

**JUNE, JULY AND AUGUST 2021  
CLARION CONNECTION  
FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
201 3<sup>RD</sup> AVENUE NE  
CLARION, IA 50525**

**Pastor: Rev. Mike Gudka  
Church Phone: 515-532-2845  
Pastor Mike's cell: 515-835-7847  
Email: [pastormikegudka@gmail.com](mailto:pastormikegudka@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.clarionumc.com](http://www.clarionumc.com)**

Secretary: Jodi Kraft  
Office Hours: Monday - Thursday 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon  
Email: [jodi@clarionumc.com](mailto:jodi@clarionumc.com)

Church Treasurer: Sam Moore  
Financial Secretary: Jodi Kraft  
Church Council Chair: Bud Young

Custodians: Carol Townsend and Juliet Gudka

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**Keep up with Happenings in Our Church**

If you are a Facebook user, search for "[Clarion First United Methodist Church](https://www.facebook.com/ClarionFirstUnitedMethodistChurch)" and join our page. That way you will keep up with current happenings at our Church. In addition, check out our website at <https://www.clarionumc.com> (no "f") and look at past teachings, see what is on the Church calendar, and lots more.

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**Friendly Reminder from Staff Parish Relations Committee**

Please remember that Mondays are the one day a week that Pastor Mike tries to save for rest and recuperation. In the event that an emergency, Pastor Mike would still like for you to contact him.

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**New Birthday Ministry - Do We have your current address?**

We are starting a new Birthday Card Ministry and we hope to offer you a little love and recognition on your birthday. If you don't receive a birthday card, it could be because we don't have your date or birth, or we don't have your current address. Please contact Jodi in the Church office and make sure your information is correct. And when your big day comes around - HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

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**June Liturgist:** Kelly Kirstein  
**July Liturgist:** Nancy Nail  
**August Liturgist:** Carolyn Etter

**June Hosts:**  
**July Hosts:** Peggy Olsen and Judy Watne  
**August Hosts:**

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**Hosts and Liturgists Needed!**

Are you willing to greet people as they come to Church on Sunday mornings? Or are you interested in reading the Sunday morning announcements before the service begins? Well we need YOU! Please see Bonnie Young to sign up for one of these VERY IMPORTANT volunteer opportunities.

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**Audio/Visual Volunteers Needed**

Do you like to record others? Do you enjoy running a soundboard? Or perhaps you enjoy working with a PC and setting up slides? And even if you don't have any training, but think that you would enjoy contributing to worshiping Christ in any of these ways, please see Angela Lantzky or Andy Young for more information. And lots of training will be provided, along with having a really flexible schedule.



## Summer 2021 Newsletter Article

Most of us know the Ten Commandments and many of us can recite most of them from memory. And there are many other laws that are contained throughout the Old and New Testaments. The one that I want to look at today is **Deuteronomy 6:16**: *"You shall not put the Lord your God to the test..."*

Now the reason for this law is because we may want to tell God what to do. And in our finite perspective, we might think that this request is a good thing. But God's perspective is infinite and everything is playing out according to His plan. And what we want just might not turn into a good thing in the long run. But even when we don't get what we want, God does promise us this, **Romans 8:28**: *And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.*

But there is one exception the God makes to His rule regarding never testing Him, **Malachi 3:10**: *"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this," says the Lord of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows."*

Now a Tithe is defined as 10% of your gross income and this is to be used to support the basic everyday needs of the Church. This is different from Offerings, which are above and beyond the Tithe and are used for special events, special projects, and mission work.

Looking at the promise from God regarding your Tithe, can you imagine how many blessings God can pour through the windows of heaven? And the Tithe is not just about making sure that the Church has enough money for basic expenses. It has far deeper spiritual meanings regarding our relationship with God. And that is, "Do you trust that God will come through with His end of the promise?" The more we love and trust God, the more a Tithe becomes a means to deepen our relationship with God. And it means opening up our eyes to seeing the Holy Spirit pouring blessings all over our lives.

Now I have to admit that in my younger years, I was always giving God my left-overs. If I had a little money left over after paying my bills and having some fun, then I would put it in the offering plate. Other times, I really didn't think about the offering until they passed the offering plate. And I would check to see how many small bills that I had in my wallet and toss them in the plate as it went by. In fact, I was so embarrassed doing this that I used to roll or fold the money so that the next person couldn't see how little I put in the offering plate.

But as my relationship with God grew, so did my trust in Him. And I began to see that everything in this entire universe, including what I previously thought was my money, belonged to God. And I came to understand that God expected me to be a good steward of everything that God had provided. When I came to this understanding, a lightbulb went off in my head and I began to take God at His word. And yes, I tested Him.

On each payday, the very first check that I would write was my Tithe to the Church. And of course you know what happens when God makes a promise. I began to see both small and large blessings come into my life. No, my life was not suddenly perfect and wonderful; but I could see God working to honor my Tithe by blessing me more and more. As a result, my faith gradually went deeper and deeper.

Did you know that Jesus talked about money more often than any other topic? And the only topic that tops money, is love. You see there is nothing intrinsically wrong with money. It is simply a resource that is part of our life. The challenge is when we begin to trust money more than God. The challenge is when we begin to worship money and the things it buys. The challenge is when we let money make our decisions, instead of our trust in God.

So I want to encourage you to take some reflection time and see what money means to you; then reflect upon what Christ means to you; and finally reflect upon where you place your trust. Quite simply, the joy that comes through trusting the Lord is eternal and will never let you down.

Now for one comment on what your Tithe means to Christ's Church. For many Churches, the donation stream over the year looks like a roller coaster. It drops way low in the summer, peaks at Christmas, then goes way down until it swings back up on Easter. The challenge is that while donations fall, the church bills remain relatively stable. And one of the ways you can bless your Church is to sign up for automatic withdrawal from your bank account. We have enclosed an automatic withdrawal sign-up form in this newsletter if you are interested in doing so. This helps turn the donation stream into more of a straight-line than a roller coaster.

And I want to say "Thank you" to those who are using automatic withdraw or make sure that their donations come in on a regular basis each month throughout the year. Approximately one-third of the donations that we need to pay our bills now come in through automatic giving. And this regular predictable giving turned out to be one of the many blessings that we experienced, as we all went through the difficult time of the pandemic. It helped us keep current on all of our regular bills.

So let me end this last newsletter before the one in August, by praying that you all have a GREAT summer. And I look forward to seeing you all in worship throughout the summer as well!

God bless,  
Pastor Mike

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### **Children's Time Leaders Needed**

Do you love helping children learn? Would you be interested in leading children's time during the worship service on the Sundays that you are available? If you are, then we need your skills to help bring the teaching to life during worship services. You will be provided in advance with the teaching title, scripture, and the theme for each teaching. So you will have plenty of time to prepare for the teaching time. And you can volunteer for the Sundays that work with your schedule. If you are interested in helping in this way, please see Pastor Mike.

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### **Kid's Corner has Returned!**

The Kid's Corner is once again open with coloring activities for kids to use during the worship service. It is located on the back table. There is a spray disinfectant in the Kid's Corner that you can use. Unlike Lysol, this is a disinfectant that is okay if it is consumed.

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### **Sunday Evening Worship at The Meadows**

We are restarting our Sunday Evening Worship at The Meadows in the Activity Room on the second floor. This is a recording of the worship service at the Church. It takes place at 6:00 PM each Sunday.

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### **NEW! Way to Worship!**

We now offer three ways to join your Church family in worship. And our prayers are that you will stay connected with your Church home and find the worship service that works best for your situation:

- **In-Person Worship:** Sunday's at 10:30 AM with alternating worship styles
- **Recorded Worship:** This is available on our website by Tuesday of each Week at [www.clarionumc.com](http://www.clarionumc.com).
- **Live-Streaming Worship:** This is available on our website at [www.clarionumc.com](http://www.clarionumc.com)

Let's all stay connected. Let's lift each other up. And let's continue to be The Body of Christ!

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### **Cement Replacement**

The Trustees have some great news. Because of your steady giving, this summer the Trustees will be replacing all of the parking place cement across the front of the Church (along 3rd Ave NE), and the driveway at the parsonage. Because many of these spaces are for handicap parking, this replacement will make the surface much safer to walk upon. The Trustees apologize for the limited parking while the cement is being replaced.

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### **JUNE**

**Women on the Rise Worship Gathering**, Saturday, June 5 at 6:00 p.m. Here at First United Methodist Church.

### **Communion and Fellowship at The Meadows**

We are restarting our monthly gathering at The Meadows in the Assisted Living Lunch Room on the third Wednesday of each month at 10:00 AM. This will begin on Wednesday, June 16, 2021. We will celebrate Communion and enjoy some fellowship time.

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### **JUNE CALENDAR**

- 2-3 - Cleaning of the Church basement (Fellowship Hall and classrooms)
- 2 - 8:30 a.m. Bibles and Bikes
- 5 - 6:00 - 9:00 p.m. "Women on the Rise" conference in the Sanctuary
- 6 - 10:30 a.m. Summer Worship
- 8 - 2:00 p.m. PEO (Fireside Room)
- 7:00 p.m. MOE meeting
- 9 - 8:30 a.m. Bibles and Bikes
- 8:00 p.m. Worship Team meeting
- 10 - Church office closed

- 7:00 p.m. SPRC meeting
- 13 – 10:30 a.m. Summer Worship
- 14 – Church office closed
- 16 – 8:30 a.m. Bibles and Bikes
- No Finance Team meeting
- 20 – 10:30 a.m. Summer Worship
- 6:30 p.m. Trustees meeting
- 23 – 8:30 a.m. Bibles and Bikes
- 7:00 p.m. Church Council meeting
- 26 – Praise Team workshop
- 27 – 10:30 a.m. Summer Worship
- 30 - 8:30 a.m. Bibles and Bikes

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**JULY**

**All Church Trustee Work Day**

The Trustees invite you to help with a work-day on Saturday, July 17 from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. We have a large to-do list that will include everything from painting to tuning up the generator. The more volunteers that we have, the faster we will make these improvements to our Church. There is a list of to-dos on the back table of the sanctuary. So please, please, please sign-up for the task(s) that you want to help complete! The Trustees will provide all of the materials and tools and everything will be ready to go when you arrive. And please know that if you can only come for a few hours, that would be great.

**Vacation Bible school**

We are very excited to announce that we will be holding in-person VBS this Summer! The dates are Sunday, July 25th through Thursday, July 29th. This year's theme will be the same as last year - "Knights of North Castle." However, we will have even more fun sharing the gospel with this theme in person!

If you are interested in serving at VBS by teaching or helping in our classroom, leading Worship Music, preparing and serving snack, or in any other way, please contact Nikki Conlon at 532-2203 or [nikcon7@hotmail.com](mailto:nikcon7@hotmail.com)

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**JULY CALENDAR**

- 4 – 10:30 a.m. Summer Worship
- 5 – Church office closed
- 7 – 8:30 a.m. Bibles and Bikes
- 8 – 7:00 p.m. SPRC
- 10 – 7:00 p.m. “Deep Encounters” in Sanctuary
- 11 – 10:30 a.m. Summer Worship
- 13 – No MOE
- 14 – 8:30 a.m. Bibles and Bikes
- 8:00 p.m. Worship Team meeting
- 17 – 9:00 a.m. All – Church Trustee Work Day
- 18 – 10:30 a.m. Summer Worship
- 6:30 p.m. Trustees meeting
- 21 – 8:30 a.m. Bibles and Bikes
- 7:00 p.m. Church Council meeting
- 25 – 10:30 a.m. Summer Worship
- 6:30 p.m. Vacation Bible School
- 26 – 6:30 p.m. Vacation Bible School
- 27 – 6:30 p.m. Vacation Bible School
- 28 – 6:30 p.m. Vacation Bible School
- 29 – 6:30 p.m. Vacation Bible School (last night)

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**AUGUST**

As a reminder, most Team Committee meetings resume to plan, etc. the upcoming fall schedule, Sunday school, etc.

**AUGUST CALENDAR**

- 1 – 10:30 a.m. Summer Worship
- 4 – 8:30 a.m. Bibles and Bikes
- 6:00 p.m. Youth Committee Team meeting
- 7:00 p.m. Education Team meeting
- 8 – 10:30 a.m. Summer Worship
- 11 – 8:30 a.m. Bibles and Bikes
- 8:00 p.m. Worship Team meeting

- 12 – 7:00 p.m. SPRC
- 14 – 7:00 p.m. “Deep Encounters” in Sanctuary
- 15 – 10:30 a.m. Summer Worship  
6:30 p.m. Trustees meeting
- 18 – 8:30 a.m. Bibles and Bikes  
6:00 p.m. Finance Team meeting
- 22 – 10:30 a.m. Summer Worship
- 25 – 8:30 a.m. Bibles and Bikes  
7:00 p.m. Church Council meeting
- 29 – 10:30 a.m. Summer Worship

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### June Birthdays and *Anniversaries*

- 2 – Reed Campbell, **Anna and Tyler Warnke**
- 3 – **Shelley and Tim Fletcher**
- 7 – June Christensen
- 8 – Kent Harklau, **Jenna and Michael Boothby**
- 9 – Cathy Farwell, Jaydan Sorensen, **Emily and Mark Bernhardt**
- 10 – Brenda Rauch, Tory Warnke
- 11 – Kelli Leshner, Todd Sorensen
- 13 – Patrick Bilyeu
- 15 – Deanna Lehman
- 16 – Bryan Meinders
- 17 – Eric Sorensen
- 18 – Emily Bernhardt, **Bonnie and Bud Young, Alyssa and Jeremy Fender**
- 19 – Kimberly Leshner
- 21 – Anna Warnke
- 22 - Janet Hennigar, Aubrie Fishburn
- 25 – Beth Ott, Pat Tracy, Dan Smith, **Kari Jo and Daniel Murray**
- 26 – Connie Hill, Linda Marker, Jim Ott
- 27 - Roger Brooks, Tim Marker, Gary Keller, Nathaniel Steffenson, **Kim and Tim Marker**
- 28 – Colin Kirstein, Ania Renteria

### July Birthdays and *Anniversaries*

- 1 – Theresa Hansen, Daniel Murray
- 3 – Jake Johnson
- 4 – Mary Carlson
- 5 – Mikey Aswegan, Kari Jo Murray, Ember Howell
- 6 – Carol Chantrill, Allyn Christensen, Bob Ott, Ashley Wicks
- 7 – Austin Walton
- 8 – Kim Marker, Pauline Lester, Rachel Sido
- 12 – Phoebe Sanders, Finn Warnke, **Miriam and Leroy Jensen**
- 13 – Karl Olsen, Nick McOllough
- 14 – Kurt Morgan
- 15 – Ryland Morgan
- 16 – Tammi Lundgren
- 17 – Bill Drury, Claire Kirstein
- 19 – Steve Martin, Joella Steffenson
- 20 – **Shannon and Kelly Leist**
- 21 – Jodi Kraft, **Amber and Patrick Bilyeu**
- 23 – **Lynette and Dan Smith**
- 24 – Carol Leshner
- 25 – Olivia Martinez
- 27 – Abby Kirstein, Sharon Evans, Aishel Goins
- 29 – Natalie Kirstein, Lacy Buchanan
- 30 – Mike Bowman, Emma Conlon

### August Birthdays and *Anniversaries*

- 1 – **Sarah and Jon Kopitzke**
- 2 – Norm Carlson, Rich Hocraffer
- 3 – Dracyn Morgan
- 5 – Athena Berning, **Connie and Mark Hill**

- 6 – Alan Hagie, Agnes Hendrickson
- 7 – Dominic Carey, Claire Campbell, Braxton Woodin
- 9 – Derek Conlon, **Kay and Roger Brooks**
- 11 – Evan Wahl, **Carolyn and Dennis Bowman, Katy and Craig Warnke**
- 12 – Troy Schultz, **Theresa and Jeff Hansen**
- 13 – Kari Disney, Dylan Jackson, Abigail Dorn, Emma Fishbur
- 14 – Pastor Mike Gudka, Kirk Disney, Dawn Nail, Whitney Carey
- 15 – Kennedy Jackson, Donna Miller
- 17 – Joshua Lundgren, Carson Riley, **Nancy and Mike Nail**
- 18 – Tanner Abbas
- 19 – Kathy Walton
- 20 – Clinton Miller
- 21 – Debbie Hennigar, **Jennifer and Jim Mewes**
- 22 – Ed Nail
- 23 – Alison Friesleben
- 24 – **Janice and Dennis Murphy**
- 26 – Sarah Kopitzke, Leah Bernhardt, **Cathy and Jeff Farwell**
- 27 – **Nora and Brandon Thompson**
- 28 – Melanie Riley
- 29 – Nancy Nail
- 30 – **Amy and Scott Wiezorak**
- 31 – Nikki Conlon, **Abby and Dean Kirstein**

**Happy Birthday and *Happy Anniversary* to all!**

Note: If your birthday or **anniversary** is not listed, or we have the date wrong. Please contact the church secretary.

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**Need a 12 Foot Lighted Christmas Tree for Free?**

We have replaced our 12-foot lighted Christmas tree and we need to find a home (or a barn) for our previous lighted Christmas tree (some of the lights need replaced). Please see Pastor Mike if you would like the tree or if you know of someone who could use it. It is free.

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**Okoboji United Methodist Camp** is looking for staff and volunteers. Junior staff are high school youth 16-18 years of age, who agree to come camp throughout the summer, volunteering their time helping on support staff or in cabins with an older Summer Staff. Volunteer a week, three weeks, or five weeks! Also looking for volunteers of any age to help at camp this summer. Anywhere from check-in on Monday, helping in the kitchen prepping meals, assisting in the camp store, cleaning cabins or assisting with programming areas. Please contact Phil at [phil@okobojicamp.com](mailto:phil@okobojicamp.com) or call the office at 712-336-2936. More information at [www.okobojicamp.com](http://www.okobojicamp.com)

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**Quarterly Committees for July, August and September**

July, August and September Co-Chairpersons

June: Karianne and Jake Johnson, Shannon and Kelly Leist

July: Connie and Mark Hill, Cindy and Doug Riley

September: Shirley and Bruce Wigans, Linda Klehm

Additional Committee persons:

Alison and Jeff Friesleben  
 Tanja and Brian Jensen  
 Kristina and Sam Moore  
 Donna and Bill Speirs  
 Beth and Steve Jackson  
 Kay and Brian Marker  
 Miriam and Leroy Jensen

Sally and Ron Emerson  
 Jody and Darren Johnson  
 Marilyn and Karl Olsen  
 Alison and Kevin Marshall  
 Kathy and Nick Stahl  
 Kim and Bob Ott  
 Alexis and Kurt Morgan

Beth Clutter  
 Kari Jo and Daniel Murray  
 Helen and Ed Southard  
 Agnes Hendrickson  
 Amy and Steve Krueger  
 Olivia and Austin Walton  
 Karen Hill

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**Clarion First United Methodist Church  
 Church Council Minutes  
 April 21, 2021, 7:00 p.m.**

The Church Council of Clarion First United Methodist Church met on Wednesday, April 21, 2021 via in person and zoom with 12 members present: Dennis Bowman, Jerry Boyington, Tana Boyington, Cathy Farwell, Pastor Mike Gudka, Judy Kirstein, Kent Kirstein, Angela Lantzky, Ania Renteria, Joel Renteria, Kathy Watts and Bud Young.

Chairperson, Bud, called the meeting to order and Cathy offered devotions. Denny made a motion to adopt the

agenda with the added item of COVID Restrictions. Second by Kent. Voted on and carried. Judy made a motion to accept the minutes from the previous meeting. Second by Cathy. Voted on and carried. Kent presented the Treasurer's Report. Denny made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report. Second by Judy. Voted on and carried.

Pastor Mike reported the Wesleyan Covenant Association webinar will be presented May 1. Rally Sunday we will return to two services and hold a church BBQ after the second service. May 2<sup>nd</sup> is the last day of Sunday school. High school seniors, Sunday school teachers will be recognized. Three confirmands will be brought into church membership.

Cathy made a motion to approve Chrysalis being at our church on November 5 and 6 with planning and practice on October 8 and 9. Second by Tana. Voted on and carried.

Pastor Mike reported on the new circuit structure being planned for the churches. Kent reported that they continue to look at possibilities of how to hand the Church Treasurer position. Jodi has expressed interest in doing some of it. Jerry made a motion for Jodi to begin training and continue to look for a new Treasurer. Second by Kent. Voted on and carried.

New Sunday school superintendents will be looked at for next year as both wish to step down. A date to establish new 5 year goals for the church will be planned for fall.

Pastor Mike presented the COVID Guidelines discussed and voted on at the last meeting that will go into effect as Wright County has lifted the mask mandate. Kent made a motion to reopen the church office Monday – Thursday, 8:00 a.m. – Noon. Second by Cathy. Voted on and carried.

Education – Tana reported High school seniors and Sunday school teachers will be recognized and Confirmands will be received into the Church. Memorial – Pastor Mike reported the new Christmas tree was bought and they are looking at a new nativity scene and decorations. SPRC – Jerry had nothing new to report. Worship – Angela reported that they haven't met. They have set the date for the coach for the Praise Team to come for June 26<sup>th</sup>. Youth – Kent reported they will resume in the fall. Finance and Trustees – Kent reported they have checked into new concrete for south of the church and the driveway for the parsonage. Denny made a motion to proceed with a limit of \$30,000. Second by Judy. Voted on and carried. Pastor Mike reported that an AED has been ordered as well as First Aid kits. UMW – Judy reported that they haven't met. MOE – Ania reported they have decided to support the Lighthouse in Iowa Falls and have a yearly call for donations before Mother's Day. They will continue to support the Beacon of Hope with a yearly call for donations the second Sunday in November. They are planning the BBQ for Rally Sunday.

The next meeting will be May 26. Joys and concerns were voiced. Cathy closed with prayer. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kathy Watts, Secretary

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**Your Giving Makes a Difference**

Last week: \$2,535 (5-23-2021), Needed weekly: \$4,291  
Year-to-date: \$116,252, Needed year-to-date: \$90,118



# Automatic Withdrawal Authorization Form (ACH) for Clarion First United Methodist Church

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	Envelope/Donor #:	Date:
Effective Date of Authorization: ____/____/____		
Type of Authorization:   ___ New Authorization   ___ Change Donation Amount   ___ Change Donation Date ___ Change Banking Information           ___ Discontinue Electronic Donation		
*Last Name:		*First Name:
*Address:		
*City:	*State:	*ZIP:
*Email Address:		*Phone:
Date of <b>FIRST</b> Donation: ____/____/____	Frequency of Donation: ___ Weekly – Mondays ___ Semi-Monthly – 1 <sup>st</sup> and 15 <sup>th</sup> ___ Monthly on the 1 <sup>st</sup> ___ Monthly on the 15 <sup>th</sup> ___ Bi-Weekly (every other week) ___ One Time Donation	Offering Designation:   Amounts: ___ Tithe 10%           \$_____ (General Budget) ___ Mission Fund       \$_____ ___ Audio Visual Loan   \$_____ ___ Window Replacement       \$_____ ___ Other:_____       \$_____
<b>CHECKING OR SAVINGS</b>		
Please debit my donation from my (check one): ___ Savings Account ___ Checking Account ( <b>attach a voided check</b> )		Routing Number: _____ <i>Valid Routing Number must start with 0, 1, 2, or 3</i>  Account Number: _____
I authorize the above organization to process debit entries to my account. I understand that this authority will remain in effect until I provide reasonable notification to terminate the authorization.		
Authorized Signature: _____		Date: _____
<b>CREDIT / DEBIT CARD: NOTE: Using your credit/debit card costs the church 1.75%</b>		
Card Brand (check one):   ___ Visa   ___ MasterCard   ___ American Express   ___ Discover Card		
Card Number: _____		Expiration Date: _____
Name on Card: _____		
Billing Address (if different from above): _____		
I authorize the above organization to process transactions in accordance with the above information. I understand that this authority will remain in effect until I provide reasonable notification to terminate the authorization.		
Signature (as it appears on the card): _____		Date: _____

**\* All of this contact information is required.**  
***If using a checking account, please attach a voided check over the credit/debit card section above.***