

☒ First ☐ Things ☐ First

An Invitation to Give

Stewardship 2026

September 29, 2025

Dear Friends of Fairfax United Methodist Church,

I'm grateful for the past three months we've had to serve and share in ministry! Thank you for receiving my family and me into the Fairfax UMC community, and thank you for your willingness to trust me and work with me to share in the abundance of what the Kingdom of God offers and the possibility and promise of exceedingly more when we share what we have!

With these reflections on giving, I invite you into an intentional time of generosity as we lean into our Stewardship series, **First Things First**, beginning October 12th. If you're new to the church, this stewardship conversation is an opportunity to spend time in prayer, worship, and conversation as we consider how we can use our church's giving to further God's work through Fairfax UMC and beyond.

Why "First Things First"?

In the Bible, "first fruits" refers to the practice of giving the first and best portion of a harvest to God as an offering (Deuteronomy 26). For Israel, this meant the very first part of the harvest—not the leftovers, but the best! It was an act of gratitude and a declaration that everything belongs to God. This was a bold statement of trust in God's provision and presence. This idea also connects to Jesus in the New Testament, where He is called the "firstfruits" of those who will be raised from the dead, symbolizing the beginning of a greater harvest of believers.

In the same way, when we put God first in our prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness, we are practicing worship. Jesus said, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:33). That's the essence of **First Things First**! When our priorities shape our lives and we give ourselves to God first, we will experience the fullness of life with God.

A Life of Generosity

During this series, we'll focus on how giving changes us from the inside out. Throughout the stories of scripture, we see a commitment to radical generosity and a willingness to intentionally share fully in God's work. Generosity is more than money—it's a lifestyle of surrender, joy, and faith.

Looking Ahead

On November 2nd, All Saints Sunday, we will make our commitments to generosity for 2026 as we celebrate the Great Cloud of Witnesses who gave their lives in faith. Their legacy is our reminder that we, too, are called to live generously, to run the race with perseverance, and to keep our eyes on Jesus.

An Invitation

As we begin this journey, I invite you to consider: “What does it mean for me to put First Things First?” What would it look like to give God the very best of your time, your resources, your gifts, and your life? Imagine what God might do in and through you as you give.

Throughout our series, I hope to see you in worship, and I want to invite you to join me in reading our **First Things First** Devotional, “Reflections on Giving from the People of Fairfax UMC,” which will be available for you to pick up at the church starting at the October 12 service. If you can’t make it in person during Stewardship, you can contact the church office to request a mailed copy. The devotional will also be available for digital download on the Stewardship page on our website. This devotional is full of testimonies and stories of how God has changed peoples’ lives through generosity, as well as weekly Scripture readings, a guide on ways to give, and a tithing chart to help you as you consider your invitation to give. My prayer is that together we will rediscover the joy and abundance of a life giving our best to God!

Let’s put **First Things First** and see what God does!

Much Love, Hope & Peace

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "T. Bryson Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "S" at the end.

Rev. T. Bryson Smith
Lead Pastor
Fairfax United Methodist Church



Fairfax United Methodist Church

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