



CHRIST CHURCH
A UNITED METHODIST COMMUNITY

Charge Conference Brief

March 2026



Council Chair's Report



Rev. Dr. F Willis Johnson, Senior Servant

Over the past several months, our church leadership has walked through a thoughtful process of discernment, seeking to understand both our stewardship and our missional responsibilities in this season. This journey has included a thorough financial review and an honest look at our long-term sustainability.

We have sought guidance from real estate professionals, consulted with the West Ohio Foundation of the United Methodist Church and district leadership, and carefully evaluated our property with the help of licensed experts. Throughout, we've placed a high value on keeping the congregation informed and collective engagement among the leadership.

Following are summary reports from the Trustee and Finance committees as presented and approved at our last Charge Conference on Sunday, March 8. I want to extend my gratitude to these committees for their diligent work, and to all members of this Conference for your engagement, questions, and prayers as we move forward together.

Submitted by,
Gail White-Dixon
Council Chair



Trustee Summary Report



Rev. Dr. F Willis Johnson, Senior Servant

As Trustees, our primary responsibility is to care for the congregation's resources faithfully and responsibly. We also understand that Christ Church's building and grounds carry deep spiritual and emotional meaning for many in our community.

In January, our leadership obtained a professional property evaluation so that our conversations would be guided by clear facts. Here is what we learned and what it could mean for us:

1. What the Property May Be Worth

The highest suggested listing price for our building and grounds is **\$1,250,000**. This reflects current market conditions and the building's condition. It represents a possible asking price, not a guaranteed outcome.

Given today's market, a more likely sale price would be around **\$1,000,000**.

Church properties are considered niche real estate, which means fewer potential buyers and often longer sales processes with additional approvals required.

2. If We Decide to Sell

If we move forward with a sale, the property would be marketed as real estate — land and building. The financial value lies in the location and the physical property, not in the congregation or its ministry. This is the standard approach for churches in our denomination.

3. Realities of Selling a Church Property

Church buildings do not sell like homes or commercial storefronts. Buyers are often other congregations, schools, nonprofits, or sometimes developers (depending on zoning). Sales commonly take six to eighteen months and may involve negotiations and approvals outside our control.

4. Our Role as Trustees

If a sale were considered, we would consult with our District Superintendent and follow all denominational requirements. The congregation would have a clear voice in the process. Any proceeds from a sale would be handled transparently and according to church guidelines.

5. Important Questions for Discernment

- What debts remain on the property? None
- What are the annual costs to operate and maintain the building?
- Are there major repairs or deferred maintenance we need to address?
 - Parking lot \$21K
 - Roof \$100K
 - HVAC \$10K
 - ADA door \$5.5K
 - The costs listed above are rough estimates; they are not actual quotes.
- How does keeping or selling the building align with our mission and calling at this time?

6. Risks and Responsibilities

Owning the property brings ongoing financial responsibilities. Selling brings uncertainty and could affect our community in significant ways. Our responsibility is to weigh these realities carefully, with both stewardship and mission in mind.

Summary

The evaluation shows that the property has meaningful financial value. At the same time, any decision about staying or selling is complex and will take time. This information is offered to support open, informed, and faithful conversation about our future.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Kati Glover
Trustee Chair



Finance Summary Report



Rev. Dr. F Willis Johnson, Senior Servant

On Sunday, January 11, 2026, we as a congregation shared the Breakout prayer for the first time. The next morning, two insurance policy estate legacy gifts were deposited in our bank account totaling \$61,354.54! Pending the Trustee's formal acceptance of these gifts, the funds have been deposited into our money market savings account.

While this is helpful for future planning, these funds do not guarantee long-term financial stability. In January and February 2026, our expenses continue to exceed our income. The deficit is over \$7,000, which almost depleted our Operating Fund balance. Including our intention to meet our apportionment obligation (which has only been partially met so far this year), these gift funds would be drained before the end of 2026.

Currently, Christ Church receives pastoral support funds from the District and pastoral housing funds from the parsonage sale, totaling \$ 5,866 per month. To achieve self-sufficiency, we will need to cover this amount before 2027.

Christ Church expenses are currently for staffing, building operation and maintenance, and office expenses, with minimal funding for ministry and meeting the required obligation of annual apportionments. Finally, there are insufficient funds.

All this is to emphasize our need to be prudent in our financial management; faithful and generous in our giving; and open in our communication with one another. We must trust God, who has already done more than we expected, to guide us as we move forward in our desire to be transformational in ministry, not merely survive.

Submitted by,
Bob Herington
Finance Chair

INCOME vs. EXPENSES

Deficit: Over \$7,000 in Jan-Feb 2026



Operating funds could run out in 2026



TEMPORARY SUPPORT

\$5,866 per month

Ends Before 2027



District Support

Parsonage Funds

INSUFFICIENT MINISTRY INVESTMENT



Minimal Investment in Outreach, Missions & Community Programs

MAJOR REPAIR COSTS



Parking Lot | **\$21K**



Roof



HVAC **\$10K**



ADA Door **\$5.5K**

CRITICAL DECISIONS AHEAD

How Do We Sustain Our Ministry?



Right-Size Operations • Consider Property Sale • Invest in Ministry



**Frequently
Asked
Questions**



Rev. Dr. F Willis Johnson, Senior Servant

Christ Church Conference FAQ SHEET

Regarding the March 22 Called Church Conference

Clarification: Charge Conference vs. Church Conference "Charge Conference" and "Church Conference" refer to official United Methodist meetings, but differ in who may attend and vote. Understanding this distinction clarifies what happened on March 8 and what will happen on March 22.

Charge Conference

A Charge Conference is the official governing body of a United Methodist congregation. It comprises the Leadership Council and other designated church leaders. Charge Conference responsibilities include leadership elections, pastoral relations, financial matters, property decisions, and recommendations for church life and mission. The District Superintendent or a designated clergy person typically presides, as on March 8.

Church Conference

A Church Conference, which professing members in good standing can attend and vote in, is held when issues affect the entire congregation or when broader participation is appropriate, as determined by the District Superintendent.

What Will Occur on March 22

For the March 22 meeting, the District Superintendent has authorized it as a Church Conference, meaning all professing members in good standing may attend and vote. Members will be voting on whether to authorize the exploration of a potential sale of the church property. Voting at the meeting is required; absentee or proxy voting is not permitted.

The meeting will be presided over by Rev. Dr. Jim Wilson, Olentangy River District Superintendent.



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What will members be asked to decide on March 22?

Members will consider listing and possibly selling the church property. A Charge Conference vote was needed to begin the process. By approval of the Charge Conference, a called Church Conference vote is required to move forward. Both exercises and votes are conducted under the guidance of the District Superintendent.

Moreover, the motion authorizes that, should the property be sold, the church leadership is to take all necessary steps to ensure that the proceeds from any sale are used to support the ongoing mission and ministry of Christ United Methodist Church.

This means proceeds are not to be distributed or expended at will, but are to be carefully stewarded and purposed for operations, ministry, and missional imperatives that sustain Christ Church's presence, work, and witness in keeping with denominational principles.

Why is this conversation happening now?

Christ Church leadership has reviewed long-term finances, property needs, resource trends, and future ministry opportunities. Faithful stewardship sometimes requires us to ask difficult questions about how best to deploy our resources to further the church's mission.

Has this conversation been happening for a while?

Yes. Over the past year, leadership has reviewed finances, consulted with district leaders, evaluated the property, and kept the congregation updated.

Have we considered renting or leasing parts of the building?

Yes. Leadership explored this possibility. Also, such considerations have limits: major repairs, renovation costs, low tenant interest, and building constraints for certain types of programs and enterprises. Currently, leasing parts of the building is not financially viable. Leadership remains open to credible opportunities if they appear.



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Could a daycare operate in the building?

One congregant has expressed interest in exploring bringing a daycare business into the building. This may require reviewing building changes, zoning, licensing, safety, and finances. Leadership welcomes thoughtful proposals as part of ongoing discernment.

Why does the vote need to happen now?

Leadership understands that the March 22 timeline can feel fast, and we respect that these are weighty and emotional matters. At the same time, the congregation has been informed for some time that decisions of this kind would be necessary. The March 22 date reflects the financial realities facing the church and the deadlines required by our organizational and denominational processes.

Could Christ Church merge with another congregation?

Some members have asked whether a merger with another church could be considered. We are not part of any merger talks now. The District and Cabinet leaders of the West Ohio Conference decide such matters. Merger questions will be shared with the District Superintendent for guidance.

Could other struggling churches be absorbed into Christ Church?

This idea has also come up. Only District and Cabinet leaders of the West Ohio Conference decide on merging or consolidating congregations. Such possibilities require their evaluation.

Will we be able to see the Council reports?

Yes. Leadership aims to make relevant information available so members can understand the factors under consideration in this discernment process. Transparency is important as we move forward together.

Where would the church meet if the building were sold?

This is one of the most important questions being asked. If the property were eventually sold, the congregation could explore options such as, but not limited to:

- worshipping in a smaller leased facility
- sharing space with another congregation
- using community facilities
- re-establishing ministry in a new location

These options will be considered if needed.



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Can members vote if they cannot attend the Charge Conference?

No. Members must be present at the Charge Conference to vote.

Is the building owned entirely by the local church?

United Methodist churches hold property “in trust” for the denomination. All property decisions must follow denominational guidance and be approved by the District and Cabinet.

What is the deeper spiritual question before us?

One member said, “The real question is not just what we want, but what God may be asking of us.” Buildings can serve the church's mission, but our calling is not limited to buildings. Our mission remains: worship God, love our neighbors, serve the community, and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

How can we prepare spiritually for the March 22 meeting?

Everyone is encouraged to pray the Breakthrough Prayer, listen with grace, speak honestly and respectfully, and seek the church's common good. Discernment is not simply decision-making. It is listening together for the movement of the Holy Spirit.

Please direct questions regarding this matter to: christconferenceinfo@christcolumbus.com