



A P A R T
Together

2021 Stewardship Campaign

September 6, 2020

Dear Benson Memorial Family,

Grace and peace be with you! It's said that "Absence makes the heart grow fonder." I think that saying ranks right up there with sayings like "It's good luck if it rains on your wedding day" and "Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss, you'll land among the stars." These are well intentioned and designed to make us feel better when things aren't going our way but, when you get right down to it, they might not be all that true. We are all tired of this Coronavirus, and we miss being able to get together in person as a church family. The virus has had a devastating impact on the world, our country, and our church family. Over the last six months, I've personally been through all the stages of grief, including disbelief, denial, bargaining, guilt, anger, and depression. Finally, I think I've reached the last stage and accepted that things won't be back to "normal" any time soon, if ever again. The only way I know how to get through those stages of grief is to give myself a little space and the time to do so.

It's hard to believe that fall is rapidly approaching and we're starting our 2021 Stewardship Campaign, with Commitment Sunday scheduled for October 4. In recognition of these unprecedented times, our theme for this year's campaign is "Apart Together".

Coming together in spite of separation has been an unexpected theme this year, but being “apart together” has always been a part of who we are as Christians. Benson Memorial UMC has done an amazing job of staying spiritually strong and continuing to be relevant as a Christian family during this pandemic. Our staff and lay leaders have done a great job of leading remote worship and Bible studies, as well as leveraging programs to help ensure the financial solvency of our church. Our mission teams have continued to provide support for our community, despite having to be creative in how we deliver those services.

While we still aren’t in a position to be together physically, our community and the world need our help even more than usual. That’s why, this year, your support for the programs and ministries of Benson Memorial UMC are crucial. During this year’s campaign, you will hear sermons and testimonies about the ways that Christians and, specifically, the Benson Memorial community have come together in spite of a time of necessary distance from one another. Our specific focuses will be on how we’ve worked toward racial reconciliation, helped those facing economic challenges, and tended to people’s physical and mental health.

As I mentioned above, sometimes the only way to get through a challenge is to give yourself a little space and time. It’s amazing what a little space can do. Take, for instance, the word “apart.” Add a little space and it turns into “a part.” That’s how we need to think about our church community in these current times: not that we’re *apart*, but that we’re **a part**—*a part of a church family that cares deeply for each other, our community, and all of those in need.*

We’re proud of each of you and grateful for your continued financial support that makes our collective work possible. Please be in prayer during this season as you consider your financial commitments to Benson Memorial UMC for the year 2021. Enclosed, you’ll find your 2021 Card. To turn it in, you can mail it to Benson Memorial UMC, 4706 Creedmoor Road, Raleigh, NC 27612. We know many of you look forward to turning in your commitments in person. Be on the lookout for more information about in-person dropoff on Commitment Sunday.

On behalf of our Stewardship Committee and pastors, grace and peace be with you,

Bob Sylvester
Stewardship Committee Co-Chair