MULTIPLYING JOY

MYERS PARK
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Friends,

Hilarious. The Bible tells us "God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7) – where the Greek word rendered "cheerful" originally meant "hilarious." My dream for me and you is that we give to God, and to God's Church, in a way that elicits broad smiles, laughter…genuine hilarity.

It's not that God doesn't love the grudging giver, the guilty giver, the calculating giver, or the chintzy giver. God doesn't mind an uncheerful giver or even a non-giver. God's dream is like mine, that we discover the joy of giving, of investing not in our own portfolio but in God's hugely important work in the world.

"Angels can fly because they take themselves so lightly" (G.K. Chesterton). The spiritual life is learning to travel light, with a loose grip on what isn't ours in the first place but God's good gifts to us. How good of God to give us churches like ours doing significant work, enabling our spiritual growth as givers! I love Thomas Merton's wisdom: "If you have money, consider that perhaps the only reason God allowed it to fall into your hands was in order that you might find joy and perfection by giving it away."

Angling into 2027: expenses go up, of course. Our fantastic staff needs cost-of-living increases, and merit increases. And our mission in our troubled world never shrinks or stays steady, but it grows – like our joy, our hilarity when together we make amazing things happen.

Consider a significant increase in your estimate of giving for 2027. Use the enclosed card – or just give! You can stretch; you can surprise yourself with the surprising joy of bold generosity. God needs you, but you need some hilarious giving to discover greater joy in God's presence.

The verses sandwiching "God loves a cheerful giver" are all about God's blessing. How good has God been to you, and to all of us? What kind of giving to the church makes sense?

Oh, and don't forget that beyond our regular budget, we have our Mission & Outreach fund – 100% of which goes out of the building into the community and world, our best witness to a skeptical world that there really is a God who cares, and through us.

I hope you're smiling by now, maybe even laughing. How hilarious to help your money find its ultimate purpose, not for you to accumulate shiny things, but to shine the light of God's love out there! Thank you in advance for your generosity during 2027.

Your pastor,

Dr. James Howell

Your generosity connects people, transforms lives, and roots our community in faith. Each story of growth propels us forward in our mission of ***Multiplying Joy***, and none of it would happen without your faithful support.