

26 Mighty Mission Minutes

Thought starters. Stories about where your dollars go – The difference your dollar makes. Share one each week immediately before the offering. (It is always more effective to add specifics to the story if you have a personal angle to share.)

1. Apportionment System - Methodism's founder John Wesley said, "I look upon all the world as my parish." Wesley reminded us that we are called to step out of our little corner of the world to spread the good news, transform hopelessness into hope and help God's children wherever they may be.

"I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me."--Matthew 25:35-36, NRSV

While it would be wonderful if we could reach out personally to everyone who needs our help, we know that is impossible. So we gather regularly with our congregation and put money into the offering plate, and through a carefully crafted system of United Methodist mission and ministry our gifts stretch around the world. The power of the connection allows us to spread the love of Jesus Christ, literally, around the world. (see umc.org/give)

2. Circle of Care – Through your giving we are caring for kids who can no longer live in their homes (usually through no fault of their own), often referred to as “at-risk” children, but we see them as “at-promise” and your generosity is giving them a safe and secure place to live into the human being God intended them to be. We have residential sites at The Children's Home in Tahlequah, The Boys Ranch at Gore, and The Holsinger Home at Enid. Every day we share the love of Christ with these children.
3. Flood Assistance – As the skies opened and the rain let loose on Friday, April 30, 2010, the Williams family settled in for the night.

The next morning, they awakened to find their furniture and other belongings submerged in raw sewage in their basement. Often, three of the

six children, now ages 8 to 18, slept downstairs. Some of the water began climbing upstairs as well.

Although the house is not in a low-lying area, the sewers had backed up. “The fence around the house created a fishbowl,” Erica Williams explained.

“There was water everywhere — nasty sewage. The water clogged the ductwork.” However, that wasn’t all.

“A week or so later,” she said, “the rats came.” They went into the ventilation system. We killed 18 big rats. Then the mold came. Then the bugs came.”

But the family had nowhere to go. Enter United Methodists relief workers and VIM volunteers.

Immediately, the United Methodist Committee on Relief gave an emergency grant of \$10,000 at the request of the Tennessee Annual Conference. Since then, UMCOR has awarded two \$100,000 grants for meeting survivor needs.

Brandon Hulette directs mercy mission and disaster recovery for the Tennessee Conference. He reported that a large recovery operation continues.

“Despite the sustained level of disasters here, we’ve been able to be the body of Christ in the lives of those individuals through the extravagant, generous support of volunteers and donors across the connection.” (umc.org)

Know for sure that through your giving here at church your dollars are at work for good! Thank you for your generosity!

4. Circle of Care – There are more than 10,000 children in Oklahoma's foster care system. On any given day there are 150 children in need of a foster home, which has yet to be found. When a foster or adoptive home is not available, these children stay in county shelters. The Oklahoma United

Methodist Circle of Care found a solution through a program called Child SHARE. We help these children escape neglect, abuse and abandonment. Each district has an anchor church that helps to coordinate placements and UM families volunteer to provide the foster homes. Your apportionment dollars make this critical ministry possible.

5. Circle of Care – Pearl’s Hope was the dream of one woman. She gave a major gift to make possible a place where single women with underage children could come get help in a time of emergency. Most agencies do not have the facilities to keep the family intact. Through our Oklahoma United Methodist Circle of Care this ministry has been established in Tulsa at the former Francis E. Willard Home property and is providing housing and help (from transportation, to job skills, to counseling and spiritual guidance) to families, as we speak. This is a great new ministry your giving through apportionments supports.

6. New churches started – Recently at a UM Forum we celebrated the cutting-edge work of After Hours, a new kind of church led by Jerry Herships. He is a former comedian and bar-tender with a passion and giftedness for reaching young adults (mainly in taverns and bars) and pointing them to the Denver area to “be church” by serving alongside the homeless. We heard about the ministry of Amanda Garber, who founded Rise United Methodist Church out of her campus ministry in Harrisonburg, VA. Her church is thriving as a growing young adult community of faith. We celebrated the 18 month old ministry of Chicago’s Urban Village, led by Christian Coon and Trey Hall, already a three campus multi-site with a fourth in the works. We heard from Adam Weber in South Dakota and Jacob Armstrong near Nashville, TN, both young men whose new churches have quickly grown above 500 in worship.

Signs of new life (young life) are popping up all over the country! Thanks for keeping hope alive - in our hearts and our denomination. (Path 1 News)

7. Oklahoma City University – Where you are a name, not a number. Personalized education is what we offer through our United Methodist University in Oklahoma City – values based education and service learning

as an integral part of the college experience. A portion of your giving makes this kind of high quality education possible.

8. Volunteers-In-Mission – Oklahoma Conference sends more people and more dollars into short-term service in the name of Christ than any other conference in America! Lives are transformed as we send doctors and medical personnel, as we build houses, as we drill water wells and as we lead Bible Schools and provide Christian study curriculum. Your dollars underwrite the coordination of this fantastic ministry through our Conference office so that more and more people can respond to God’s call to go unto all the world making disciples!

9. Campus Ministry – Oklahoma Conference has one of the most active ministries to students on college campuses in the nation. Our apportionment dollars support ministries like our OSU Wesley Foundation in Stillwater that reaches scores of students each week through worship, Sunday School, study groups, Bible Studies, Christian reflection groups, shared meals and more. In one of the most pivotal transitions, any of us make, many fall away from faith. During their college experience our connectional ministry and mission giving makes this important outreach and contact for Christ possible on campuses across our state.

10. Summer Camps – When we send a child or youth to camp for a week they get more Christian education and spiritual formation experience than they do in a year of Sunday School. Often this is a time of critical faith formation. This time away from the regular routine of everyday life provides a time for great growth in faith. Our connectional dollars support three campgrounds in Oklahoma, one close to Tahlequah, Camp Egan; one on Lake Texoma, Crosspoint Camp; and one near Hinton called Canyon Camp. Every week of the summer our camps are filled with hundreds of youth and children learning about God and developing a faith on which they can build a lifetime.

11. Camp Cavett – one special camp which happens every year at our United Methodist campgrounds is Camp Cavett. It is a special camp for young people with debilitating illnesses. Children with handicapping conditions are welcome to attend. This is the only camp available for heart, sickle-cell and cystic fibrosis children. In conjunction with the OU Medical School Children's Hospital this week of camp provides a rare experience of outdoor fun and faith with trained medical personnel in attendance to provide a safe and appropriate experience for these children in difficult circumstances. I am so pleased to be a part of such a tremendous ministry. Anytime you drop a dollar into our offering plate a few cents goes toward making this kind of camping experience possible.
12. UMCOR – or the United Methodist Committee On Relief is the disaster relief arm of The United Methodist Church and is ready to jump into action any time there is a disaster anywhere to relieve suffering of those effected. Tornado, earthquake, hurricane, famine or flood UMCOR has trained personnel to respond with Christ's compassion and practical help. Always working in partnership with the local officials and other helping agencies UMCOR maximizes our dollars to help the hurting. Many relief organizations spend from 25 – 40% on administration our UMCOR working with our local connectional church only spends 2% on administration. In fact, 100% of our special appeals go directly to aid.
13. Board of Ordained Ministry – Pastors are recommended by local churches but also have to be approved by our Board of Ordained Ministry at the Conference level. Made up of clergy and laity, this Board works to ensure that the gifts and graces necessary for effective pastoral leadership are present in our candidates for ministry. They spend countless hours with our entering ministers to interview, teach and guide aspiring pastors. Our connectional dollars underwrite this work to ensure the best possible pastoral leadership is provided to keep our churches strong.
14. Africa University – established nearly 20 years ago now, our United Methodist Africa University has been a huge success graduating over a 1,000 students in fields as diverse as agriculture, health sciences, theology,

education and public administration. With some 1100 students from 27 countries enrolled this year our efforts are changing the face of Africa. None of us could do this alone but through our connectional mission and ministry giving we make this great institution of higher education possible.

15. CJAMM – our Criminal Justice and Mercy Ministry is an amazing work we support through our connectional giving. CJAMM provides life changing ministries inside and outside of prison for those dealing with the Department of Corrections. We provide spiritual guidance and formation through our Kairos Weekends inside the prisons and then ongoing support through our Redemption Congregations (located in Lawton, Oklahoma City and Tulsa) plus our re-entry housing for families through our Exodus Houses. Your dollars dramatically change lives for some of those most in need in our society.
16. Conference Leadership – Bishop Robert Hayes has served as our episcopal leader since 2004. He has inspired and encouraged our clergy and our churches. He travels all over the state to preach and teach and meet the people called Methodist. A portion of what you give goes to support the Bishop’s housing, transportation and salary. Strong leadership makes a difference and you are helping make that possible as you give.
17. Starting new churches worldwide – In 2008 our United Methodist leadership recognized the acute need to start new churches to reach more people with the call of Christ. We committed to start over 600 new churches in the U.S. in the next few years and another 400 around the globe. Hundreds of new churches across the country are reaching new people for Christ, plus churches in faraway places like Mulawi in Africa, Vietnam, and the Philippines are bringing people into the Christian family. Your generosity helps this vital ministry thrive.
18. Starting new churches in Oklahoma – Research is clear that new churches draw new people to the UMC. Your dollars go to help reach people for Christ through these new ventures. Our three most recent church starts are

in the OKC metro area. Crosstimbers in Moore, Oklahoma, Summit in NE Edmond and Connect in NW Edmond. Your dollars help provide start-up support for the first five years of the life of each of these churches. Thousands of people will be reached because of these new churches. Other new church starts are being planned currently. I am glad we are doing this vital work to spread the Good News of God's great love for all people!

19. Children's Curriculum – Your dollars make it possible for us to help our children learn the key stories in the Bible and develop a faith on which they can build a lifetime. Your giving makes this ministry developing the next generation of Christians a reality right here in our church, thank you for your willingness to give.
20. Heating and Cooling – we all want it to be cool in here in the summer and warm in the winter. That only happens as we are each willing to give and support the church. As we give generously we not only provide for ourselves an inviting worship space but we create a place where others can come and meet God. It is important that we maintain our facilities so we can be an attractive witness for Christ.
21. Pastor's Salary – I am giving my best and I thank you for your support. Your support of the pastor's salary makes it possible for me to represent all of us during a hospital visit, at a wedding or funeral. You allow me to devote full-time to addressing needs in our community and in our church as we strive to build the kingdom of God in this place. (Add a specific recent instance here which illustrates how you have represented them, as the church, in a positive way.)
22. Pastor to hospital – Every week I (if the pastor is speaking) visit in the hospitals to support, encourage and pray with those individuals dealing with illness. We also pray and provide support for the families of those with loved ones struggling with illness. Your faithful giving provides support so that I can represent you and this body of Christ to any and all in those stressful and difficult situations.

23. Pastor to homebound – Some of our members can no longer physically get to the church and so we go to them. I represent you and the church to them so that they receive emotional and prayer support, as well as a human touch to make sure they know we have not forgotten them even when they can no longer be here with us. Your faithful giving provides the pastor's salary and creates this important connection between our church family gathered and those unable to be here regularly.
24. Pastor teaching Bible Study – Every week I teach (give specifics of Bible Study or Sunday School or small group) our Disciple Bible Study. 12 of us gather each week after doing Bible reading and reflection all week for discussion and further learning as we work our way through all the major themes of the Bible. Study strengthens not only individuals but our church as a whole and empowers us to carry the Gospel out into the everyday world. Your giving makes this spiritual growth opportunity available year after year in our church.
25. Fighting Global Poverty – In desperation, a Liberian mother brought her 10-year-old son, her 11th child, to Mary Ann Newah in Ganta, Liberia. The boy looked to be 6 or 7, because he was undernourished. "His mother said, 'I do not know what to do to get him healthy,'" Newah says. "I'm dealing with lots of children that are malnourished, and most mothers do not know the source of malnutrition."

Typically, children arrive at the recovery center unable to stand or walk on their own because of malnutrition affecting their legs. When parents bring in badly malnourished children, Newah begins to add tea with honey and a powder made from moringa leaves to their diets. Newah taught the mother to use moringa—a locally grown vitamin-and-nutrient-packed plant—to nourish her son. Moringa is like a super-food: high in vitamins A and C, calcium, potassium, magnesium and zinc. Moringa's roots can help treat infection. United Methodist connectional giving makes this live saving ministry possible. (umc.org)

26. Agricultural Assistance – Before Victor Kpe of Ghana learned beekeeping, from United Methodist workers, he was extremely shy, and struggled to put food on his family’s table and pay his children’s school fees, says a United Methodist official. In 2002, Kpe’s 18 beehives yielded an un-heard of 100 gallons of honey, bringing in much needed income (one gallon sells for \$15 to \$20 in Ghana). UMCOR then trained the more-confident Kpe to train people in Liberia in beekeeping.

Beekeeping skills have transformed dozens of African communities. Honey can be a source of nutritious food, used for salves or sold in the market. Beeswax is used in batik textiles. Propolis, a hive resin, can be used in construction of furniture to sell in the local markets. As of 2008, UMCOR had helped bring 1,240 beehives to Liberia, adding \$40,000 to the economy.

The United Methodist Church does a great job of multiplying your gifts to transform lives and communities. Your connectional giving impacts people worldwide providing food for the soul and body. (umc.org)