



Tigard United Methodist Church

Spirit. Service. Community.



“We can thrive... even in a pandemic!”

Dear Members and Friends of Tigard UMC,

I am writing this letter to invite you to participate in our church’s ministry with your generous giving in 2021, to highlight how we have been in ministry so far in 2020, and to share our direction for the future.

If you had asked me seven months ago what I thought our church’s financial situation would be this fall, I would have confessed to a measure of anxiety. With worship suspended indefinitely, all of our in-building programs and activities shut down, and our building use revenue gone, I was worried about how we were going to make ends meet.

If I could go back in time, I would say to myself, “Oh you of little faith, Jeremy!” **I failed to trust the amazing generosity and abundant hearts of the TUMC community.** Looking through a lens of scarcity, I only saw what would be missing—what would not happen, what would have to be canceled, what money would not be available. **But looking through the lens of abundance, I am amazed and in awe of all the “good fruit” that our church has produced** even in the midst of the challenges of the pandemic.

- In less than a week, **we made the transition from in-person to online worship.** We did not miss one Sunday of worship, thanks to the efforts of many generous people behind the scenes.

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No good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit; for each tree is known by its own fruit. Figs are not gathered from thorns, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good... for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks.

Jesus in
Luke 6:43-45

October 2020

- We quickly transitioned many of our small groups to Zoom, including the Confirmation class, Youth Group, the Monday book group, the men's coffee group, and the United Methodist Women (to name a few). **We even had to acquire a second Zoom account** to manage all of the various Zoom gatherings!
- **We have been sharing food** with hundreds of families in our community at our Bethlehem House of Bread food pantry.
- **Our English Language Learner (formerly ESL) classes resumed this fall**, on schedule, utilizing (you guessed it) Zoom, with many students and tutors participating.
- Over the summer, **we hosted "Racial Justice Discussion Groups"** engaging people in conversations about racism, white supremacy, history, and what our responsibilities are in the future. Some of these groups continue this fall.

Looking through the lens of abundance, I am amazed and in awe of all the "good fruit" that our church has produced...

- In July, **we established the "Helping Our Neighbors" Fund**. Over \$15,000 has been donated to the fund which has in turn provided rent and utility assistance to over 25 families (most of them living in the apartment complexes around the church building), plus school supplies and internet connectivity scholarships.



Thank you artwork from a child whose family received rent assistance from the "Helping Our Neighbors" Fund.

- In September, **we restarted Water's Edge worship** on Zoom, offering an alternative worship experience and bringing that worshipping group back together.
- Behind the scenes, in quiet ways, **kind and caring people from TUMC have been checking in on each other**, with cards, calls, emails, and text messages, reminding people that they are not alone.
- Our church has weathered the financial strain of this time **thanks to the incredible generosity of the TUMC community**.

I hope that, like me, when you take a moment to reflect on all of the above, you will see **abundance and good fruit**. Even in a pandemic, **we can thrive as a church. And we have!**

While there have been losses that we understandably grieve, like the indefinite closure of the Indoor Playpark and Jubilate, and the suspension of the choir (to name a few), **because of you—your love, prayer, time, and generous donations—we continue to adapt our ministry to the realities we face. The abundance of God flows through YOU, empowering our ministry.**

Looking ahead to 2021

As we look ahead to 2021, we will keep imagining how we will **THRIVE** even amid the ongoing pandemic and the chaos of the world. Because we are in an “in-between time,” the Church Council has not yet identified clear goals for 2021.

But the Church Council has been pondering, praying, and discussing our core values and where the Holy Spirit may be leading us in the future, especially as we one-day emerge from the pandemic. Some glimmers of what the future holds for TUMC include:

Expansive Community

The pandemic has shown us that **TUMC can expand beyond our traditional way of defining our community.** We have people who watch our live stream worship who do not live locally—our digital community. There are people in our neighborhoods who faithfully volunteer at the food pantry or as tutors for ELL but do not attend our church—our extended community. We have expressed our desire to be open to ALL people through our Welcoming Statement—our aspirational community. In the future, we’ll continue to be intentional about expanding the TUMC community beyond the traditional definition of church membership and participation.

Standing for Justice

The Church Council views the prominent focus on racial justice over the summer, along with Bishop Stanovsky’s challenge for United Methodists to participate in anti-racism work, as an opening for **TUMC to step more deeply into justice work.** Our church already has a history of partnering with IMIrJ (Interfaith Movement for Immigrant Justice) and we have taken small steps into LGBTQ+ advocacy. There are a committed core group of people within our congregation who are eager to carry this work forward, inviting the participation of the whole TUMC community.

Meeting Needs in our Community

The TUMC congregation has been extremely supportive of the new “Helping Our Neighbors” Fund. By offering assistance to families in our area, we have begun to develop relationships with the Family Partnership

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Advocates in local schools, the TTSD Family Resource Center, as well as other community partners. We continue to partner with Family Promise of Tualatin Valley to assist families experiencing homelessness, and we also have many community connections in the Metzger neighborhood through Bethlehem House of Bread. The Church Council would like to see our church build on this work in the future.

As we prepare our 2021 General Fund budget, we are keeping it lean. We realize the economic realities that people face. At the same time, we are committed to carrying forward the ministry of our church in vital ways—as we have done for 110 years. **What's most important to us is being able to nurture our congregation, serve**

We can THRIVE, even in a pandemic. And we are!

How to Give

- Visit the church website at www.TigardUMC.com to make a one-time donation or to set up a recurring donation using a credit or debit card or by authorizing a donation directly from your bank account.
- Text "TUMC" (without the quotes) to 77977 and follow the instructions in the reply.
- Open the Tigard UMC smart phone app and tap "give."
- Write a check and send it to the church address.

the community, and be an active presence of hope and love at a time when it is so desperately needed.

As our Church Council looks ahead to 2021 and plans for a thriving church, **please take time to prayerfully consider your giving to TUMC, complete an "Estimate of Giving" card, and return it to the church.** (You may also fill out an estimate card online. Visit the church website at www.TigardUMC.com.) We especially encourage you to consider signing up for recurring electronic giving so that your support of the church's ministry will be uninterrupted regardless of what is happening in the world.

Your continued generosity is one way to be a part of a thriving church that is adapting to a world that is fundamentally changing due to the pandemic.

Thank you for allowing the abundance in your hearts to flow into and through Tigard UMC. Because of YOU, our church has been and will continue to THRIVE — even in a pandemic.

With deep gratitude,

Pastor Jeremy

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www.TigardUMC.com

9845 SW Walnut Place
Tigard, Oregon 97223
503-639-3181

P.S. By completing an "Estimate of Giving" card (on paper or online), you participate in the ministry of our church as together we respond to God's call to serve as God's loving people. **Thank you!**