

# FIRST LOOK

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



VOL. 1 NO. 1

WINTER 2016

*A Future Filled with Hope*

Do all the **good** you can.  
By all the **means** you can.  
In all the **ways** you can.  
In all the **places** you can.  
At all the **times** you can.  
To all the **people** you can.  
As **long** as ever you can.

JOHN WESLEY

## LOOKING FORWARD

**Racial Equity Action Plan,**  
Week of January 16, 2017

**Eco-Justice Weekend,** March  
18-19, 2017 Keynote Speaker  
& Preacher: Rev. Dr. Timothy  
Eberhart, Garrett-Evangelical  
Theological Seminary

**Lyons Lecture in Theology,**  
April 29, 2017 Keynote Speaker:  
Rev. Robin Meyers PhD., May-  
flower United Church of Christ  
and Oklahoma City University

**Holy Week:** Palm Sunday, April  
9; Maundy Thursday, April 13;  
Good Friday, April 14  
Easter Sunday, April 16

## OUR MISSION

We seek to embody grace and hospitality in the manner of Jesus,  
nurturing our diverse spiritual journeys and joining together as  
a servant community to help realize a more loving and just world.

Find out more about First Church: Online go to [fumc.org](http://fumc.org)  
and follow us on Social Media



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608-338-0107.

# Mark My Words...



*I am thrilled that we are launching this First Look!*

Our congregation lives through dynamic and diverse ministries. This publication will be a mirror of those experiences that will allow all of us to see and hear the stories. People, pictures, sights and words that tell the compelling narrative of our congregation will help us all appreciate the scope of our common life. I hope that this is a piece you will cherish for your own enjoyment and appreciation of the church.

I also hope that you will share it with others and use *First Look* as a way to invite participation in what we do in ministry together. Look and see how good it is that God has called us to be in this time and place!

*First Look* will be published four times a year. This first issue will be timed to the annual Church Conference. The spring issue will focus on our formational ministries. The summer issue will look to our education and programs. And, the fall issue will be a celebration for all of the blessings of God we have experienced during the year.

The monthly *Chimes* will be changed to meet the “news and announcement cycle” more effectively. Although the format will be different, the focus of the weekly *Chimes* will be to keep us up-to-date with the happenings at the church. This will appear primarily as a paper version available on Sundays.

This edition of *First Look* is a paper copy that we hope you will share. In the future, you may choose to receive the electronic copy only. We are seeking to honor our commitments to the environment and effective circulation of our communications.

*With joy,*

Rev. Dr. Mark A. Fowler

Lead Pastor, First Church



## PARISHIONER PROFILE

### Steve Schooler

Steve Schooler has been an FUMC member since 1981, when he moved to Madison, lived downtown, and needed a church he could walk to. He was raised a United Methodist, so it was a great fit, and he's been here ever since. At the end of December, 2016, he retired as Porchlight's executive director. Porchlight is a Madison organization that works to decrease the homeless population by providing shelter, housing, and supportive services. Steve has recently been elected to First Church's Governing Board and will serve as Treasurer.



**Q: What was it about either practicing law or “looking at” Transitional Housing that was your impetus to change careers?**

A: For the 20 years I practiced law, I was a litigator – civil law. One summer I was at Reagan National Airport and I picked up a book – totally random – titled *Amazing Grace* by Jonathan Kozol. It's about the devastating effect of poverty in the South Bronx. And there's a description in the book about an Episcopalian church with a priest – a woman – who had been a Wall Street Lawyer, and I thought to myself, “This is a message.”

So, I went home and talked to my wife, who was very supportive. But she said, “You're entitled to one midlife crisis – and only ONE midlife crisis – and this is it.” So, I began to look about how to re-credential myself. I had been on the board of Transitional Housing and trying to figure out what to do next. And then totally unsolicited – a job description for the assistant director showed up in my mailbox. The only reason I received it was because I was on the board. So, I quickly resigned from the board and applied for the job. And the rest...

**Q: First Church and Porchlight have had a very close working relationship for the last three plus decades. Would you talk to us about that a bit?**

A: Well, Gloria and Chuck Waity (among other FUMC members) were involved in the initial group of faith

communities advocating for and then organizing an emergency shelter for Madison. Gloria was one of the initial board members of Transitional Housing (the predecessor of Porchlight) when it was formed. First Church has been there, front and center, and we've been one of the churches that has, faithfully, for 30+ years served at the shelter from the very beginning. And then, on top of

*I was driving around...looking at churches, as one tends to do, and I saw this nice small town Methodist church with a sign outside: “Open Doors, Open Minds, Open Hearts.” That is a pretty powerful mission statement. That rings true and has rung true all these years I've been a member at FUMC. And that's the reason I'm still here.*

that, when we needed an additional overflow shelter, this church was there with that, as well.

Finally, financially, First Church has supported Porchlight and its various ministries in all its shapes and forms. The church contributes around \$8,000 annually to Porchlight's Social Ministries funds. Most of that goes to emergency eviction and prevention assistance.

Then there are additional contributions. The church has held an Isthmus Brass Christmas concert that has raised more than \$3,000 annually for the past four or five years. The most recent one had a donor who matched the first \$5,000. We ended up raising more than \$12,000 for that one. A year ago, the People's Chorus concert raised close to \$10,000 for Porchlight's capital campaign.

**Q: If you had a magic wand and had unlimited funding, what would be the first thing on your wish list for the church?**

A: Now, that's an interesting question. Hmmm. What is the highest priority of the church? Buy a parking ramp? Strike that. Although, actually, that's not a bad one. If there was truly unlimited funding, access to a parking ramp would not be a bad thing. And I can say that for sure, because I am a part of the [ Sunday morning] curb-side ministry, and I know what a problem that is. So, yes, that might be at the top of the list. My bias is outreach funding – to provide more emergency housing to families, as well as individuals. It's a tremendous need. And it's not a need that's going to go away soon, given the political environment. So, I guess that would be my top priority.

**Q: Now that you're going to be serving First Church as Treasurer on the Governing Board, what do you perceive your role to be?**

A: This won't be an entirely new role, as I've been on various administrative councils for years. This most recent iteration has moved from administration to more of a policy setting role. For example, what is going to be the strategy of this church going forward for the next several years? I'm intrigued and interested in working on the answer. That's why I agreed. We have a new pastor, new initiatives. Where will we be in the next five years?

**Q: So, Steve, what's the answer to your own question? What is your vision for the future of this church?**

A: Several things. First and foremost: this church is in a relatively unique position to be spokesperson/organization for those issues that arise where persons of religious faith have an obligation to speak out. When we refused to give up the shelter in exchange for continuing the parking ramp privilege we had...that was a huge statement in this community and reverberated around as to



The Isthmus Brass Christmas Concert, performed December 8, raised more than \$12,000 for Porchlight.

what the importance of shelter was. There are other things. The things that we are doing, with the gay and lesbian, transgender communities. The things that the outreach ministry is doing as an advocate for those on the streets. I would like to see this church take on – I don't know that it's an advocacy role, but it's a spokesperson role, "We have looked at the principles of our religious faith, and here is what these principles tell us." That is really, really important in this community. And that's in addition to what it's already doing.

**Q: Finally, do you have a last word?**

A: Yes, one other thing. One of the reasons why I am still a member after 30+ years: As I was driving around in north central Michigan, I was driving around...looking at churches, as one tends to do, and I saw this nice small town Methodist church with a sign outside: "Open Doors, Open Minds, Open Hearts." That is a pretty powerful mission statement. That rings true and has rung true all these years I've been a member at FUMC. And that's the reason I'm still here.

*Bobbi Foutch-Reynolds  
Contributing writer, First Church*

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In December, First Church elected Steve Schooler as a new Governing Board member and Treasurer, Jim Hoyt to the Nominations Committee and Olivia Hwang as a lay member to the Wisconsin Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. Brad Crowley was re-elected Governing Board Chair and Jessie Simpson was elected Secretary. Donalea Dinsmore was re-elected as Lay Leader. Thank you to Abby Ehringer who completed her term on the Board, Sonya Penner, Nominations Committee Member and Leigh Roberts, lay member to annual conference, for their years of service to First Church in these roles.

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# A future filled with Hope

The bold claim of our church is the initial greeting on our sign, “**Downtown for Good!**” It is clear we have staked our place and our commitment to be good for downtown. We also embody a spirit of hopeful and genuine hospitality in all that we do. It is in this spirit that we are coming to call our outreach ministries program “Hope’s Home.”

Hope’s Home encompasses a family emergency shelter, a foot care clinic for the homeless, a food pantry, meals and worship on Wednesdays, a hot weather cooling shelter and meals at Christmas and Easter.

The cherished passage from Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians reminds us that “...these three remain, faith hope and love. The greatest of these is love.” I am looking forward to engaging the apostle at the eternal table in his preference for love. My pastoral and mentoring experience has been that hope is the critical focus upon which we have the faithful courage to love and seek justice. Hope is the formative and spiritual capacity to look forward with confidence to a future good. In the Hebrew Bible, hope emerges from the covenants

God has made with the people Israel. In these covenants there are assurances of relationships, a place, a name and security for an abundant life. The Christian scriptures gather the hope of the world in Jesus. It is the vision of the inclusive beloved community that Jesus describes and models in ethical teaching, healing, prophetic action and signs of transformation. The central acts of incarnation and resurrection which we celebrate at Christmas and Easter witness to the specific hope of “God with us” and the indestructible and eternal hope

of the promised life in the beloved community.

At the December 2016 benefit concert performed by the Isthmus Brass on behalf of Porchlight, I introduced the program to our packed sanctuary. When I called us “downtown for good” there was an eruption of applause, an affirmation that our public witness was well known and enthusiastically supported. We are partners in being Hope’s Home to those in need of shelter and a meal, encouragement to look forward to another day and a better future!



Opening First Church for our neighbors without homes provided a safe, hospitable place to call home during the excessive heat last summer. Nearly 200 people were brought together to share an experience to remember for a lifetime. The two days were filled with grace and hospitality.

Our congregation embodies a spirit of hopeful and genuine hospitality in all that we do. Hospitality and hope may seem to be disparate ideas, but in my experience of our church one is the doorway to the other. Hospitality is a genuine and inclusive welcome to a faith community that seeks to follow and model the way of Jesus. It is the spirit of our being and the pathway for developing our patterns of worship, choices in education, yearning for opportunities of spiritual formation and community building, prophetic witness and action in environmental justice, the support of Latino workers,

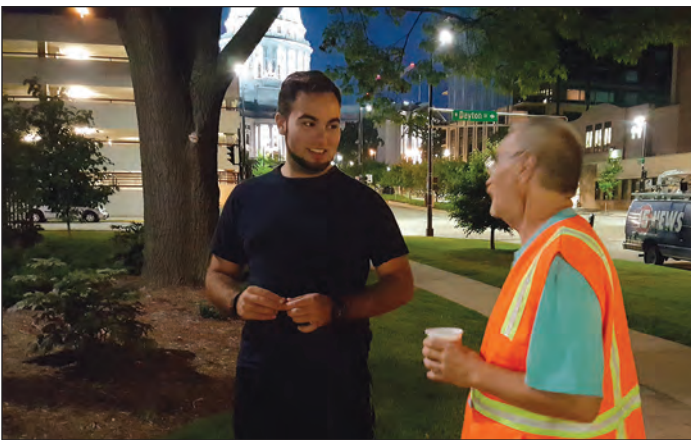
international concerns for justice in Israel/Palestine and El Salvador (among others), healing of racial disparity in Madison, inclusion of all of God's children (and we mean all!) in our community, and so many more.

As a celebration of our life together as a church dedicated to seeking and establishing signs and experiences of the beloved community I would invite you to join me in understanding our church as Hope's Home. As a material focus of this sentiment I have come to call our Outreach program Hope's Home. It is a program known in the community as a dynamic expression of our commit-

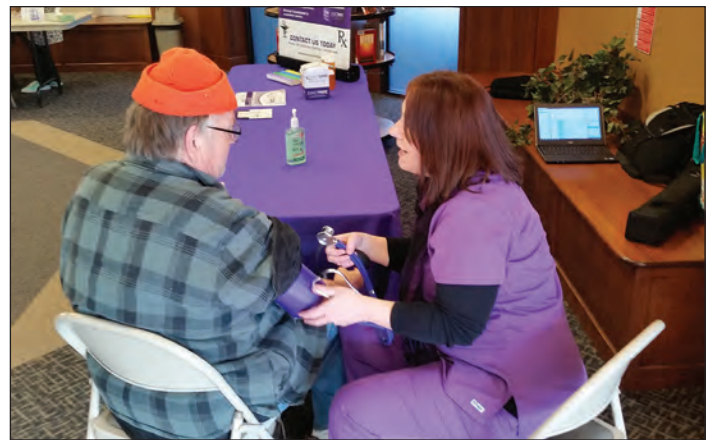
ment to following the way Jesus, the Poor Man of Nazareth. Hope's Home is a family emergency shelter, a foot care clinic for the homeless, a food pantry, meals and worship on Wednesdays, a hot weather cooling shelter and meals at Christmas and Easter.

All of this, from the dynamic and vibrant faith community to the public witness and service we do in the name of Jesus is an expression of our commitment that we are determined to be "Downtown for Good" and we express a genuine dedication to hospitality and being "Hope's Home."

*Rev. Dr. Mark A. Fowler*



Adopt-A-Block Program is a partnership with the City and Downtown Madison, Inc. (DMI) to help keep our downtown neighborhood clean and safe. Volunteers also get to know our neighbors at the same time.



During the Community Breakfast on Wednesday mornings, FUMC provides connections to community services available to help individuals and families who live in poverty.



Our church's youth rooms provided a safe and comforting space for homeless children and their families for six months as an emergency overflow shelter.



Churches in our community take turns providing meals at the Porchlight men's shelter. FUMC provides a dinner on Saturday evening and breakfast the next morning, one weekend a month.



# By the Numbers...

First Church's newly formed Finance Committee reviewed the budget for the period July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017. It was subsequently approved by the Governing Board and Circuit Church Conference. During the coming year, the church's finances will be transparent and available to all of our members and friends who are interested. In this issue of *First Look*, we are sharing information about the types of income which support the many programs of the church. We have also identified the major "functional" areas and how your donations make a difference in our church and community.

Pledged giving makes up 56% our budget. These are commitments received during our New Beginnings and fall Leaping Forward campaigns. Non-pledged income makes up another 15%. These are from friends and members who donate,

but do not make formal commitments. Our First Foundation distributes funds from endowed accounts as intended by those donors. These make up 12% of our total income.

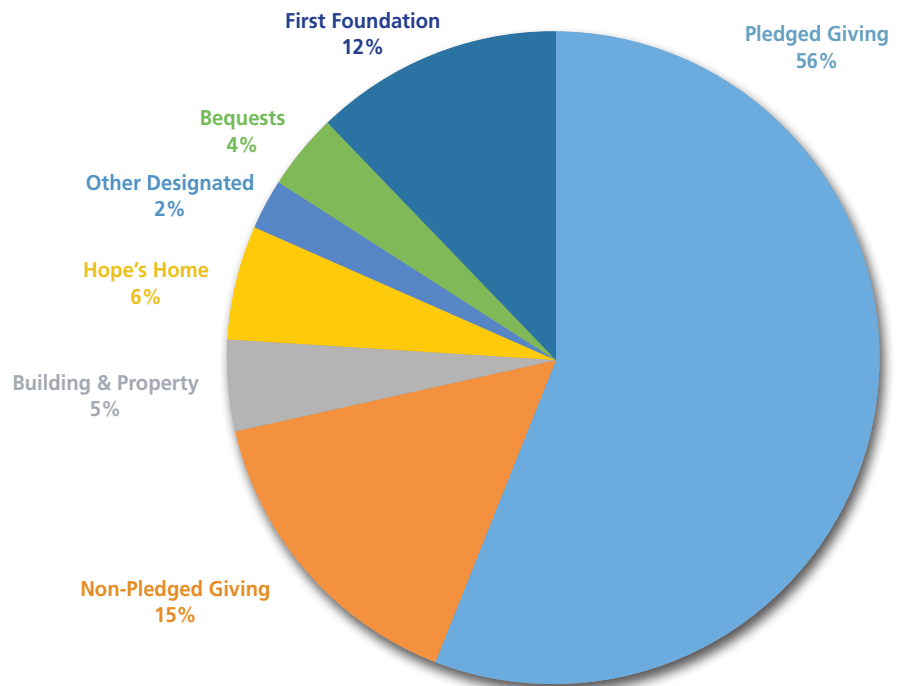
Our expenses are almost evenly divided between the areas shown below. Hope's Home is a new category that includes what was formerly known as Outreach Ministries and also the annual Local Missions support. These programs include the Food Pantry, operating four days per week, and outreach to the Homeless for meals, shelter, and well-being.

Conference apportionments are assigned to the appropriate divisional categories, as they represent giving and resources in which we participate. Detailed managerial budget reports will be available upon request at the end of the first quarter, 2107.

*Sarah Flanagan*  
Accountant, First Church

## INCOME

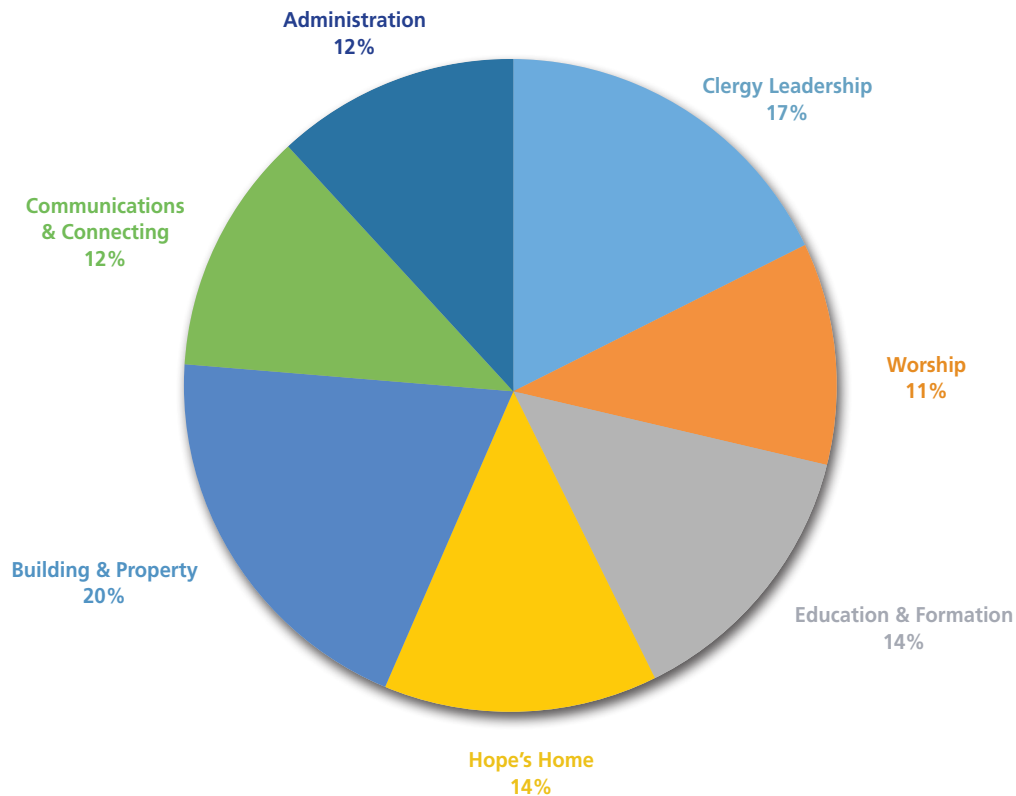
Pledged Giving	750,000
Non-Pledged Giving	207,000
Building & Property	60,000
Hope's Home	75,000
Other Designated	33,000
Bequests	50,000
First Foundation	163,167
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>1,338,167</b>





## EXPENSES

Clergy Leadership	226,866
Worship	142,679
Education & Formation	180,785
Hope's Home	178,106
Building & Property	255,210
Communications & Connecting	152,842
Administration	152,498
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>1,288,986</b>



The ministries of First Church are furthered by the generous financial commitments made by First Church members, friends, constituents and the FUMC First Foundation. Thank you for your support of our mission to help realize a more loving and just world.

## FIRST FOUNDATION

# Thanks a Million

### Do you know how good our First Foundation is for downtown?

Since its beginning there have been more than a million ways that First Foundation has supported our church's ministry, "Downtown for Good."

First Foundation's mission is: "To serve the First United Methodist Church, Madison, and its ministries by inviting, accepting, investing and administering enduring gifts from members and friends of the church." While incorporated in 1965, the first gift was received in 1982 from the estate of Leland & Lillian Sorden. This initial estate gift and all the gifts that followed have been invested and administered by the First Foundation Board of Directors and the earnings have been granted to support our church's ministries.

Through the end of 2016, \$1,376,121 has been granted to enrich and develop First Church's ministries and has helped us be



All can participate more fully in First Church worship, thanks to Foundation-funded upgrades in projection and audio systems and a hearing assistance "loop."

downtown for good. These grants are possible because of the generosity of our members and friends. On All Saints Sunday in November,

we remembered and thanked the saints who provided for First Church through their estate plans. These saints include:

Madden Allen  
Bishop Ralph and  
Marian B. Alton  
Dorothy Anderson  
Nona Andrews  
Phoebe Bancroft  
Ben & LaVerne Bartel  
Vera Bartholomew  
Mildred Brandt  
Winston & Neva Brembeck  
Herman H. and Lorraine Brockhaus  
Vera C. Browne  
Edna H. Casserly  
Lucile Clock  
Melville H. & Vera M. Cohee  
Mary E. Colt

Edward & Barbara Crossman  
Rachel Dortzbach  
Valesca Faris  
Eva Fosdick  
Bonnie Friday  
Rachel Ganapol  
Anita Grundloch  
Carl & Elaine Guell  
Elynor S. Hansen  
George & Edyth Harb  
Evelyn Harris  
Mildred Hauck  
Blanche Heideman  
Fay E. Holum  
Harriet Hopkins  
Dorothy Huston

David Ellis James and  
Rosine Geiser James  
Margaret Ann James  
Elsie M. Kearney  
Mern & Lois Keir  
Irene Koehler  
Ruby Lansing  
Gladys Lively  
Edith M. McAusland  
Katherine Way McMullen  
Theraca Mehnke  
Clifford Meloche  
Edna Louise Miller  
Jean Morgan  
Marion Murphy  
Phil & Jean F. Myers

Harlan & Elizabeth Nicholls  
Louis & Marian Olson  
Laura Pennow  
Eleanor M. Rhinehart  
Walter B. & Helen Senty  
Pearl V. Sheckler  
Anita M. Sievert  
Leland G. & Lillian Sorden  
Marie Sprecher  
Thelma Studeman  
Maybelle L. Tyksten  
Van & Nancy Van Dyke  
Linda VandenBerg

George & Naomi Vitense  
Margaret Wald  
Earnest & Irene Walker  
William Wendt  
Myrtle I. Willett  
Stuart & Helena Wright

The gifts from these estates total more than \$4 million, and the earnings from these gifts have provided more than \$1 million in support of First Church's mission and ministries.

Each of these saints gave a gift that lasted a lifetime and beyond. You, too, can make a gift that will last beyond your lifetime. Please consider joining the "Downtown for Good Society" by providing for First Church in your will, trust or account beneficiary designation.

*Don Schultz*  
*First Foundation Board Member*



EMPOWERING THE FAITHFUL

If you wish, you may make an undesignated gift for use by the church as needed, or you may designate your gift to one or more of the following funds:

Worship & Music Fund  
Christian Education Fund  
Mission & Outreach Fund  
Property Care & Improvement Fund  
Youth & Young Adult Ministry Fund

For more information about First Foundation or guidance in providing for First Church in your estate plan, please contact our Lead Pastor Mark Fowler at 608-234-5189 or [mfowler@fumc.org](mailto:mfowler@fumc.org); or First Foundation Board President Matt DeVos at 608-316-3801 or [Matt@devoslawfirm.com](mailto:Matt@devoslawfirm.com).





# Downtown for Good

It's not just a clever phrase, it helps clearly define First Church and its mission within the Madison community.

Initially of course, it describes First Church's location within the heart of the city of Madison. From the first church built in 1849, through its struggles in the 1990's to stay in its present location, First Church is committed to being downtown, and staying downtown.

Of course the most important **Good** is that which our church provides in myriad ways for the Madison community. The **Good** of the food pantry and homeless outreach ministries. The **Good** of youth group retreats and mission trips. The **Good** of UNICEF collections, Pride Parade, Music Fellowship, and CROP walk. The list of **Good** continues to grow. Ultimately our passion for this **Good** helps us use our spiritual gifts to make a difference in our church, our society, and our world.

*Downtown for Good, it's where we are... it's who we are.*