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The Meadowlark, published monthly, is the official newsletter of Middletown United Methodist Church. Materials published are voluntarily submitted and become the property of Middletown United Methodist Church. Articles are due no later than the 15th of the month prior. Materials may be submitted by email (webmaster@middletownumcnj.org), by fax (732 615-2357) or placed in The Meadowlark mailbox located outside the Church Office. Articles received beyond the due date for the current edition will be published the next month unless date expiration has occurred. To subscribe to The Meadowlark in print form, please send your request and physical mailing address to Middletown United Methodist Church, 924 Middletown-Lincroft Road, Middletown, NJ 07748, Attn: Meadowlark Subscription. To subscribe to the electronic version, please send your email address to webmaster@middletownumcnj.org.

The Pastor's Message *February, 2010*

Dear Members and friends,

As we begin the month of February, we wanted to give you a review of how we ended 2009 from a giving and budget point of view. As of March 1 of last year, we were staring down the barrel of a deficit of \$72,392.76. In response to this situation, the Administrative Council, the Finance Committee, and the Staff-Parish Relations Committee began a very difficult process of cutting the budget in any way possible while we also looked for ways to increase the church's income.

I know that some of you grew weary of receiving messages from me and others about the need to increase giving, and that some of you thought that the fall Stewardship Campaign was a bit intense. I understand your feelings about those things; I grew weary of having to constantly write to you about it. The issue was, however, crucial. MUMC had never been in this position before. In prior years there was enough of a reserve built up that deficits were covered. That is no longer the case; there is not enough of a reserve to cover that kind of deficit anymore. \$72,000+ is a big amount to make up. In any case, deficit spending is something that can get any organization and especially a church, in a precarious position.

That is where we were.

The budget for 2009 went through several revisions and as of March 22, a deficit of \$55,336.26 was projected. That was still leaving us in a condition of crisis. The Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) made recommendations to the Administrative Council to further cut expenses by adjusting the staff. The Youth Coordinator and the Assistant Sexton were let go and the salaries of the Music Director and Administrative Assistant were significantly reduced. The pay for the Nursery Attendant was also adjusted downward. Bonuses for the staff of Mothers Day Out were reduced by 50% which enabled MDO to give more to the church than they would have otherwise. All of these actions were received with understanding and grace by those directly affected, though, of course, without a great deal of joy as you will understand.

At the same time, we were doing everything we could do to encourage increased giving and there were positive results from that effort. Praise God, a good number of you were able and willing to go beyond what you had originally planned to give. By November, the deficit had been reduced further and by the

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