

2016 Budget Narrative

October 2015

LIVE IN THE SPIRIT

Adult Education

Our Adult Education ministry strives to connect people to the power and presence of God in their every day lives. We do this through encouraging people in worship and through the practice of daily devotion and Sabbath-keeping.

An integral part of our adult ministry is our small group Bible studies and fellowship groups. We grow best in our love for God when we also learn how to love another! This past year, over 200 people have participated in small group Bible studies, and other groups such as Deborah & Ruth Circles, Bible and BREW and a new group for women called Wine Study and Bible Tasting. Through these groups, people are growing in faith, lives are being touched and transformed.



Children's Ministry

Our children's ministries strive to share God's love with the youngest members of St. Thomas so they may grow in faith and develop a personal relationship with Christ. We encourage family learning and mission experiences. This is accomplished by including children in the worship through weekly children's sermons and junior worship leaders, providing Bible-based learning opportunities, as well as encouraging family mission and spiritual growth. We want St. Thomas to be a place where children feel safe and loved, by God and by their church family.

Our budget is used for supplies for Children's Chapel, DOCK, and Family Fun Sundays, VBS, children's Bibles and Junior Worship Leaders.

Youth Ministry

Youth ministry is a huge part of St. Thomas. Our Youth Ministry exists to REACH out to middle school and senior high youth, ENCOURAGE them in God's love through fellowship, NURTURE them in their faith, and equip them to SERVE. All of our programming is built upon this mission statement. We reach out to our youth through our monthly coffee house ministry where youth are encouraged to bring their friends and get them involved. We encourage our youth by providing events like Capture the Flag and Laser Tag that will allow them to have a safe and welcoming environment to build relationships. Nurturing our youth in their faith is a priority at St. Thomas. We give them weekly opportunities through our small group leadership crews and bigger impact events like our winter retreats at Spring Hill camp and Great Escape in the summer. And lastly we teach them the importance of serving others through annual local activities such as MCREST and the 30 Hour Famine and through distant mission trips.

Our youth ministry budget is imperative to our youth program for it provides the means for youth to build a foundation for an ongoing relationship with Jesus Christ. Research by Barna shows that 83% of all Christians made their initial faith commitment as a child or in their teenage years. I am very thankful that at St. Thomas we make our youth budget a priority.



LIVE IN THE SPIRIT (CONT.)

Deacons

The duties of Deacons are to minister to those in need. At St. Thomas, they have two areas of responsibility: congregational care and fellowship. Congregational care involves caring for the needs of our congregation with Meals Ministry, Homebound Communion, "We Care" cards, visitation, funeral needs, transportation, nursery care supervision as well as the recognition of births, adoption and baptisms in the congregation. Fellowship involves coffee hour each Sunday morning, kitchen supplies and congregational activities such as summer BBQs, chili cook-off, Rally Day and the occasional pancake breakfast.

Deacons budget includes all coffee and kitchen supplies, celebration cakes and flowers as well as church and Deacon sponsored events.

Stephen Ministry

Stephen Ministry is a one-on-one ministry by trained lay members of our congregation. Stephen Ministers assist our Pastors by providing ongoing visits to both church and community members who are experiencing a difficult time. Stephen Ministers provide emotional and spiritual support and care to people who are going through a challenging time, such as divorce, grief, terminal illness, hospitalization, unemployment, relocation, chronic illness, or loneliness.

The budget is mainly used for grief pamphlets, and training materials.



LOVE GOD



Property Management

The Property Management portion of the budget allows the church to establish, plan, coordinate and perform maintenance and improvement projects for the building and grounds that provides a stimulating environment allowing more people to reach for, live in and share Christ. For example, St. Thomas provides a welcoming environment for AA which meets several times a week at the church, the FAR program finds a home at our church to teach developmentally disabled children about the arts, Senior lunches bring community seniors together for food and companionship and the church provides a suitable and friendly environment for the Youth of our church. This budget also includes all office supplies and equipment (computers, phone, postage and copier leases etc.). These are just a few of the ways that the Property Management portion of the budget sustains the mission of St. Thomas.

Personnel

Our staff at Saint Thomas is all exceptional people who all are vital to the church operations. Paid staff includes 12 people in various job functions starting with our Ministry staff; the Pastors, Youth Ministry and Music Ministry. The support staff in the church office to nursery care workers all provides critical support functions.

The personnel committee uses many tools each year to determine what a fair compensation for each member of the staff might be. We use national labor statistics, professional publications, recommendations from Presbytery and benchmarking along with yearly reviews. Many of the staff has several years' experience in their field along with advanced education. When all of these are considered and benchmarked against similar job functions in religious organizations we compensate many of our employees more toward the lower portion of the wage scale. This year personnel is asking for a 1.5% increase over last year's budget to compensate our employees.

Just as a note: the 2015 National Bureau of Labor Statistics report for the Detroit area shows a 3.0% wage increase for some of our support staff job functions.

SHARE CHRIST

Connections Ministry

The connections ministry welcomes first time guests to St. Thomas, encourages retention, and connects guests to ministries, bible studies and other church activities. Host Newcomers' Coffees for the purpose of proving guests the opportunity to meet one of the pastors, learn about St. Thomas, and the Presbyterian Church. We facilitate membership and integration into the life of the church through New Member Classes.

In addition, the connections ministry provides training to Greeters and Hosts, adding new volunteers to serve in this ministry. We provide greeters at each service to welcome all who attend, and Welcome Center hosts at each service. Hosts welcome guests, answer questions, and supply a Welcome Packet and gift for guests.

While most of the ministries activities are done by dedicated volunteers, a major part of our budget is for the Fellowship One software. The software is used by office staff and volunteers for tracking and assigning follow-up phone calls and letters. Other costs include name tags, welcome gifts, printing of brochures, folders and pens and food supplies for new member classes.

Worship

Worship stands as the central component of our life together as a community of faith. Through worship, we offer ourselves to God in love and gratitude, showing our praise and adoration for God's work in our lives today. Worship is, indeed, the work of the people.

In order to sustain relevant, thought-provoking, Biblically-based worship, the church must provide funds for all facets of the worship experience. This includes the basics such as Bibles, hymnals, audio-visual equipment, praise and worship music, choir robes and folders, candles and communion supplies. Additionally, the worship budget includes funding for sanctuary decor, pulpit supply when our pastors are on vacation, as well as resources and literature for drama and liturgical movement ministries.



Faithsharing/Community Outreach

Major activities of the Faithsharing/Community Outreach team include the monthly senior lunch, the community carnival, movie nights, and other outreach events. The Senior Luncheon ministry which reaches approximately 40-50 seniors each month (more than half from the community) will be in its 5th year. While most of the food is donated by the congregation, we do use about \$400/year in budget money for paper products and once a year we buy pizza. This ministry is extremely cost-efficient and meets real needs with our senior neighbors.

Additionally, the faithsharing team sponsors an annual community carnival. Many ministries participate and fund carnival games, etc., but we spend about \$100-200 on this event and our other outreach events, such as the Michigan/Michigan State tailgate.



SHARE CHRIST— continued



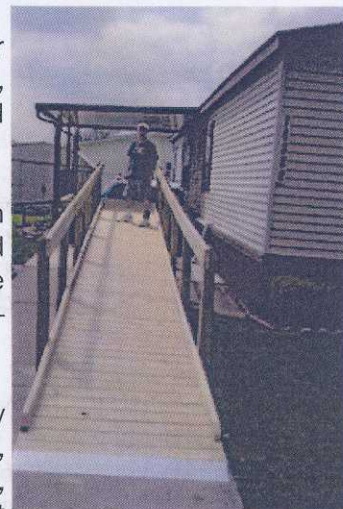
Mission

The Bible clearly places a strong emphasis on supporting the widows and children and the unfortunate. St. Thomas has had a very strong focus toward helping others for a great many years. We do a lot for a church our size. Our financial support of our mission partners is heavily weighted toward local mission with 15 different areas of focus and 68% of the funding going to local mission. These services vary from providing direct housing, food and much more to 60 homeless individuals (MCREST) to indirectly providing food and other

needs through our partners at Abigayle Ministries, Good Shepard Coalition and Samaritan House.

We also have a ministry that directly helps older and disabled adults in our community stay in their homes through small things like cleanup around the house, fixing something or in one case building a wheelchair ramp to allow the disabled person to be able to get out of the house through Step-Out & Serve.

We directly help several people in need each year through our benevolence fund. In addition, we provide Chemo Caps to hospitals for people who need them, dental and medical care through Trinity Community Care and then Christmas baskets provide direct help each year at Christmas just to name a few. In 2016 we are also supporting a local organization to reduce Human Trafficking in our area.



Our distant mission partners directly provide life sustaining shelter, food, water and medical care for babies, children and others that would not survive without that help. St Thomas supports a feeding center in Haiti that feeds up to 50 children one meal a day, four days a week. Without that support those families would face devastating circumstances. **Today there is a new school that we helped build in Haiti.** This is so vital a ministry I feel that it cannot be covered adequately here.

One other area in distant mission provides education and recreational activities to enhance the lives of the disabled at Christ Outreach for the Blind.

Most of all having all these focus areas allow for each of us to find a place where we can be the hands and feet of Christ and touch someone's life, often in a very significant way.



Live. Love. Share.

November 8, 2015

Dear Friends and Members of St. Thomas,

Last Sunday, we passed out a letter and ministry pamphlet detailing all of the ministries of St. Thomas, asking you to prayerfully seek God's will and consider your giving for 2016. One story was inadvertently left out of the ministry brochure, and we would like to share it with you at this time. It comes from Chris Kring, one of our Stephen Leaders. It is a powerful story of a life touched through a Stephen Minister. In order to maintain confidentiality, the two individuals will only be referred to as John (the Care Giver) and Joe (the Care Receiver). Here it is:

This relationship began six years ago, as soon as John had completed his Stephen Ministry training. His Care Receiver, Joe, was an elderly gentleman who was living in senior housing due to some health concerns. John visited Joe faithfully each week and would often go out to lunch with him. Although the standard visit is considered to be one hour, John usually spent 2-3 hrs. visiting Joe. Topics of conversation primarily dealt with concerns about Joe's relationship with his family, other residents and staff and other health issues. Sometimes Joe liked to talk about his hobby of painting and show John his projects. John always prayed with Joe and occasionally they discussed their thoughts about spiritual readings. As time progressed, Joe had to be hospitalized due to deteriorating health and John visited him in the hospital and updated the St. Thomas prayer chain with requests for prayers of healing. During Joe's final three months, he needed to be transferred to a nursing home. John faithfully visited 5-6 times per week and listened compassionately, prayed and even assisted Joe with eating and drinking.

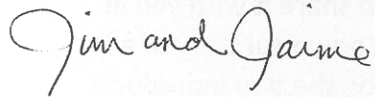
This relationship only ended with Joe's death. John felt blessed to have developed this trusting bond with Joe, in which he was able to share God's love and care for His flock. John also developed genuine appreciation for the positive manner in which Joe faced the challenges of old age and death and felt it would help him with any such future challenges of his own. Joe similarly felt blessed to have had someone who really listened to him without judging, who showed up regularly, who maintained the confidentiality of private matters, who prayed for him and who was a true friend.

We share this with you, because we believe many are unaware of how the ministries of St. Thomas are impacting and touching lives in our community and beyond. This is just one example of two lives being touched and transformed by a ministry of St. Thomas. There are many more! All of these ministries are made possible through the grace of God and your generous support.

Please take a moment to prayerfully consider your giving to St. Thomas for 2016. If you sense God calling to increase your pledge, please do so. If you sense God is calling to give the same, we hope you will do so. If you sense God is calling you to give less, by all means do so. The key is to seek God's will both for you and the church.

Make sure to pick up your pledge card for 2016 in the Narthex for your convenience. Please bring the card with you to either service on Sunday, Nov. 15, which is Consecration Sunday. We will receive all pledge cards as an act of worship on that Sunday.

Thank you for your prayers and support.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jim and Jaime". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid and personal.

Pastors Jim and Jaime
Co-Pastors