

# A Few Short Words...

by Pastor Phillip Short

**Y**ou have some good news. It comes to us from the Finance Committee, the church office, and the church leadership. The end-of-the-year report indicates that we have been exhibiting great stewardship. We should celebrate this.

Our report begins with apportionments; the “dues” that United Methodist congregations pay to our denominational institutions, structures, and ministries. In 2008, we were supposed to pay \$144,025. We were only able to pay \$53,522.82. In the year 2009, we were asked to pay apportionments in the amount of \$149,268.99. The Stuart 1st UMC was able to meet 100% of this obligation. What a victory!!!

In 2008 we spent \$1,178,883.79 in operating costs. In 2009 we operated with \$977,638.64. This is a difference of \$201,245.15. Again, what a victory!!!

What’s more, the Stuart 1st UMC was able to do this with a decline in giving. There was an approximately 5% decrease in giving during 2009 as compared to 2008. However, there was a 12% decrease in spending as well. With careful stewardship and cooperation, we were able to carry a surplus into 2010.

There are some significant reasons for this good report. First of all, the Finance Committee led with a strict budget that would function within the projected pattern of giving. Dr. Susan Schmidt is to be thanked for forming this budget. The ministry leaders and the church leadership are to be commended as well. All spending was scrutinized to avoid needless expenditures.

What do we say about this? We may begin by thanking God. He is The One who insists on good stewardship. We get to good places when we obey Him. I just want you to know that the church is being good stewards of your stewardship.

We have every intention in the world of going forward in this pattern of excellent stewardship. Thank you for supporting your church during the past year. I thank you for the way that you are sure to continue to support it in 2010. Great things are happening here! We have great things for which to look forward. I am looking forward to walking with God and with His church here at Stuart 1st UMC!!!