

## Mission Project Tithe

The concept of offering God our “first fruits” is an ancient one commanded in the book of Leviticus 2 (and other biblical texts) to set a priority of giving back to God the first portion of that which we have received. In an agrarian culture that was done by offering a grain sacrifice, along with a portion brought to the temple to feed the priests and other religious persons who did their work without pay.

The concept is similarly expressed (although typically in a metaphorical way) in the New Testament by harkening back to the “Law of Moses” in guiding the faithful to ensure that their priorities were properly set – God first, others second, and our needs third.

As we have assessed the needs of our church – both physical and programmatic – through a visioning and strategic planning process, we have come up with a rather extensive and definitive list of work we would like to complete and programs we would like to initiate over the next several years.



The Finance committee has suggested that one way to ensure our priorities are in good order would be to incorporate this idea of “first fruits” in our campaign. The proposal is to tithe (giving 10% or the first fruits) of everything contributed to a project or need yet to be determined. At a later date, we will

rely upon the guidance of the Mission and Outreach Commission to determine the recipient of the first fruits after they have surveyed the congregation for suggestions and input.

Giving the first fruits means that no matter how much money is received through the campaign, 10% would be used for a mission project. If one million is raised, \$100,000 would be given away. If half that amount is raised, \$50,000 would be given. In any event, this contribution comes off the top and may mean that some of the projects we hoped to complete would have to be postponed until adequate funding is available. Following this guideline, however, does remind us again of one of our core values at Mission Hills United Church of Christ – to give thanks to God **first** for all with which we have been blessed, to minister to the needs of others **second**, and **third** as wise stewards to use what is ours to meet the pressing needs of our own congregation.

Today’s forum in the Commons invites your thoughts on this concept as well as suggestions for our future. By wrestling with this notion in an overall fund-raising strategy, you will help determine the scope of what will be presented at our upcoming Ecclesiastical Meeting on June 12.

Handwritten signature of Pastor Scott with a spiral logo to the right.



### **What is the project that will receive the funds?**

At this stage of planning, the specific project cannot be identified. At the June 12 Ecclesiastical Meeting, the congregation will be asked to vote whether or not to support this component of the fundraising plan. If approved, the specific project would be determined AFTER the funds are raised, a dollar amount determined, and the congregation will be involved in this decision making.

### **What types of projects are being considered?**

Types of projects that have been suggested range from supporting local non-profit community groups (or starting our own local community non-profit) to supporting Our Church’s Wider Mission or a specific UCC program, sending our first fruits to be used to support national and global UCC efforts.

### **What if I don’t want to support a mission project component of the Second Century Campaign?**

Your opinion matters! Please attend the forum today and be a part of the conversation, or you can also email your thoughts to SCC@missionhillsucc.org to reach the members of the Finance Committee who are working to present the Second Century Campaign to Church Council and the congregation for approval. The campaign is still under construction, and your input is needed to help make it a success, a program that we can all get behind as a congregation. Together we can do great things!

**Affirming our Heritage,  
Proclaiming our Legacy...**

**Second  
Century  
Campaign**



## **Mission Project Tithe**

*Honor the Lord with your substance and with the  
first fruits of all your produce;  
then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your  
vats will be bursting with wine.*

**(Prov. 2:9-10)**

**Be prepared to vote at the Ecclesiastical Meeting on June 12.**

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**Come to the forum after church on  
Sunday, May 15 in the Commons to learn more!**