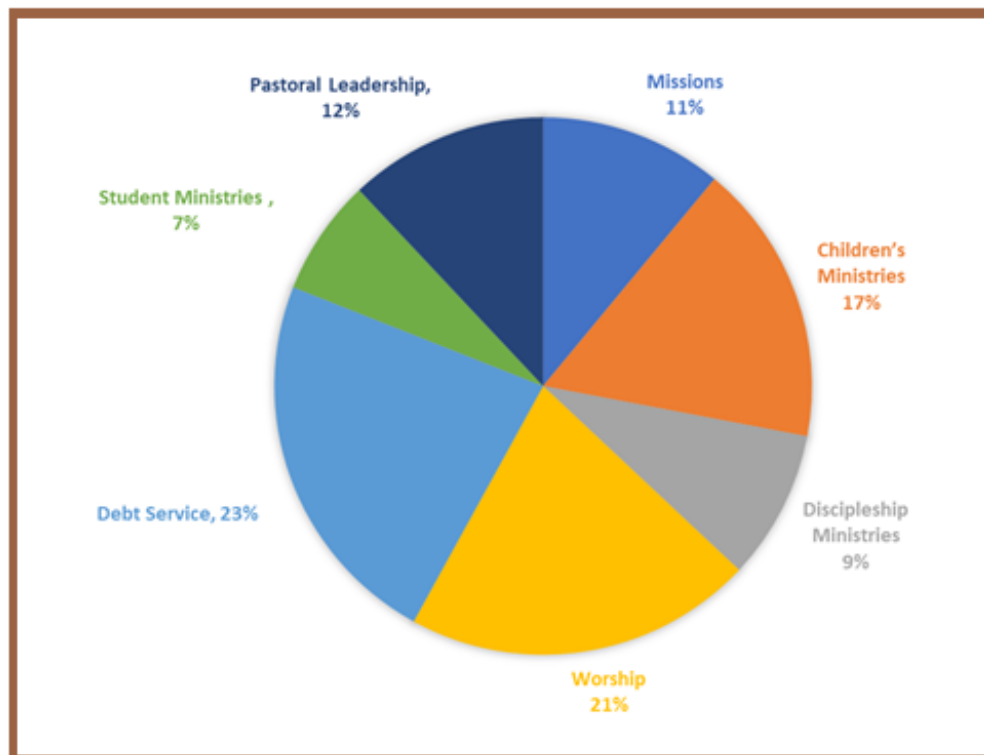
2024 Ministry Budget

Our 2024 Proposed Unified Ministry Budget provides a **\$1,078,000** investment for the Gospel in our community and world. This is up 3% from 2023 and represents our financial commitment to draw, develop, and deploy people for Jesus. Here is a description of the work your tithes and offerings support.

Worship

\$225,000

Worship is our heartbeat as a congregation. Our four weekend worship services and special celebrations provide a variety of opportunities for people to gather to praise God, pray, hear God's word preached, respond in faith, and celebrate the sacraments. We offer online worship for those unable to join us in person and these virtual experiences, too, help keep us connected and reaching new people.



Missions

\$118,000

Our 2024 budget increases our investment in HOPE Scholarships to send 120 kids to school in Guinea, Africa. We are also providing tuition support for the families of Liberian pastors. Becky Johnson Souza will receive monthly support for her work in the Amazon. Claire Yerkey will also receive support for her ministries in Puerto Rico. We are helping several students in Africa attain their dream of college education. We have mission partnerships with Operation Christmas Child and Another Child Foundation. Closer to home, we partner with GROW Ministries in Cambridge and assist local families through Matthew 25, Beds for Kids, and the Lunchbox Program.

Children's Ministries

\$183,000

This category supports the staffing, facilities, and programming that draw, develop, and deploy children for Jesus. Because we believe in imparting the faith to the rising generations, we have a full-time Director of Children's Ministry for the first time. Spending in this category also includes our church nursery, Sunday School, Children's Church, Ignite After School Ministry, Vacation Bible School, and special events. Although Little Green Apple Preschool is financially self-supporting, this category provides the space and insurance for this excellent program.

Discipleship Ministries

\$95,000

Developing people in Jesus is one of our pillars at First Methodist. This category provides the space, staffing and materials for us to offer high-quality experiences that grow people in their walk with Jesus. Yvette Biddle & Amber Lily, our discipleship staff, lead the ministries that welcome new people into our church.

Student Ministries

\$74,000

This category also supports our programming and special outreach events to reach students for Jesus. Youth are embedded in all parts of our church ministry, but we also offer specialized ministries aimed at helping students embrace joyful Christian discipleship. Our South Campus provides an accessible facility in the center of Geneseo where youth feel welcome and wanted.

Pastoral Leadership

\$129,000

Our congregation is led by Rev. Dr. Chris Ritter, an ordained elder in the Global Methodist Church. Our appointed pastor leads our congregation, preaches God's Word, celebrates the sacraments, provides spiritual guidance, supervises our staff, conducts weddings and funerals, teaches the faith, and keeps us connected to the work of God in the larger world. This budget category allows us to maintain our church parsonage, provide a salary, equip continuing education, and provide GMC clergy benefits.

Debt Service

\$254,000

We are making great progress on the debt we incurred in 2014 when we added a new sanctuary, Commons, kitchen, music room, and main entrance. This major new addition has allowed us to draw people to Jesus and become a center for activity for our community. Through the generosity of our congregation, we have paid all but \$1.9 million of this \$4.5 million project. Each month we make two payments totaling just over \$21,000.

Primary Goal:

100% Participation

Secondary Goal:

**\$2.2 Million
over 2 years**



THE GIVING LADDER

Moving to the Next Step in Giving

Generosity does not happen by accident. It is intentionally grown. It starts when we ask two questions: "Where am I?" and "Where is God calling me to go?" Then we take one step at a time:



Tithe Plus Giver

Tithe Plus Givers donate over and above ten percent. They go beyond the biblical standard and are enabled by God to invest more to build His Kingdom.



Tithe Giver

Tithe Givers realize the blessings of giving and respond to the biblical standard of giving ten percent of their income to the work of God.



Consistent Giver

Consistent Givers dependably give to the work of the church and realize that consistent giving is crucial to a life of faithful stewardship.



Emerging Giver


Emerging Givers are on the first step of the giving ladder. They give occasionally and are discovering how generosity is part of trusting God.

Ask God the step of faith he is calling you to as together we draw, develop, and deploy people for Jesus.

Commitment Weekend





During worship on **October 21 & 22**, we will complete pledge cards like this one.

1. Please include your personal contact information.
2. Check the level of giving you are stepping to, described on the previous page.
3. Begin with what you are currently giving to the church each year.
4. Now add the amount you are increasing.
5. Total the amounts in #3 & #4.
6. Multiply by two to find your number for both 2024 and 2025.
7. Add any additional amount God might lay on your heart from investments, savings, etc.
8. Add the amounts in #6 and #7 to arrive at your **Total First Fruits Pledge**.
9. You can also complete this form online at www.peopleneedjesus.org/firstfruits



NAME(S)
ADDRESS
PHONE#
E-MAIL

I/WE ARE STEPPING UP TO:

 Tithe Plus Giver	<input type="checkbox"/>
 Tithe Giver	<input type="checkbox"/>
 Consistent Giver	<input type="checkbox"/>
 Emerging Giver	<input type="checkbox"/>

\$ _____	WHAT I/WE CURRENTLY GIVE ANNUALLY
+ \$ _____	MY/OUR EXPANDED GIVING FOR FIRST FRUITS
= \$ _____	NEW YEARLY AMOUNT
X2 \$ _____	2-YEAR SUB-TOTAL
+ \$ _____	OTHER ONE-TIME GIFTS (STOCKS, SAVINGS, ETC.)
= \$ _____	MY/OUR TOTAL FIRST FRUITS PLEDGE