First United Methodist Church
DOWNTOWN FOR GOOD

"Then King David said to the whole assembly: "My son Solomon, the one whom God has chosen, is young and inexperienced. The task is great, because this palatial structure is not for man but for the LORD God. With all my resources I have provided for the temple of my God – gold for the gold work, silver for the silver, bronze for the bronze, iron for the iron and wood for the wood, as well as onyx for the settings, turquoise, stones of various colors, and all kinds of fine stone and marble – all of these in large quantities. Besides, in my devotion to the temple of my God I now give my personal treasures of gold and silver for the temple of my God, over and above everything else I have provided for this holy temple . . ."

I Chronicles 29:1-3

As I read this passage from I Chronicles, I can't help but be moved by David's devotion to the LORD in these, his waning years. He is essentially committing a lifetime of accumulated personal wealth to honoring the LORD, knowing full well that he would not live to see the temple built. That task falls to his son, Solomon, inexperienced though he is.

David really was providing funds for a vision he would never personally realize. He lived by the old adage, "Do your givin' while you're livin' so you're knowin' where it's goin'."

As we explore the possibilities of a capital campaign here at First Church, we might ask, " Is this building and all that is in it for God, or is it for people ?" The answer, I think, is "Yes." Certainly our facilities provide a place for worship, learning and community for our members and guests, as did the temple that Solomon would build, minus the gold and silver. And, the building at 203 Wisconsin Ave. provides a staging area for ministry – a place where people come to be fed (literally and spiritually), to find healing, and to find refuge. It is a place where we serve God by serving others, living out the Great Commandment to "love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength" AND "love your neighbor as yourself."

Unlike David, we may see some of the outcomes (completed projects) that result from a capital campaign. And, we'll see some of the impacts on the ministries of our church, but not all. Some ministry impacts will be the responsibility of the Solomon generations of our community. That's as it should be, I think. And, I don't know, but there's something special, something that resonates deeply within me when I think about helping build for the future . . . planting a tree under whose shade I will not sit.

And so, as we begin conversations about a possible capital campaign, I invite you to pray. Pray about the future of First Church and the ministries that make a difference in the lives of people throughout our community. Pray about how our building and facilities can continue to support and strengthen those ministries, today and in the future. And pray for clarity of vision – a vision we can see, perhaps only dimly, for the generations who follow.

There will be opportunities in the coming weeks to learn more about the needs we're considering, ask questions, and help shape the path forward. I hope you'll be part of those conversations as we discern together what God may be calling First Church to do.

Blessings,
Kevin Williams, Lay Leader