



December 2024

Greetings in the name of Jesus, our risen Lord!

Every autumn at HUMC we remember our call to be good stewards. Our stewardship is connected to the question we've been asking recently on Sunday mornings: "Why church?" Why do we invest so much of our time, talents, and treasure into the church when we have so many other options vying for our attention?

As we've seen in our preaching through the book of Hebrews, the answer can be found over and over in Jesus Christ. We do what we do because Jesus' work in our lives, our county, and our world can best be realized through our church's beloved community and blessed mission. Sometimes our community and mission are messy, but Jesus meets us in the mess and works miracles through it. Thanks be to God!

On the other side of this sheet, you'll find a little exercise I was curious about. I went through our calendar for the last year and listed everything that was part of the life of the church, and I know I still don't have everything on there. Take a look – you'll be amazed! Why church? Because you are part of this beautiful, dynamic, breathtaking work of Jesus in the world!

Those events only tell part of the story, though. The life of our church also includes countless gifts of sacrificial love, acts of encouragement, hours of prayer, rhythms of rest, devoted hours of Bible study – countless ways Jesus has formed us through our congregational life that can't be added up on a list.

So for our stewardship emphasis this year, we're inviting you to prayerfully consider how you can best be a steward of the coming year in the life of HUMC. Where in your life is Jesus calling you to grow deeper? Who is he calling you to pray for or reach out to? Where is he calling you to rest, or to trust him, or to engage in a new way?

Part of our stewardship involves financial planning, so we're inviting you to consider your commitment to financial giving in 2025. Your completion of the enclosed financial commitment card (the white card) helps our finance team plan our budget for the next year and is greatly appreciated. Please prayerfully complete your card and return it during our worship on Sunday, December 15th. We've also included a separate commitment card (the pink card) to help you think about your spiritual growth in the next year. Pray over this card, think about it, and return it to keep in communication with Pastor Luke about how God might be leading you – and us – into 2025.

As always, it is a joy to serve the Lord with you!

Grace and peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Luke Richards".

Pastor Luke Richards

R. Keith Howard, Finance Chairperson

Between 11/1/23, and 10/31/24, Hanover UMC hosted or contributed:

- 103 Sunday morning worship services
- special services for Hanging of the Greens, Christmas Eve, Good Friday, and Ash Wednesday
- Lenten lunch and worship service
- Easter brunch
- 8 different topics in adult Sunday School
- 7 spiritual direction group meetings
- 2 congregational discernment meetings
- 25th Anniversary Tornado Remembrance Service
- Jazz for Jesus concert
- 3 funerals
- 12 United Women of Faith events
- 11 men's breakfasts
- youth group meetings most Sunday evenings
- weekly children's Sunday School and Children's Church
- 23 Amazing Life after school program events
- Easter egg hunt
- Trunk or Treat
- child protection training
- 23 food pantry distributions serving as many as 90 local families
- 4 blood drives
- 2 pie and ice cream fundraisers
- an Early Response Team to clean up after the March tornado in Hanover
- rice meal bag mission feeding 7200 people around the world
- monthly missions including over 170 pairs of socks for the youth shelter, boxes of tissues for elementary classes, and canned meat for our food pantry
- emergency assistance for food, rent, and utilities
- an outreach table at the Hanover College student involvement fair
- 178 doughnut stand hours
- plant giveaway
- End of the Month meal serving 270 meals to 135 people
- donations to Heifer International providing livestock around the world
- Giving Tree serving residents of Hanover Nursing Center
- Operation Christmas Child boxes
- Hannah's Harbor transitional housing
- donations to UMCOR for disaster relief

...not to mention all the work of our quilt ministry, finance team, administrative council, staff/parish relations committee, care team, evangelism committee, trustees, and more!