
THE BEACON

Dear DUMC Family,

As the year's final quarter begins, I'm grateful for the many ways you bring our church's vision to life: Rooted in Faith, Growing in Love, Branching out into God's World. In worship, in quiet acts of care, and in service beyond our walls, you remind me that the life of the church is something we share and nurture together.

Autumn invites us to pause and give thanks. It also invites us to pay attention: Who among us could use encouragement? Where might a new person find a place to belong? How can we make room for those whose needs or experiences differ from our own? These questions help turn our gratitude into love.

As Advent approaches, we will once again prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. The season can become busy, but its message calls us to something deeper than a full calendar. It asks us to make space for hope, practice peace, receive joy, and share love. My prayer is that DUMC will be a place where people can do just that, whether they have been part of this congregation for decades or are walking through our doors for the first time.

Thank you for the ways you worship, serve, give, pray, and care for one another. Some of the most meaningful expressions of faith never appear in a newsletter: a phone call, a meal, a welcoming conversation, or a helping hand. Each one matters.

In the months ahead, I encourage you to stay connected through worship and the opportunities shared in DUMC's weekly updates. This Week at Damascus carries current announcements and ways to participate. As we close this year and look toward the next, may we continue to grow in love and branch out into God's world together.

With gratitude and hope,
Rev. Myungha Baek
Senior Pastor
Damascus United Methodist Church



Registration is Open for:
***Rooted in Faith... A Church-Wide
Retreat!***

WHO: Members of the congregation and anyone who worships with DUMC.

WHAT: The first of three interactive gatherings about living into God's vision for DUMC.

WHEN: Sunday, October 11, 2026 from 9:00am-3:00pm

WHERE: Onsite at DUMC

Lunch will be provided.

Please register by leaving a note in the pew pad or by contacting the church office at: office@damascusumc.org or 301-253-0022. Include the names and number of people in your family who plan to attend.

Registration ends September 30.

**Nursery care and children's activities will be available.*

Schedule:

Worship

Centering Time

Small Groups: *What does it mean to be "rooted" in faith?*

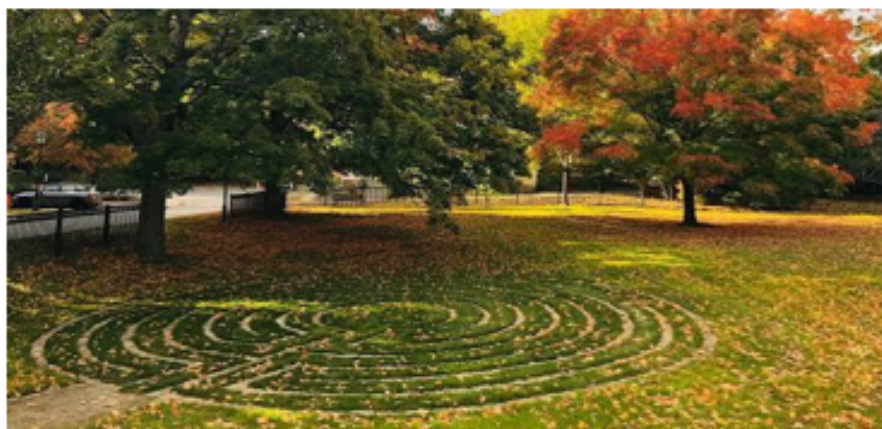
Lunch

Large Group Activities: *Choice of labyrinth walk, prayer, or journaling*

Closing Activity

Sacred Path: The Time of Drawing In

The signs have begun to show up all around us: crisp, cool mornings, the first few red leaves have fallen, the sounds of excited children returning to school, later sunrises and earlier sunsets. Autumn arrives as the easy days of Summer wane. The rhythm of life changes with the seasons. Now is the time of drawing in, in anticipation of the colder, quieter winter days ahead. The autumnal equinox, the time when day and night stand in equal balance, arrives on September 22nd this year.



In the midst of the frenetic activity that often accompanies the arrival of Autumn, a walk in the labyrinth can be an opportunity to savor the changing seasons, to take a few moments to be mindful, be still and experience peace, and to nourish our souls for the months ahead.

This Fall, **Sacred Path**, our DUMC labyrinth ministry, invites you to take a walk in our beautiful courtyard labyrinth and offers these suggested prayers as you walk.

1. At the Entrance (The Inward Journey: Letting Go)

As you stand at the edge of the labyrinth, feel the cool autumn air. Notice the leaves letting go of the trees. Offer your own releases:

"Creator of the changing seasons, as I step onto this path, I come to let go. Like the trees that release their leaves, I release my worries, my rushing, and the heavy things I have carried through this year. Slow my steps. Quiet my mind. Help me leave behind what I no longer need to carry."

2. At the Center (Resting and Receiving)

When you reach the middle of the labyrinth, pause, rest, and breathe in the quiet presence of God or the universe:
[1, 2]

"Holy One, I rest here in the center of your peace. Thank you for the bounty of my life and the lessons of this past season. Warm my heart with your steady light as the days grow shorter. Fill me with your quiet strength and grace."

3. On the Way Out (The Outward Journey: Returning and Blessing)

As you walk the same path back toward the outer world, pray for others and prepare to re-enter your daily life:
[1, 2]

"As I walk back out into the world, I carry your light with me. I pray for my family, my neighbors, and all who are hurting or cold. Give me a grateful heart and steady feet for the path ahead. Let my life bear good fruit in the season to come. Amen."

Sources: <https://www.manitoulearningcommunity.com> ; <https://www.genevachurch.org> ;
<https://www.wydale.org/> and YouTube.com



Coming in less than two months!

The DUMC Mission Team has scheduled a Rise Against Hunger meal packing event on November 8. This will be our fifth time hosting this event and participation provides a perfect opportunity for us in little ole Damascus to give back to the world!

Our church community needs to provide 60 volunteers to help pack 10,000 meals. That's right, 10,000 meals and we'll do it in less than two hours!!!

The meal packing will take place in our church Dining Hall right after our Sunday morning service on November 8.

Rise Against Hunger is a wonderful organization that will provide all the basic supplies and the know-how to make this happen. Then within a few months these meals will be shipped to a community somewhere in the world that has a need for food.

If you'd like to participate in this event and make a difference in the world, you need to sign up in advance. We need to make sure that we have enough hands to accomplish this task. This is a great opportunity for families to work together. It is best, though, for children 8 years and older and it's perfect for teens who want to earn service-learning credit. Participants do not need to be church members.

Just click on the link below and enter your information.

<https://act.riseagainsthunger.org/event/e837819>

If you have further questions or you don't have computer access, you may contact Marcia Hofman @ marciahofman67@gmail.com or 301-455-2960.

Volunteers in Mission 2026

Again, this October 4th–10th volunteers from Damascus UMC will travel to eastern NC, to work on house projects for people who have sustained damage from weather and don't have the resources to finance the repairs. It is a great week of work, witness and fellowship for the people who volunteer to help. If you are interested in joining this team, contact Carol Yocum: 301-788-6446 (text or call). There will be one more Zoom meeting in late September.

Update from the Refugee Resettlement team:

In 2022 the Mission Team decided to expand our local ministries and support a refugee family. Since September 2022, Damascus UMC has supported the Joya family of 7 with used furniture and household items, friendship support and encouragement, providing driver training for the wife and the donation of a used car for her to do all the running that a mom of 5 kids has to do.

THE FAMILY IS CURRENTLY IN NEED OF A NEW USED CAR FOR THE MOM, NAHID.

The children are all back in school in Walkersville. They are in grades K, 3, 5, 8 and 12.

Nahid is also in school at the Community College in Frederick for English classes.

Father, Bashir, who had company in Kabal, Afghanistan, provided service and materials to the American military. Last year he started an oil products import business with the UAE. The business was going well and Bashir had hoped that by next year, it would have provided the finances needed to support his family. But with the Straits of Hormuz closed, he has not been able to get product and the business has failed. He continues to be an Uber driver, but is the only income provider for the family.

Thank you to all who contribute to Missions. Some of your funds support this family.

They are most grateful because they have no family in the United States.

Nahid's family of origin is now living in Norway. Bashir still has some brothers and sisters living in Afghanistan.

They are a delightful family.

Damascus CROP Hunger Walk registration is open

No one in this world should be hungry. That's why the CROP Hunger Walk is more than just a gathering of people in a place. We're part of a movement, taking steps and raising funds together to provide meals for those in our own community who need them - and supporting programs that create greater food security in communities all around the world.

Join us Sunday, October 4th at 2 p.m. in Damascus Regional Park, 213723 Kings Valley Road!

Please join us in the fight against hunger. The steps we take and funds we raise will make a difference in the lives of others. Want to be part of a group?

Put a team of walking friends together and raise money per mile for hungry families in Damascus (25% of your raised funds are used locally) and around the world.

Contact Cassidy Sellier to register: 717-495-1458 or cassidysellier@gmail.com.

Join Us for the
56th ANNUAL CROP WALK

A COMMUNITY EVENT THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Together! ❤️

TOGETHER • GIVE • SUPPORT • MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Date:
OCTOBER 4TH, 2026

Time:
2:00 PM

Location:
DAMASCUS REGIONAL PARK
23723 Kings Valley Rd,
Damascus, MD 20872

STUDENTS CAN EARN SSL HOURS

HELP OUR COMMUNITY
Raise Funds for

DAMASCUS HELP ❤️ **CHURCH WORLD SERVICE**

Local helping local. Help. Hope. Change.

Your support helps provide food, shelter, disaster relief, and life-changing assistance to those in need—locally and around the world.

Scan to Donate
OR LEARN MORE ABOUT
DAMASCUS HELP AND
CHURCH WORLD SERVICE!

Every Step.
Every Dollar.
Big Impact.

LEARN MORE & REGISTER: <https://events.crophungerwalk.org/chw/event/damascusmd>

News from our Board of Global Ministries missionary, Dr. Belinda Forbes (dentist) in Nicaragua:

*"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope." - Romans 15:13 (NIV)*

Hello members of Damascus UMC

Before I take a break from newsletters during the slower-paced months ahead when United Methodists adjust their church schedules and head to annual conference, or time away may be calling, I wanted to share this Pentecost greeting and celebrate the arrival of the Holy Spirit once again. This past year my husband Gerardo and I have discovered the joy of birdwatching. We are amateurs for sure, but as we walk the dog in our Managua neighborhood, we now have the Merlin Bird ID app in hand and spend time looking up and most of all, listening to the songs and calls of the birds who have adapted to the busy, urban space we share with them. The AMOS Health and Hope campus is also a haven for dozens of species. My Sound ID sessions are filled with recordings of flycatchers, grackles, thrushes, hummingbirds, parrots, parakeets, doves, woodpeckers, wrens, tanagers, orioles, magpie-jays, becards, and the stunning national bird of Nicaragua, the Turquoise-browed Motmot or Guardabarranco (photo, above). Central America has an abundance of native and migratory birds that are simply a delight to see and hear. After thirty years of missionary service, more than twenty of those living in the same place, I ask myself, "how have I missed this?" These miracles of God's creation are a source of joy and wonder and vital engineers of ecosystems across the globe. I just wasn't paying attention. I wasn't listening...and I am amazed! In Acts 2 we learn important things about the arrival of the Holy Spirit. First, those gathered with the disciples formed a community. Then, the power of the Holy Spirit enabled them to speak and understand each other. Their reaction was to be utterly amazed. No matter how long our Christian journey, the opportunity is always present to hear and see new things that we may have missed; to understand how God is working in a dynamic and transformative way in the world and be ready for the invitation God extends to us to join together, listening and observing before we act. God can open our eyes and ears and hearts to sense the world around us, to hear not just the beautiful songs but the cries of those who may have lost hope. Like the first disciples, we can act with courage to speak God's truths and co-create a world of beauty and justice. May this Pentecost season be flush with hope, guided by the Holy Spirit, and may we be amazed at what God is ready to show and call us to if we look and listen.

Grace and peace, Belinda



Fall Workday at Laytonsville Safe Haven

This fall Saturday workday will be led by Mark Nehring on November 7th. Please call Mark 617-312-5497 to register your willingness to do yard work for a morning at the Laytonsville Haven House for Veterans. Lunch is provided by a Harwood House donation to this project. Bring your yard cleanup tools!

The Missions Team is grateful for your willingness to lead this event, Mark!

POINSETTIAS SALE

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS WILL BE FOR SALE (ORDERS) IN NOVEMBER. THIS IS A CRITICAL OPPORTUNITY TO SUPPORT A FUNDRAISER THAT SUPPORTS OUR MISSION AND OUTREACH EFFORTS, LOCALLY, IN THE UNITED STATES, AND AROUND THE WORLD. WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR ORDERS!



Adopt-A-Road Cleanup in 2026 – November 7th

Mark your calendar for the following Woodfield Road Clean Up dates. The Earth Stewards are inviting you to help clean up Woodfield Road on Saturday mornings at 8am as part of the Montgomery County Adopt-A-Road program.

We have had 4 successful street cleanups already this year. The last one had 12 happy volunteers making the cleanup go very fast.

“Many hands make light work.”

All equipment will be provided: vests, gloves, bags, etc.

Meet at the Woodfield Rd. end of the church parking lot.

For more info contact Jeff Heinbaugh at heinbjc@comcast.net.



CALLING ALL ART & CRAFT VENDORS!



Damascus United Methodist Church

9700 New Church Street
Damascus MD 20872

Spaces available - \$30

Contact: Gina Wilson – Wilsongin@myyahoo.com

Table rental - \$5

Linda Rice – Ricelinlu@aol.com

<https://www.damascusumc.org> 301-253-0022

HARWOOD HOUSE Christmas Kick Off Shopping Event! Sunday November 8th 12:00pm – 3:00pm

Christmas ornaments, collectibles, decorations,
wreaths, garland, tress, clothing, toys
AND SO MUCH MORE!

Great prices & your purchases support 30 local charities



Our Communion Steward, Michele Tregoning, needs communion servers.

We have communion as an important part of our church service on the 1st Sunday of every month. Each time we need a minimum of 4 servers to help distribute the elements. This is an opportunity for the entire family to contribute to the worship service as children can be servers, as well. Please contact Michelle via text, 301-512-5647, or email micheletregoning@gmail.com. Let her know how many in your household can help and which months you can serve. Thank you!

THE OFFICE NEEDS YOU!

We are looking for a few volunteers who might be willing to help with office coverage occasionally when I (Jennifer) am out of the office. It would just be on an as-needed basis. The main job would be sitting in the office for a couple of hours, answering the phone, and greeting anyone who comes to the door. There may occasionally be a need to let a contractor into the church but we would try to avoid that.

Most of the time, it's quiet, so you'd be welcome to read a book, work on a project, do a puzzle, or just relax while you're here. I'll still be handling my regular tasks remotely when possible — I just won't physically be in the office.

If this sounds like something you'd be interested in helping with, please let me know! And if you know someone else who might be a good fit, feel free to have them contact me at jennifer.stultz@damascusumc.org/301-253-0022 or send me their name and I can reach out.

Christian Education

We had another successful Summer Faith Time Fun. Approximately 60 children from Pk – 5th grade along with 28 volunteers both youth and adult came to the session every day July 20th – 23rd. During this time the church was filled with the children playing, singing and learning about the work of God in their lives.

Next years will be July 19th – 22nd. Mark your calendars now.



Children:

Our annual registration is now open to sign up your children for Faith Time, Cherubs, Choristers, Acolytes, please use the link below to sign them up.

Please sign up by September 13th.

<https://39256.people.myamplify.io/external/form/a61df274-734e-4125-9ae6-bbf2e99a1261>

Our year kicks off on September 13th. We will once again be holding Faith Time for Children in two groups.

Like Summer Faith Time to make Faith Time work we need volunteers – leaders and helpers for each Sunday. If you are able volunteer sign up using the below:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0A4CADA2DABFBCF8-65030542-faith#/>

Youth

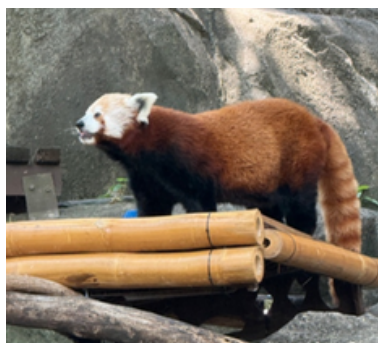
Youth annual registration form:

<https://39256.people.myamplify.io/external/form/17b78836-38e2-4232-aece-fb3770a33039>

Youth Ministry

We had some fun activities over the summer – our annual Zoo trip to the DC Zoo, helping with Summer Faith Time Fun, and this year a trip to Hershey's park. And amazingly we managed to squeeze in between the miserably hot weather for both the zoo trip and Hershey's park.

1. This year's trip to the Zoo, the weather was cooler so the animals were out an about so the photos weren't all just sleeping pandas.



2. Our Hershey's park trip was a success with 5 adults and 12 youth.
We had a full day of rides, animal sightings and fun.
And of course eating chocolate.



Plans for this fall.

Youth Group Events:

Our Youth group kickoff will be Sunday 9/20 at Tree Trekkers in Frederick in Frederick from 3 to 5pm followed by dinner and getting to know you at the DUMC Youth Center immediately following (Price for Tree Trekkers approximately \$30ish per person).

Confirmation:

We will be starting our new year of confirmation class beginning the week of September 14th. If you are in 7th grade or above and have not received an invitation for this year's confirmation, and would like to attend, please send me a text at 240 678 9248 and I will get you added.

Confirmation begins September 14th and runs through May 17th.

Confirmation ceremony will take place late May or early June.

Summer Faith Time was July 20th – 23rd

We had another successful SFTF event at Damascus. This year we visited Rainforest Falls. We once again had about 60 children attending the program, once they came on day 1 they all continued throughout the week. The wonderful main stage decorations were the result of the work of Connor Finn and Lila Lacquement, with handmade flowers done by Abigail Baek. Other folks also worked in getting our rooms decorated, and leaves cut out.

Our program theme was centered around Psalms –with a focus on:

- God is our Creator (Psalm 103:22)
- God knows everything (Psalm 139:1)
- God is our safe place (Psalm 142:5)
- God is love (Psalm 136:1)

The week was full of games, laughs, songs, experiments, (a few tears when parents first left) and learning God's word. To make this program work it took 16 adults and 14 youth serving as station leaders, crew leaders and helpers. As you can see by some of the photo's a great time was had by all. This year you may notice a little bit of Snoopy throughout, this was in memory of one of our beloved leaders – Allison Greer.

Next years SFTF is planned for July 19th – 22nd.

Lisa Marshall has retired effective August 1, 2026 after many years of dedicated service to DUMC as Property Manager. Lisa and her husband Doug remain active in our congregation and will continue to provide support and service to DUMC in many ways.

Brittnay Tarpley, previously our Lead Custodian, has taken on the role of Property Manager. Thanks to Jennifer Stultz in our office who will also be helping with the many needs of our facilities, including scheduling and facility reservations.

To help with organization and scheduling, please reach out in advance with facility needs, as requests made with less than two weeks notice (change this timeframe as appropriate) may not be able to be accommodated.

For space reservations, please email: jennifer.stultz@damascusumc.org

For facility needs, please email propertymanager@damascusumc.org



A HEARTFELT THANK YOU

I would like to extend my deepest and most sincere thanks to our pastors, church leadership, and the entire congregation for the beautiful farewell celebration held during and after the service in honor of my retirement as the church Property Manager.

After more than 20 years of serving in this role, I am truly grateful for the opportunity to have been a part of this church family. The kind words, thoughtful expressions of appreciation, and warm sentiments shared with me touched my heart deeply.

I am especially overwhelmed and humbled by the generosity of everyone who “showered” me with cards. Each card, message, and expression of love meant so much to me and will be cherished as a wonderful reminder of the many years we have shared together.

Thank you for making my retirement celebration so special and memorable. I am grateful for the love, support, encouragement, and kindness you have shown me throughout the years, and I look forward to working alongside of you as a congregant in our path forward. May God continue to bless our pastors, leadership, and congregation, and may He richly bless each of you for the love you have shown me.

With a grateful heart and sincere appreciation,

Lisa Marshall

Smart Stewardship: Tax-Wise Ways to Support God's Work

As faithful stewards, we seek to use all that God has entrusted to us for His glory.

While generosity is first and foremost a matter of the heart, there are also practical ways to maximize the impact of our giving. By taking advantage of available tax provisions, contributors may be able to give more to support the ministries of the Church while reducing their tax burden.

Here are two tax-advantaged giving strategies to consider.

Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs)

If you are age 70½ or older and have an Individual Retirement Account (IRA), you may be able to make a Qualified Charitable Distribution directly from your IRA to the Church. For those who are required to take Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs), a QCD can satisfy all or part of that requirement while excluding the distributed amount from taxable income. For many retirees, this can be more beneficial than withdrawing funds and then claiming a charitable deduction. Please note that QCDs only apply to IRAs and not 401(k) accounts.

Gifts of Appreciated Securities

If you own stocks, mutual funds, or other investments that have increased in value, consider donating them directly rather than selling them first.

By transferring appreciated assets to the Church, you may receive a charitable deduction for the fair market value of the gift while potentially avoiding capital gains taxes that would have been due upon sale. This strategy can often provide a larger benefit to both the donor and the Church.

A Final Thought

Tax considerations should never be the primary reason for giving. Our generosity flows from gratitude for God's abundant blessings and our desire to participate in His work. Yet wise stewardship includes making thoughtful decisions that allow us to accomplish more with the resources God has entrusted to us.

If you have questions about any of these strategies, please consult your tax advisor, financial planner, or estate planning professional to determine what is appropriate for your individual situation.

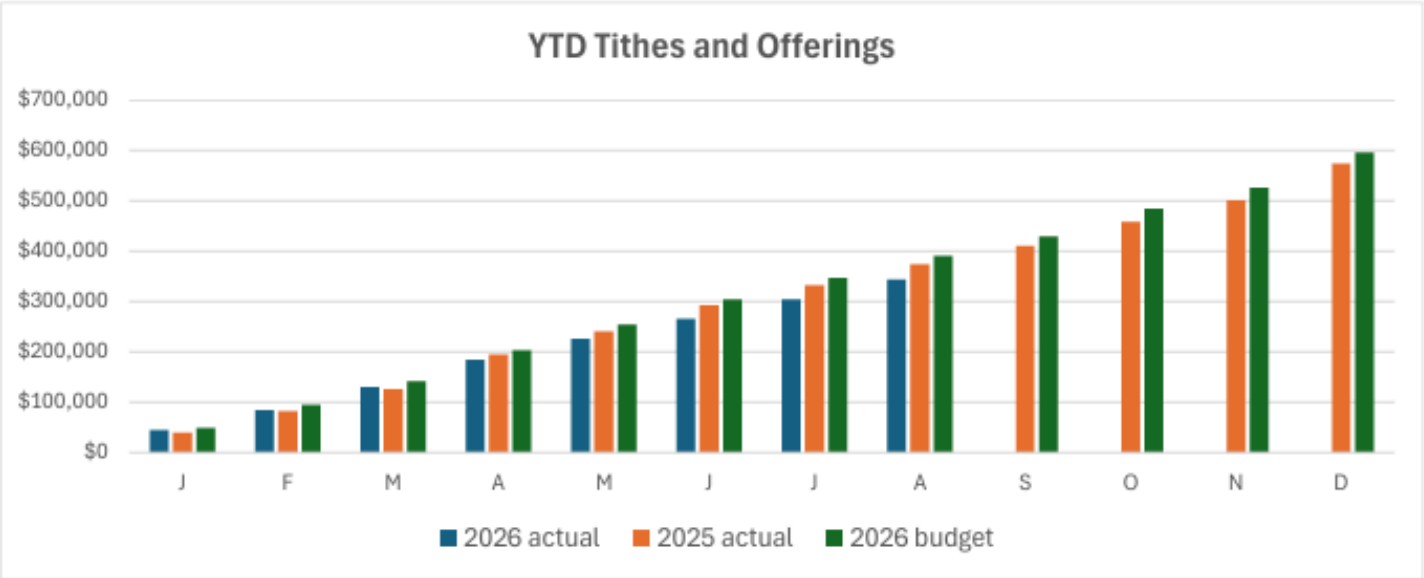


www.damascusumc.org/give

DUMC Operating Fund
YTD through August 2026
(\$ in thousands)

	Actual	Budget	% Diff	Prior year	% Diff
Revenue					
Tithes and offerings	\$342.4	\$390.0	-12.2%	\$373.4	-8.3%
Other income	\$99.9	\$92.8	7.6%	\$95.4	4.8%
Total revenue	\$442.3	\$482.8	-8.4%	\$468.7	-5.6%
Expenses					
Mission Share (apportionments)	\$30.0	\$30.0	0.0%	\$30.0	0.0%
Clergy and staff	\$274.2	\$285.7	-4.0%	\$264.0	3.8%
Facilities	\$137.6	\$148.2	-7.2%	\$136.5	0.8%
Technology	\$11.5	\$16.1	-28.2%	\$11.2	3.3%
Other expenses	\$37.4	\$40.1	-6.8%	\$57.4	-34.9%
Total expenses	\$490.7	\$520.1	-5.7%	\$487.9	0.6%
Net surplus (deficit)	(\$48.4)	(\$37.3)	-29.8%	(\$19.2)	-152.0%

nm=not meaningful



www.damascusumc.org/give

Prayer and Pastoral Care Requests:

As an ordained deacon, Rev. Helen Ballew serves with DUMC in a specialized ministry of pastoral care and adult discipleship.

To request prayers, a visit at home or in the hospital, a spiritual care conversation in-person or by phone, or the sacrament of Holy Communion - please contact Deacon Helen at 301-253-0022 ext. 3 or helen.ballew@damascusumc.org.

For urgent pastoral care needs, please contact Deacon Helen at: 301-661-1149 and leave a message.

Fridays are her sabbath.

The new DUMC Beacon is issued quarterly.
The next Beacon will be sent out in December.

Have information to share?
Please plan ahead -
send information to Jennifer Stultz
Jennifer.Stultz@Damascusumc.org

Information for the next issue
must be submitted by Novem 16, 2026!

Talk to Us

PASTORS AND STAFF

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Rev. Helen Ballew, Deacon
(301) 253-0022, ext. #3; cell: (301) 661-1149; helen.ballew@damascusumc.org

Brittnay Tarplay Property Manager
propertymanager@damascusumc.org

Jennifer Stultz, Office Administrator & Communications Manager
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Cora Horst, Director of Pleasant Plains Preschool
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Mike Powers, Bookkeeper
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Stephen Kalnoske, Director of Music and Organist
Cell: (240) 832-2112; stephen.kalnoske@damascusumc.org

Bryce Taylor, Associate Director of Music
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Angie Thompson, Director of Children's Music Ministry
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Tina Kelly, Director of Christian Education & Youth Ministry
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