



November 6, 2023

Friends in Christ,

If I had to choose, I'd say that fall is my favorite season of the year. I love the cooler temperatures, the colorful leaves in the trees, the chance to tailgate with my friends before football games, and (of course!) our All Church Retreat. There are so many reasons to find joy this time of year. At the same time, the autumn can feel bittersweet for me—daylight grows shorter, and the cooler temperatures can foreshadow much colder weather yet to come.

For me, the changing seasons are one example of a larger truth: change can be tough, even when the change brings good things in the end. Our church family continues to experience ongoing changes, and those changes can feel bittersweet to us. Alongside the very positive changes (new members, new ministries, and reinvigorated opportunities from the past) come other changes that are harder (saying goodbye to those who leave us through death or to begin new phases of their lives in other places). Through it all, we continue to look for God's direction for moving forward in faith together in our community.

Planning for our ministry budget for 2024 provides us the opportunity to reflect on our current season of change and growth. Many of the markers of our current financial health are strong and lend us stability right now, even as the effects of inflation stretch the levels of financial giving we've experienced in recent years. Chip Higgins, our Finance Chair, laid out a significant goal for our congregation during our recent Town Hall meeting: to raise our giving by 10% in 2024 to help us to grow our support for our ministries, our staff, and our facilities maintenance. Not all of us will be able to give at the same levels, but I join Chip in asking you to prayerfully consider what your pledge for giving in 2024 might look like. Perhaps your family could make a financial pledge for the first time. If you are able to increase your financial commitment to our church's ministries in 2024, we ask you to consider what this looks like for your family.

In all things, we thank you for your ongoing support of our church through your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service, and your witness. I am excited to be looking toward a new year and beyond with you!

Blessings and love,

Chris Haynes  
Lead Pastor, Christ UMC

508 Franklin Road  
Franklin, TN 37069  
Phone: 615-790-2112  
[www.christumcfranklin.org](http://www.christumcfranklin.org)