



March 2025 Update

Prepared by Doug Fell

Greetings to all of you. I hope you and your families are enjoying the early days of Spring. In case you missed it, the picture on the cover is our parking lot on April 3rd, looking from the preschool doorway; just a glimpse of God's work and our blessings.

I am writing today to provide an update on our financial results for the first quarter of 2025. My overall comment would be this: we are off to a great start!

Comparative Pledge Giving – As of March 31st:

Table 1

Year	Pledging Units	Pledges	YTD Actual Giving
2025	252	\$1,295,000	\$ 480,000
2024	267	\$1,382,000	\$ 566,000
Change	(15)	(\$87,000)	(\$86,000)
Change %	(6%)	(6%)	(15%)

As noted in the table above, for 2025 we have 252 pledging units compared to 267 in 2024 (and 280 in 2023). A pledging unit may be an individual or a family. The downward trend in the number of pledges also affected the level of total pledges for 2025 by a similar percentage, with both decreasing 6%. Of course, this is serving to put pressure on our 2025 budget but there's nothing too alarming at this point.

Attendance:

Consistent with last year, I thought it might be good to share our YTD attendance statistics for 2025 and 2024.

Attendance	Q1 2025	Q1 2024	Inc (Dec)
Sunday Worship (1)	3,076	3,002	74

(1) Includes 8am and 10am attendance as counted by the ushers thru March 23 2025 and March 24th 2024. Easter fell on March 31st in 2024, and thus distorts the YoY comparisons. The comparative attendance for Easter will be shared in the next quarterly update.

As I've stated before, counting everyone in the sanctuary is akin to herding cats: it's tough to do. So, one should temper these figures a bit and view them as being "directionally correct". In light of this caveat, the YoY increase in attendance of 2.5% is most encouraging.

YTD Financial Results – Operating Fund:

The following is a high-level recap of the financial results of the Operating Fund through March 31st of 2025:

	YTD Budget	YTD Actual	Over (Under)	Notes
Collections	\$ 364,000	\$ 425,000	\$ 61,000	Note 1
Deferred Collections	-0-	(48,000)	(48,000)	Note 1 Note 2
Other Revenue	24,000	36,000	12,000	
Total Revenue	\$388,000	\$413,000	\$ 25,000	
	2,000	13,000	\$ 11,000	
Mission Outreach	\$ 266,000	\$ 257,000	(9,000)	Note 3
Wages and Benefits	94,000	98,000	4,000	Note 4
All Other Expenses	\$ 362,000	\$ 368,000	\$,000	Note 5
Total Expenses	\$ 26,000	\$ 45,000	\$ 19,000	
Net Income				

Note 1 - Collections represent the sum of pledged, unpledged and loose offerings. For the first quarter they totaled \$425,000, which was \$61,000 above our Budget. This overage reflects the strong cash collections for pledges during our first quarter. Consequently, and to avoid lumpiness in our monthly financials, we have deferred \$48,000 of collections that will be recognized throughout the balance of 2025. Aside from this, the remainder of the favorable results reflect nearly \$14,000 of pledge donations received in January 25' that related to members' 2024 pledge. Thank you for fulfilling your 24' pledge! It's never too late!

Note 2 - Other Revenue was better than Budget by \$12,000, which was largely driven by designated donations for the Habitat for Humanity Wall Build of \$5,000 which were received earlier than planned. Additionally, we received a nonrecurring "unclaimed funds" check for approx. \$3,000 from T-Mobile which related to the final payment for rental of the steeple for the cellphone tower (it ceased in December 2022). Next, we received \$2,000 of donations to fund the choristers which were received earlier in the year than expected; again, thank you! Last, interest income and donations for flowers were better than budget but were offset, in part, by lower Per Capita donations of nearly \$2,600. We had 20 new contributors for the Per Capita offering in 2025, while as of March 31st there were 61 people who contributed in 2024 who have yet to do so in 2025. It's not too late to do so! And several of you did contribute after Pastor Betsy's reminder of April 6th, which is just wonderful. Many thanks to the new contributors and those who faithfully contribute each year towards Per Capita. It's very meaningful and appreciative.

Note 3 - Mission Outreach expenses for the first quarter were higher than budget by \$11,000. The overage reflects the offsetting expense related to \$5,000 donation received for the Habitat for Humanity Wall Build mentioned earlier in Note 2, coupled with a \$5,000 contribution towards Commissioned Ruling Elder Peter Okyere's ***Light to the Nations*** Sunday service mission.

Note 4 - Wages and Benefits were under budget by \$9,000, which reflected lower benefit and relocation costs related to Pastor Matt than planned. To be transparent, this favorability may be related to timing and thus may reverse during the second quarter and beyond.

Note 5 – All Other Expenses were \$4,000 higher the budget. The key callout is Facilities. Their actual costs were \$5,000 higher than budget, which reflects a colder winter which drove higher snow removal and natural gas costs than planned. Additionally, the timing of annual maintenance costs, coupled with some unusual repairs to our aging facility, all contributed to the higher than budgeted costs for the quarter. While Dave Matthias and I are watching these expenses very closely, we are facing a bit of a headwind as we exit the first quarter.

As a result of strong revenues and overall expenses remaining in line with our budget, our Net Income for the Operating Fund totaled \$45,000 for our first quarter, which was \$19,000 better than Budget. Folks, we are off to a very good start for 2025!

What follows is an update of a few of the other key Funds and activities of the church:

Designated Funds:

Our Designated Funds consist of our Endowment and Kaler Funds and their related investments, as well as our Memorial Fund. A recap of the key items for the 3-months ending March 2025 and 2024 follow:

Revenues:

- As we all know, the first quarter of 2025 was a period of volatility in the marketplace, which was in sharp contrast to a year ago. Consequently we experienced unrealized losses of \$58,000 in 2025 vs unrealized gains of \$121,000 in 2024.
- Investment Income was flat and totaled \$10,000 in 2025 and 2024.
- Overall, the Endowment and Kaler investments are down 10% through March 25; this compares sharply to these same investments being up 23% a year ago.

- The Endowment Fund received a one-time gift of \$16,250 in March 2024 from the estate of a member who passed last year. In 2025 the Endowment received a semi-annual continuing gift of \$3,270 from the estate of a member.

Expenses:

- To date the investment fees are virtually the same for each year (\$5,400 vs \$4,800). There were no other expenses in 2025.
- In March 2024 the Kaler Fund transferred \$19,290 to the Fixed Asset Fund to fund the final payment on the Parking Lot Lighting Project.
- Contributions to the Operating Fund totaled \$18,400 in 2024; these were not scheduled to commence until April 2025.

In light of the unrealized losses experienced so far in 2025, there's no need to be alarmed; over the long haul the markets find a means to correct themselves and grow, and the Endowment Committee has a long-term investment strategy in place. But leave no doubt we are presently going through some very choppy waters, which are always tough.

Fixed Asset Funds:

There were no activities in the Fixed Asset Fund during the first quarter of 2025. At this point, the only planned capital project for 2025 relates to replacing much of our IT infrastructure. The devices that serve to provide firewall protection and Wi-Fi services have reached the end of their useful life. This work is scheduled to occur in May and will total around \$12,700. It will be funded by cumulative points we have earned on credit card purchases over the past several years (\$6,000), with the balance being funded by restricted cash sitting in the Fixed Asset Replacement Reserve. This project was recently approved by Session.

Preschool Fund:

The Preschool is having a good year, and at this point looks to end its school year with net income near budget. The 2024/2025 fiscal year ends July 31st, but classes end in mid-May. Enrollment for the 2025/2026 school year is underway; if you know of a family that is looking for a great Preschool, I encourage you to tell them about ours. The teachers are a very tight group, and they are all very dedicated and led by a great director, Carrie Houk. Of course I am biased, but I would rate our Preschool as "top shelf". Pastor Tom's monthly teaching in the sanctuary to all the preschoolers is unique to WPC and very special too.

Insurance:

In late November 2024 we received notice from our existing insurance carrier, Church Mutual, that they would no longer insure WPC when our policies expired on Jan 29, 2025. The insurance markets are very tight right now, and the age of our building, coupled with all the activities we have that involve minors (i.e. we offer preschool, infant/toddler care, Sunday school, children's activities and youth activities), makes insuring WPC quite challenging. We also operate a church van, which adds to our risk profile. In the end, we were successful in securing insurance coverage with Selective Insurance, and the various coverages, limits and deductibles were essentially equal to what we had with Church Mutual.

However, Selective conveyed our Vehicle Safety Policy (VSP) and our Mistreatment and Abuse Prevention Policy (MAPP) were deficient and needed to be brought up to their standards by April 30th. That has been accomplished, but the implementation of these policies will be quite rigorous, especially for our volunteers. More information will be forthcoming on this topic in the weeks ahead, but for today let me say this: ***all the changes that will be asked of us have a common denominator and purpose: to protect the safety of everyone who participates in any WPC sponsored event.*** At times this purpose may get lost as one's emotions begin to kick in, especially if you are personally affected; so please, keep the word "safety" in mind as we work through this journey together.

Human Resource / Personnel Committee Update:

There was no turnover in our Staff during our first quarter of 2025. We are truly blessed to have our devoted and talented Staff and Preschool teachers – they all bring their very best to work each day.

The Staff, just like you, are eagerly awaiting Pastor Matt's arrival on May 1st. Pastor Wayne's last Sunday will be April 27th; on behalf of all the Staff, we extend Wayne a sincere thanks for all his efforts over these past several months as the PNC finalized its search. Thank you PNC, and thank you Wayne!

Facilities Projects:

As I mentioned earlier, the only planned capital project at this point is the replacement of our IT Infrastructure. The cost will be in the range of \$12,700 and will be funded via \$6,000 from cumulative points earned over the past several years with our credit card purchases, with the balance coming from the restricted cash in our Fixed Asset Replacement Fund.

Dave Matthias and the Facilities Committee have been working on a potential list of beautification and improvement projects around the church. The summer months represent

a great opportunity for these to be undertaken and completed. As a peek under the tent, a project on the near horizon involves replacing the lectern in the sanctuary.

As you all know, our existing lectern requires each reader to climb steps, do their reading, pivot, and come back down. It sounds simple until you do it, and the Facilities Committee has become increasingly concerned with the safety our existing lectern imposes on the readers. I've personally seen situations when we add a box on the top step for certain readers, all of which heightens the safety concerns. Consequently, the Facilities Committee will be purchasing a lectern nearly identical to the lectern in the Chapel. This will eliminate the need for the readers to climb steps and it will address our existing safety concerns.

Again, from a financial perspective, we are off to a great start. Thanks for all your donations, and thanks to the Staff for being fiscally responsible with your spending. From a mission perspective, we are off to an even greater start. As a congregation, you crushed the request to deliver 200 Easter Baskets (actual figure was 630), and you continue to support all the missions of WPC which serve to connect, serve and transform the lives of many. Your generosity abounds in so many ways.

As we look towards May, Pastor Matt will join us on May 1st and the Habitat for Humanity Wall Build will be held on May 31st. What wonderful bookends these two events will make for May. As a congregation we remain blessed in so many ways; my sincere thanks for the generosity of your treasures, talents, and time.

In peace and grace,

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