

# Jubilee!

St. Matthew's United Methodist Church  
in partnership with  
The Preachers' Aid Society of New England



*You shall have the trumpet sounded throughout all your land. And you shall hallow the fiftieth year and you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you: you shall return, every one of you, to your property and every one of you to your family. That fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you: you shall not sow, or reap the aftergrowth, or harvest the unpruned vines. For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy to you: you shall eat only what the field itself produces.*

Leviticus 25: 9-12 (NRSV)



*St. Matthew's United Methodist Church*  
345 Central Street • Acton, MA 01720

**BECAUSE THEY SERVE**

An Initiative for our faithful pastors  
By the Preachers' Aid Society





## St. Matthew's United Methodist Church

Growing in faith ... walking in love

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Dearly Beloved,

Grace and Peace to you, from the One who continually calls us into God's hopeful future.

I am glad to be a part of St. Matthew's at this time in its history. As a church at the age of 50, we have matured through youthful adventures and crises. We have established ourselves and found out who we are. And now, like many 50-year olds, we are thinking more deeply about our life, our purpose and our future. And it looks good.

As a long-term vision for our life and ministry emerges among us we will begin to see our calling to new ministries. They are not happening yet. They may involve additional staffing or programs that we haven't yet designed. But when we *need* to do them, our hope is that we are *able* to do them. So as we put in place a process to envision our future, we are also putting in place a plan to support that vision in practical ways, so that as the vision becomes clear, the resources to carry it out will be available. A major avenue of support is reducing our mortgage to free up finances for our ministries.

That is the reason for this capital campaign. The campaign uses words that are dear to accountant's hearts, words like dollars and pledges and tax deductions and three-year plans. But that peculiar vocabulary is just another way to speak love. That's the real reason for this campaign. We love the church, and we love the people St. Matthew's reaches out to, and those we will reach out to. We want the church to be able to pass on to following generations a faith and a love that makes a difference. So we make commitments, even sacrificial ones, for the sake of that love.

As you read this case, remember that. Behind the language that makes Nancy Vaccaro and Ron Lively get all aflutter, is the love that gets us *all* excited. Behind the numbers is the vision, and the excitement about the possibilities of the future. Behind the dollars is the love.

It's pretty fun to be with a church at a time when it falls in love with its own future. I look forward to this adventure with you.

Deep Blessings,  
Pastor Steve

# Our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

October 2012 marked 50 years of ministry at Saint Matthew’s United Methodist Church (SMUMC) in Acton, MA. During our anniversary dinner, we remembered our organizing pastor – Ralph Mirse, along with all the ministers who have blessed and served the St. Matthew’s community over the years. Later, we heard wonderful memories from 50 families in our congregation, one for each year of ministry. Many of the memories shared reflected upon and celebrated the variety of ministries that have developed within our community. We celebrated each decade by highlighting the activities that helped shape who we are today. For the 1960’s we celebrated our founders and the start of our Choir. For the 70’s we gave thanks for new programs like the Koinonia Support Groups and the Coffee House series. The 80’s introduced us to Rosie’s Place and mission trips while the 90’s brought the Household Goods Reconciling Ministries. And most recently, in the new millennium, the Acton Food Pantry was relocated to our church until they could find a larger facility and the Shepherd Ministries was launched.



*Breaking Ground for St. Matthew's (1964)*



*Our SMUMC pastors past and present (2012)*

Continuing our anniversary celebration we broke bread together on World Communion Sunday, the first Sunday in October and the official anniversary of SMUMC. Then, in true Jubilee fashion we sounded the trumpets and gave thanks for all that God has blessed us with by kicking off the year with a beautiful concert complete with choir, bells, brass, and timpani. A new song – *Wonder and Praise* with lyrics by our pastor, Rev. Steve Garnaas-Holmes, and music composition by Linda Kernohan, was commissioned specifically for this occasion. Together we rejoiced and sang, “*Blossom of God, open within us, full of the scent of your grace. Be our delight in all our living, bearing your blossoming peace.*”



*Len and Dot Werst, charter members, at our anniversary dinner (2012)*

## Our Community Today

The SMUMC website and weekly newsletter describe our community with the following words,

*We are a Christian community of vibrantly diverse people, journeying together in faith, hope and love. We are open to self-examination, to the Spirit and guidance of God, and to all who seek to love and serve God.*

*Growing in Faith, Walking in Love - Called to be a welcoming, joyful, diverse, and vibrant community that creates disciples who put faith into action to transform the world.*

We display these behaviors through our actions in ministry, outreach, and service within our community and around the world. Each Sunday St. Matthew’s hosts two worship services, an education hour for all ages, nursery care, and youth group. We also host a variety of regular and occasional programs including:

- Bells of St. Matthew’s
- Chancel Choir
- Companions in Christ
- Handbells for Fun
- Listening Group
- Music at St. Matthew’s Concert Series
- Pastor’s Bible Study
- Pax Mane Bell Ensemble
- Small Groups for Faith Sharing
- Spirit Ringers
- Vacation Bible School
- Young Spirit Choir



*Pet Blessings (2012)*



*Youth Group Hike (2012)*

Outreach and mission are particularly important in the life of our church. We serve through advocacy, action, and financial support. Local missions we support include:

- Acton Community Supper
- Acton Food Pantry
- Advocacy Network to End Family Homelessness
- Alternative House
- Boston Share Network
- Concord Prison Ministry
- CROP Walk
- Fuel Fund Collection
- Habitat for Humanity
- Hagar’s Sisters
- Household Goods & Recycling Ministry
- Loaves & Fishes
- Resident Care Rehabilitation Center
- Rosie’s Place
- Safe Havens



*SMUMC’s first Habitat for Humanity build*



*Youth fight local hunger (2012)*

We also engage the world as global citizens by increasing our awareness about the needs of people around the world. This year we learned about hunger and participated in a Food Stamp Challenge. By raising the level of consciousness within our congregation in regard to global issues, like hunger, and supporting a variety of organizations through our gifts, we begin to answer God’s call to love all of his children. We engage in global missions through:

- Bread for the World
- Disaster Relief
- Heifer Project international
- Mission Shares
- Mission Support
- Mission Trips
- SERRV – Alternative Marketplace
- And More

We are truly and deeply blessed with an active faith community that is passionate and engaged not only within the church, but throughout Acton and the world. Let us celebrate all that God has given us and prepare for 50 more years of service in Christ’s name.

## Jubilee

Inspired by our year of Jubilee, we are embarking on a 3 year capital campaign, in partnership with the Preachers’ Aid Society of New England (PAS). Our goal is to raise \$250,000 that will have a significant impact locally, regionally, and globally. **Locally, our goal is to grant St. Matthew’s a true Jubilee.** In this day and age, debt is rarely forgiven in the way God called the Levites to do every 50 years. However, together as a community, we could grant the church our own version of a Jubilee by committing to payoff our mortgage<sup>1</sup> early. A successful campaign will enable SMUMC to be debt free by May 2018, nearly 4 years ahead of our current payment schedule. Such a feat would save us close to \$56,000 in interest and free up \$60,000 in our annual budget within the next five years<sup>2</sup>. We could really *Expand the Vision*<sup>3</sup> then!



*Bob and Evelyn Johnson-Moore at their home in Wesley by the Sea (2012)*

**Regionally, we will donate 25% of our campaign proceeds to PAS’s *Because They Serve Initiative*, which is focused on providing affordable housing options for retired United Methodist clergy in New England.<sup>4</sup> Many of our pastors retire with a modest income and no equity as they have been living in church owned homes for their entire careers. As a result, some clergy find themselves in difficult situations as they seek out affordable homes to retire in. PAS acknowledges this need and now has two mixed income communities: one in Gilford, NH – Wesley Woods and the other in Wells, ME – Wesley by the Sea. With our help, PAS will be able to better respond to retirees in need of affordable housing options.**

<sup>1</sup> The mortgage was taken out in 1997 to help cover the cost of constructing the new sanctuary.

<sup>2</sup> These figures are based on the current interest rate of 5.25% and current annual payments of \$60,672. Our mortgage has an adjustable rate and the current minimum annual payments are \$43,872. The current payment amount and rate are subject to change and any adjustments up or down would alter the situation described here.

<sup>3</sup> “Expand the Vision” was the title of our 1995 3 year capital campaign that helped us build our sanctuary.

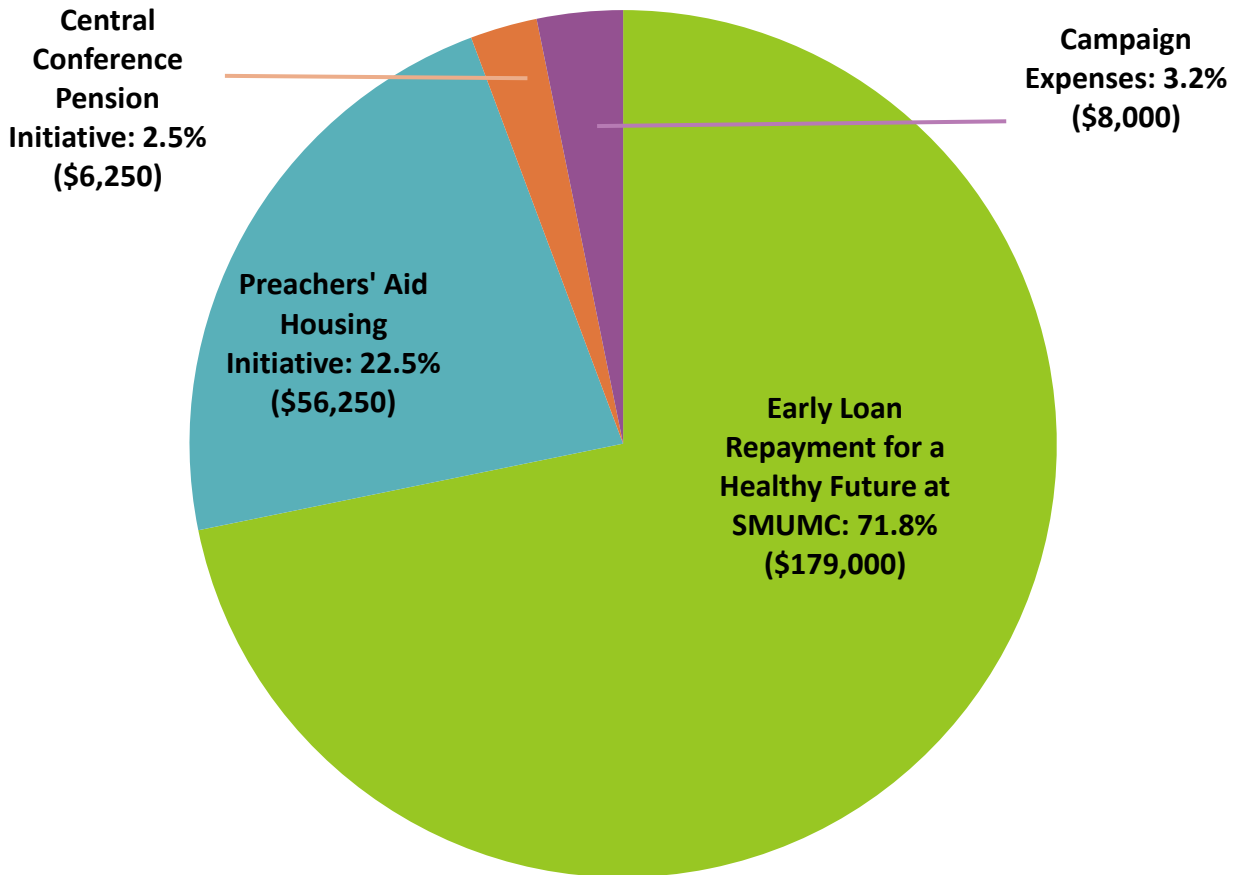
<sup>4</sup> Review the *Because They Serve* brochure, or visit [www.preachersaid.org](http://www.preachersaid.org) to learn more about Preachers’ Aid and the *Because They Serve* campaign.

Globally, PAS will tithe 10% of all funds raised for *Because They Serve to the Central Conference Pension Initiative*.<sup>5</sup> This initiative provides seed money for a fund that offers pensions for pastors serving in parts of Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe, where there is currently no pension program due to the financial situations in these areas. In short, the money we raise will benefit people in Acton, retired pastors throughout New England, and people across the world in Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe. Funds raised during *Jubilee* will be allocated as depicted in the chart below.



Central Conference Pastor

### Allocation of Gifts



<sup>5</sup> Visit <http://www.ccpi-umc.org> to learn more about the Central Conference Pension Initiative

# The Kind of Giving We Need

Everyone has different capacities. We are approaching this campaign by asking people to consider the kind of sacrifice they might be able to make over a 3-year period to help our church have a greater impact and open the door to the next chapter in our story. The chart below depicts the kind of giving we need in order to achieve all of our goals in this campaign. Please take some time to prayerfully consider making your 3-year pledge to support *Jubilee* and the future of our church.

<i>Chart of Gifts Over 3 Years</i>					
<b>Pledge</b>	<b>Annual Amount</b>	<b>Monthly Amount</b>	<b># Gifts Needed Per Level</b>	<b>Amount Pledged Per Level</b>	<b>Cumulative Total</b>
<b>\$ 24,000</b>	\$ 8,000	\$ 667	2	\$ 48,000	\$ 48,000
<b>\$ 15,000</b>	\$ 5,000	\$ 417	3	\$ 45,000	\$ 93,000
<b>\$ 10,000</b>	\$ 3,333	\$ 278	7	\$ 70,000	\$ 163,000
<b>\$ 5,000</b>	\$ 1,667	\$ 139	9	\$ 45,000	\$ 208,000
<b>\$ 3,000</b>	\$ 1,000	\$ 83	9	\$ 27,000	\$ 235,000
<b>\$ 1,000</b>	\$ 333	\$ 28	15	\$ 15,000	\$ 250,000

**All pledges and gifts are welcome and can be extended over 3 years.**

All gifts made to *Jubilee* should be made payable to the Preachers' Aid Society of New England as they are seeing to all of our back office needs. **PAS is a qualified 501(c)3 non-profit organization and all gifts made toward our *Jubilee* campaign are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.**

Thank you for your time and prayerful consideration! If you have any questions, ideas, or concerns please feel free to contact:

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# Sources

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