

April 2010
 Volume 2, Issue 1
 Office of Stewardship, Finance &
 Administration, Central TX Conference UMC

A newsletter for Local Church
 Treasurers and Finance Committee
 Chairpersons.



Lord, our God, all this abundance that we have provided to build you a house for Your Holy Name, it is from Your hand, and all is Yours. 1 Chronicles 29:16

Financially Speaking...

- * "When, as a pastor, you feel you've preached too much about stewardship, you are at a good starting place."
- * "People loathe the unknown; they will only give when all financial information is shared."

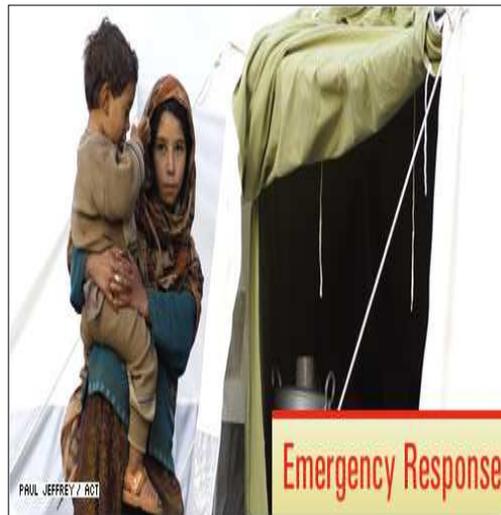
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UMCOR Emergency Response

Rev. Harvey Ozmer

UMCOR responds to natural or civil disasters that are interruptions of such magnitude that they overwhelm a community's ability to recover on its own. UMCOR's work on behalf of United Methodists is global and includes countries in Africa, Asia, Central and South America and the Caribbean. UMCOR serves in long-term disaster recovery in the U.S.



The immediate goal of UMCOR's international and domestic emergency response programs is to provide relief and rehabilitation for the entire person-physical, social, and psychological-in a distress situation. UMCOR provides long-term recovery as well as immediate relief. Recognizing that disasters cause disruptions that can last for years and often create permanent changes in people's lives, UMCOR works within a

community to address the long-term effects of a disaster and assist people in rebuilding and adjusting to change. Every dollar you give to UMCOR goes directly to the cause for which it is designated.

UPDATE: UMCOR Relief Efforts in Haiti

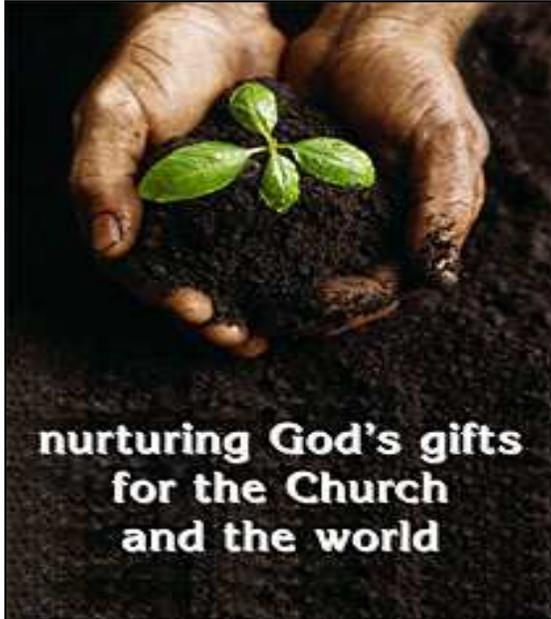
More than two months after the January 12 earthquake that devastated Haiti, UMCOR continues to receive gifts from churches, conferences, individuals and organizations to support the people of Haiti. Please continue to be in prayer for the people of Haiti as they grieve their losses and strive to meet their day to day needs.

As of March 18, 2010:

- 15 million dollars has been received for UMCOR Haiti Relief.
- \$214,792 has been given by the Central Texas Conference Churches.
- 23,520 Health Kits were transported via free shipping to Haiti.
- UMCOR has met with other partners in the health field to address the need for a long term health strategy in post-earthquake Haiti.
- A proposal is in progress to facilitate the work of volunteer teams for projects identified as priority by the Methodist Church in Haiti.

You are participants in a great work. Thank you Central Texas United Methodists.

Steps To Keep Money Coming In Herb Mather



- ◆ **Establish an endowment fund.** Establish the fund **BEFORE** you know when or if you will receive any bequests or other contributions. Seek the assistance of the Central Texas Foundation [<http://www.ctmf.org/> or 1-800-333-4096] or the Texas Methodist Foundation at <http://www.tmf-fdn.org/>.
- ◆ **Preach and teach Christian stewardship.** Most of the biblical guidance about money relates to how we earn, save and spend money. Help the people of your church become stewards of 100% of the money and possessions they control. See especially Proverbs, Amos and the Gospels.
- ◆ **Involve persons in ministry.** Involving persons in ministry is not the same as putting persons on a committee. Seek and create opportunities for shorter term commitments that will fit the nature of the current situation.
Matthew 25:31-46 Luke 6:46-47
James 1:25

Payroll Question and Answer

David Stinson

Q: Why is housing allowance in two places on the PSCF form?

A: The difference in line D.2. and line F on the Pastor's Support and Compensation Form (PSCF) is the source of the funds. The amount in line F Housing Allowance is the church budgeted amount specified for clergy housing. This amount tends to remain constant with clergy changes. If the line F amount is not sufficient to cover all the clergy's housing-related expenses, then the clergy can voluntarily allocate part of the line D Salary as Housing Exclusion. The line D.2. amount is clergy specific and can be changed anytime clergy circumstances change.

The tax treatment of the two Housing lines is exactly the same. The church should pay both housing lines to the clergy as part of regular payroll. It is the clergy's responsibility to keep receipts and documentation of housing related expenses to be able to justify the deduction on her/his individual tax return. Any undocumented housing allowance or exclusion is treated as regular income, so the church should not worry about any housing amount that appears to be "set too high". The tax consequences of housing are strictly the clergy's responsibility.

Q: I know housing allowance includes utilities and furnishings. What else?

A: Just about everything except food and personal care items:

- Down payment on a home
- Mortgage loan payments (interest & principal) to purchase or improve home)
- Real estate taxes
- Property insurance
- Utilities (electric, gas, water, trash pickup, local telephone, internet access fees)
- Furnishings and appliances (purchase and repair)
- Structural repairs and remodeling
- Yard maintenance and improvements (yard equipment, tools, and lawn service)
- Maintenance items (household cleaners, light bulbs, pest control, etc.)
- Homeowners' association dues

Pay Apportionments Online

David Stinson

The Conference Office can receive electronic funds transfer payments for apportionments and benevolences, and also payments for Pension, Insurance, and Cafeteria Plan invoices. The link is on the Conference Apportionment webpage: <http://ctsite.brickriver.com/pages/detail/1032>. [From the Conference home webpage, click "Administration", then click "Apportionments", then click on "Online Payments"]. Paying online is a simple 3-step, self-explanatory process. The fund payment form is similar to the Remittance Form, and space is provided to "write in" advance specials. Be sure to include the advance

special number, name or some other ID just as you do on the Remittance Form.



If making online payment(s) for HealthFlex, Pension, and/or Cafe-

teria Plan invoice(s), the invoice(s) must be paid in full. Partial payments need to be paid by check. Do not forget to put the invoice number on the payment form.

If your bank has debit blocks on the account to prevent unauthorized transactions, you will need to contact your bank and instruct them to allow debits and credits for ACH originator ID #3411786634: Vanco Services. Not having this filter in place will cause your payments to be returned. Call David Stinson, 817-877-5222 or 800-460-8622, if you have questions about the online payment option.

Records Retention Schedule

David Stinson

The beginning of Spring is usually the time when the previous year's records are boxed and ready to be moved to storage. As the storage space begins to fill (or



overflow), the questions arise about what to keep and for how long. The schedule below will help in the organization of your document storage. Some of the recommended retention periods below are for legal reasons. Others are based on practical con-

siderations. Remember to mind the sensitive nature of most of the documents. After exceeding their recommended retention, most documents should be destroyed instead of just thrown out.

Keep One Year

Offering Envelopes

Keep Three Years

Business correspondence

Employee personnel records (after termination)

Keep Seven Years

Bank statements and reconciliations

Canceled checks

Worksheets & related documents for tax returns

W-2s and 1099s

Invoices from vendors

Individual giving records

Housing allowance forms

Keep Permanently

Incorporation papers

Minutes

Treasurer's reports

Tax returns

Audit reports

Annual corporate reports

Property records

Contracts and leases

Insurance policies (including expired policies; lawsuits can reach back many years requiring proof of coverage)

Insurance letters/correspondence

Employee applications (for current employees)

Are You A Pay The Bills Church Or A Live The Vision Church?

Rev. Harvey Ozmer

Everything I read and hear today says that if Christians were to give their income generously—not even necessarily lavishly—they could transform the world. As you see



the giving in your church, I suspect that you agree.

In the book “A New Context For Ministry” a number of factors for this low giving are named.

- Clergy and laity alike are uncomfortable with the subject of giving.
- A consumerist culture has led many to believe they don’t have the money.
- Churches have low expectations with few consequences for poor or no giving.
- Most people never talk about money and giving with others.

Others have identified two (2) contrasting congregational cultures:

- The Pay the Bills Church
- The Live the Vision Church

Which one of these describe your church?

In a “Pay the Bills Church”, members hear “the church needs your support, the church has bills to be paid and this is how much money we need.” The church communicates practical needs and expects people to respond. The result is often struggle, challenge and drudgery.

In a “Live the Vision Church”, the feeling is “giving is an essential part of faithful daily Christian living.” The approach presents a clear vision to which God is calling the congregation and invites people to participate in the vision. It brings expressions such as, “thank you for giving us the opportunity to give.”

I don’t know that one church is purely one type or the other. But, I would offer these suggestions shared by Lovett Weems if you see yourself as a “Pay the Bills” type church.

⇒ Realize that changing the giving culture of your church will take

time and require a comprehensive, multi-year plan.

- ⇒ Become more bold and positive in discussing giving. Always tie it to faith formation.
- ⇒ Confidently convey your faith’s teaching about financial giving throughout the year.
- ⇒ Maintain high expectations of members and honor generous financial giving.
- ⇒ Remember that leaders must model the generous giving they seek in others.
- ⇒ Encourage believers to make theologically informed decisions about generous giving.
- ⇒ Provide safe ways for people to talk about how they think through their giving.
- ⇒ Provide multiple means by which people can follow through on their decisions.
- ⇒ Improve systems of transparency, communication and accountability.

My best to you as you lead your church in a journey toward the “Live the Vision Church.”

Rev. Harvey Ozmer, Director, Stewardship, Finance & Administration

On The Legal Pad

David Stinson

How could churches function without their VOLUNTEERS? Federal and state legislators recognized the importance of volunteers to the work of charitable organizations and passed legislation that protects volunteers from civil liability. TX Civil Practice & Remedies § 84.001 et seq. states. “A volunteer of a charitable organization is immune from civil liability for any act or omission resulting in death, damage, or injury if the volunteer was acting in the course and scope of the vol-

unteer’s duties or functions, including as an officer, director, or trustee within the organization . . .”

Volunteers are often “recognized” or “rewarded” with a bonus, gift card, meal, or some other kind of “gift”. Unfortunately, the gift that is meant to show appreciation can be considered payment for services. In the eyes of the IRS and the courts, giving any kind of gift to a volunteer can turn that person into an employee, not subject to the immunity provided by law.



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The purpose of the Office of Stewardship, Finance and Administration is to provide for the functions of the ministries of the Central Texas Annual Conference, to maintain connectional relationships and to develop, maintain, and administer a comprehensive and coordinated plan of fiscal and administrative policies, procedures, and management services for the annual conference.

Back issues of the FAITH newsletter are available on the Conference website on the Local Church Treasurer Information web page found under the Administration Tab.

CORRECTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS

Please contact Harvey Ozmer at harvey@ctcumc.org or David Stinson at david@ctcumc.org if your email address or any other information needs correcting, or if you have suggestions for future articles.

Helpful Links

Connectional Giving
www.umcgiving.org

General Council on Finance and Administration
www.gcfa.org

Internal Revenue Service
www.irs.gov

United States Department of Labor
www.dol.gov