

St. Andrew's  
United Methodist Church  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma  
Feasibility Readiness Study Report

Horizons Stewardship Co., Inc.  
183 Arena Road, Suite A  
P.O. Box 627  
Cabot, AR 72023  
501-843-9448

March 25, 2011

TO: Rev. D.A. Bennett  
St. Andrew's United Methodist Church, Oklahoma City, OK

FROM: Joseph W. Park, Partner  
Horizons Stewardship

RE: Feasibility-Readiness Study  
St. Andrew's United Methodist Church, Oklahoma City, OK

Horizons Stewardship (Horizons) has conducted a Feasibility-Readiness Study for Saint Andrew's United Methodist Church (St. Andrew's), Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, to test the church's readiness to conduct a capital campaign in the fall of 2011 for the purpose of constructing a new sanctuary.

The study was conducted by researching outside demographic information on your community provided by the Percept Group, as well as significant amounts of historical data provided by the church and reviewing the results of a confidential survey mailed to 100 families in your church. Seventy-two (72) or 72% of the surveys were returned, which is above the average return rate for this type of survey.

These 100 families represent about 18% of local church families, but more than 74% of total giving.

## **COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS**

The study area in this report is defined by a five mile radius around St. Andrew's. Currently, there are 134,843 persons in this study area. This represents an increase of 24.5% since 1990 and is projected to increase to 143,364 by 2015.

The 2010 estimated average household income for the study area is \$56,543. Percepts estimates that 30% of all area households contribute \$500 or more to their church.

For the purpose of this study, we will use a household income estimate of \$56,543. We can assume with some degree of confidence that this number does not overstate (and likely understates) the average household income for the church, given the higher than average level of education and the propensity of the United Methodist church to attract membership with higher than average levels of income.

The study area population's racial mix is 71% Anglo, 6% African American, 12% Hispanic, and 11% other. During the next five years the Anglo population is projected to grow by 3% compared to 9% for African American, 29% for Hispanic, and 18% Asian. The median age of 36.5 is slightly younger than the US population as a whole. Over 27% (29,248) of the study area population is under of the age of 18; which creates a significant responsibility to find ways to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with these young persons who, on average, attend church less than the adult population, making them much less likely to hear the good news of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. This is further complicated by the fact that over 32% of these children are living in households with a single parent.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

Average attendance in worship has remained consistently around 600 since 2006, despite an increase in members of 21% during the same period.

Operational income jumped significantly (24%) from 2006 (\$804,898) to 2007 (\$1,061,941), but in 2010 it remains at this same basic level (\$1,081,777).

One of the key measures of generosity among individual members is annual giving per worshiper. Below is an illustration of per worshiper giving from 2006-2010.

2006	\$1,310
2007	\$1,685
2008	\$1,786
2009	\$1,944
2010	\$1,836

Individual generosity increased an impressive 33% or about 8% per year from 2006 to 2009, before dropping 6% in 2010.

Data provided by the church indicates that there are 548 member households that live locally. Of these, 57 gave more than \$5,600 (tithe level based on above information) for the year. Assuming there were an equal number of persons whose income was below the study area average who also observe a biblical tithe, then one would estimate as many as 114 families, or about 20% of active

church families, honor God with a biblical tithe. Even accounting for the likely fact that the median household income of \$56,543 under represents the median income in the church, the number of biblically tithing families exceeds the 3-5% of United Methodists who tithe nationally and is at least consistent with the 12-15% of self-professing evangelicals who report they observe a tithe.

St. Andrew's giving records for the 2010 operating budget (ministry budget) indicate the following distribution of giving (rounded).

5% gave 35%  
20% gave 77%

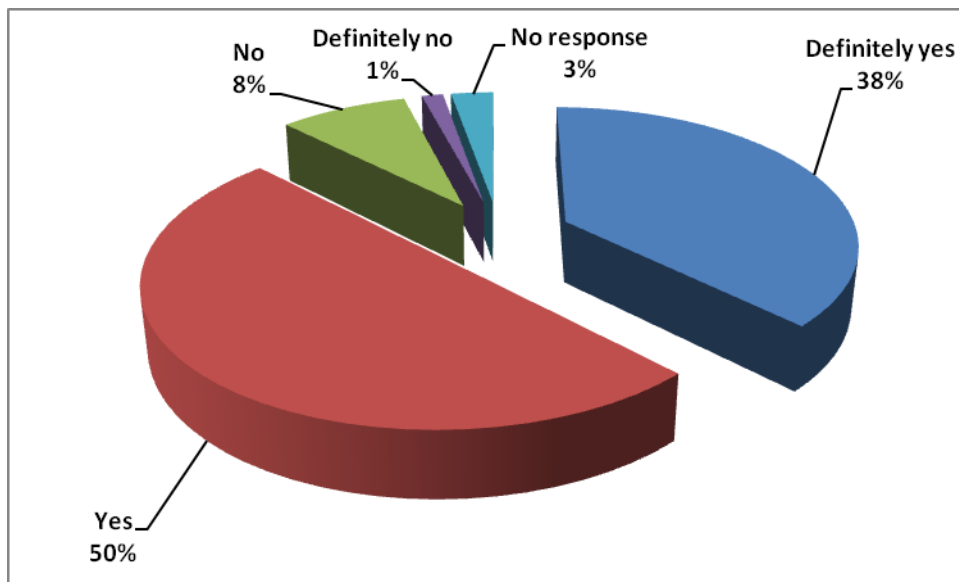
**The remaining 80% or 438 households contributed to the operating budget at a rate \$1.55 per day or \$10 per week.**

## SURVEY RESULTS:

100 mailed  
72 returned

### 1. Do you feel that constructing a new sanctuary is in keeping with God's Vision for St. Andrew's UMC to live out its mission to making disciples of Jesus Christ?

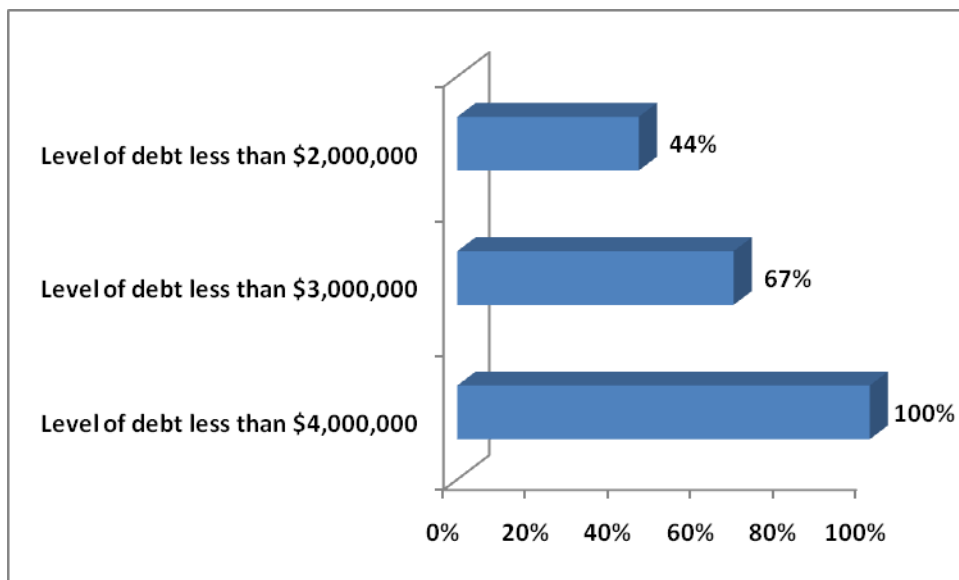
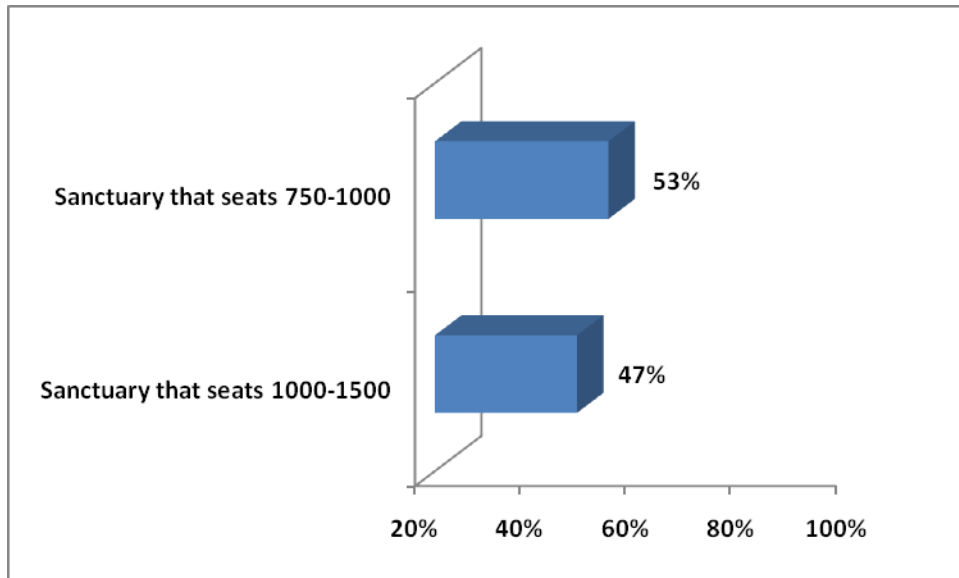
Definitely yes – 27  
Yes – 36  
No – 6  
Definitely no – 1  
No response – 2



## ANALYSIS:

A critical key to success in a capital campaign is for the congregation to clearly link the project to God's call upon the church. An exciting 88% of those most committed at St. Andrew's believe a new sanctuary is in keeping with God's Vision for the church to live out its mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ. This unity will allow the church to move forward with the confidence of knowing that almost nine out of ten of its most committed members believe to do so is in keeping with God's call upon the church.

### 2. Please give your assessment of the importance of the following factors in reaching the church's mission.



**ANALYSIS:**

These illustrations are a representation of what percentage of the most financially invested in the ministries of the church feel is most important among the choices offered.

Fifty-three percent (53%) placed the greatest value on a sanctuary that would seat 750 to 1,000 and 47% preferred a sanctuary that seated 1,000-1,500. Regardless of the choice ultimately made, it is important to note that apart from the amount of debt incurred after the campaign, there is little opposition to a larger sanctuary.

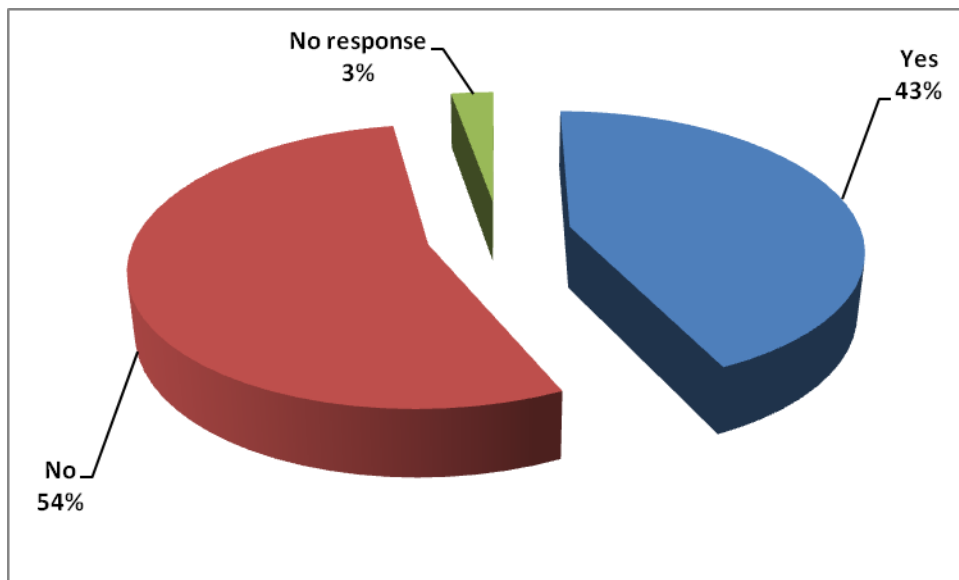
In Horizons' view, discomfort with increased debt levels is a very significant factor in the decision making process. Of those most committed to the church, 44% want to see total church debt limited to under \$2,000,000. This number grows to 67% who want to see debt held under \$3,000,000. In Horizons' opinion, any new sanctuary construction that left the church with debt greater than \$2,000,000 at the conclusion of the three year commitment period will create anxiety among almost half of those most invested in the mission and ministry of the church. Furthermore, if debt were to exceed \$3,000,000 nearly seven out of ten persons would be concerned, which makes this option clearly unacceptable from a fundraising perspective.

**3. Do you feel that the church is providing you adequate information regarding the needs and future plans of the church as they are being developed?**

Yes – 31

No – 39

No response – 2



**ANALYSIS:**

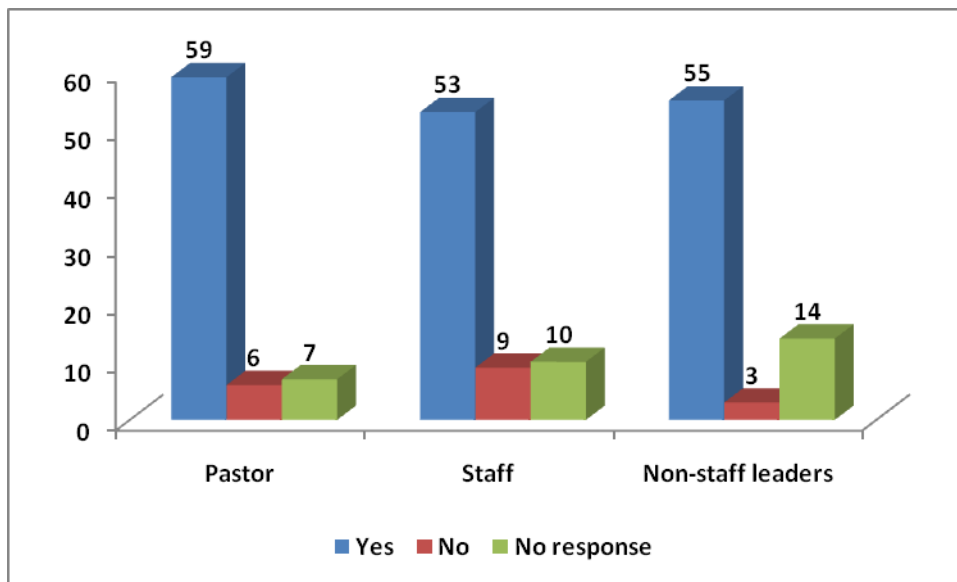
People will give sacrificially to those things in which they believe and those things they understand. For success, leadership must cast Vision and dispense factual information early and often. The majority of the committed core is vague on what is happening with the construction plans for the sanctuary. This is understandable since leadership is still very much in the discernment process about what the next steps might be.

Despite 54% of the committed core reporting they feel they are lacking information on the status of the sanctuary project, Horizons' interpretation of the

responses from this question are positive in that perceptions of the inadequacy of communication are often more a reflection of the level of trust in the church's leadership than about actual factual information. At St. Andrew's, this does not appear to be the case as persons are indicating a lack of information without citing a lack of trust in leadership. A Horizons led capital campaign is designed to ensure the perception that church leadership has more than adequately communicated both the factual and the spiritual information necessary for a person to discern God's individual will for their life.

**4. Do you feel the church's leadership is right for this undertaking?**

	Yes	No	No response
Pastor	59	6	7
Staff	53	9	10
Non-staff leaders	55	3	14

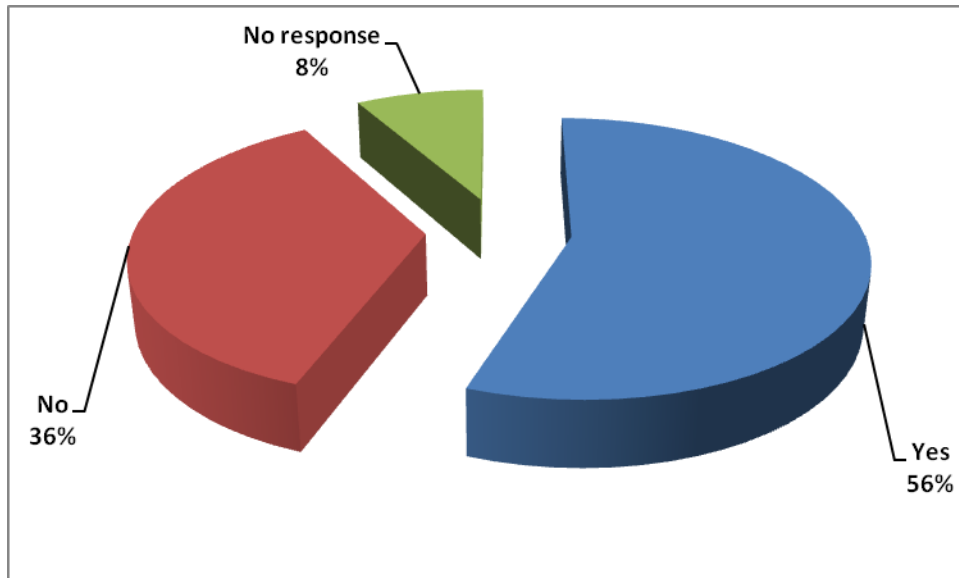


**ANALYSIS:**

These are very strong numbers that indicate that the pastor, staff and lay leaders can be fully and effectively utilized during the course of the campaign.

**5. Would you be willing to work, if asked, in a well defined and limited role in a future capital campaign?**

Yes – 40  
 No – 26  
 No response – 6

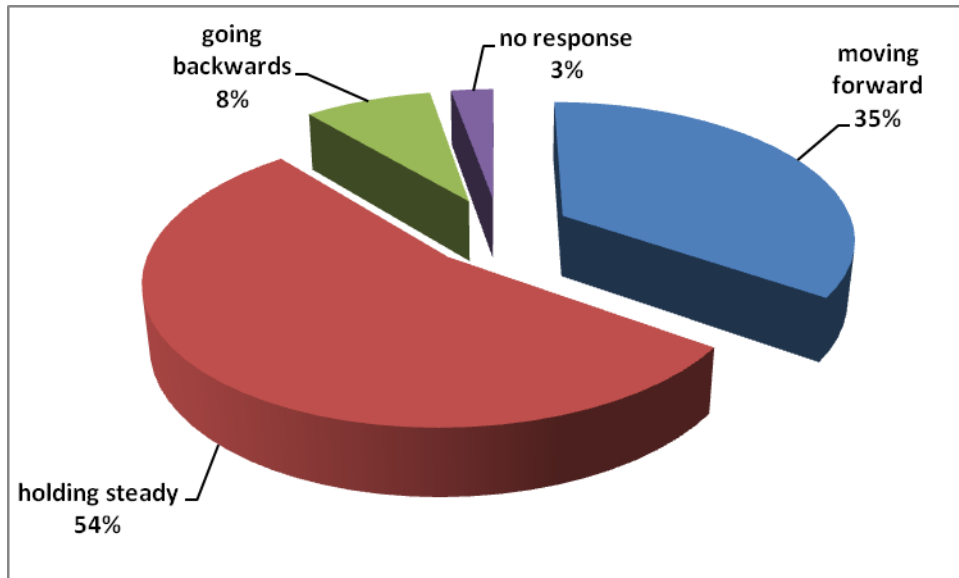


### ANALYSIS:

The willingness of the committed core to work in a leadership role is an important and foundational piece of any successful capital campaign. The majority of the committed core is already prepared to accept the challenge of leading, which is typical of what is seen from other United Methodist churches that go on to have successful capital campaigns. The Horizons campaign structure is designed to draw additional leaders from passive support or apathy into active involvement through prayer and by leveraging the energy and enthusiasm of those already willing to lead.

### 6. In your opinion, for the last 12 months, have you felt your church was?

- moving forward – 25
- holding steady – 39
- going backwards – 6
- no response – 2



**ANALYSIS:**

This tends to be an emotional question for churches as every church would like to see 100% of persons holding the view that their church is moving forward. What Horizons is most interested in is the number of persons who feel the church is moving backwards, because often there is an underlying dissatisfaction with the direction and leadership of the church that extends well beyond concern over the proposed project. It is very pleasing to see that only 8% indicated they felt the church was moving backwards and among this group there was no clear pattern of causal effect.

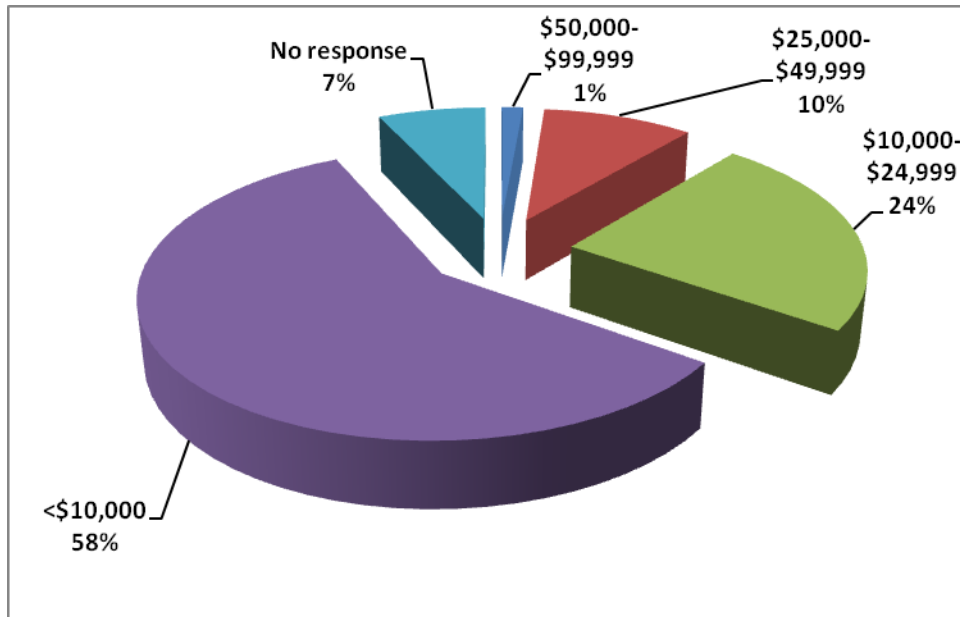
These results indicate that the overwhelming majority of the committed core (moving forward and holding steady) will tend to be open to prayerfully considering their personal involvement in realizing the church’s master plan. Horizons would expect little organized opposition to a plan to construct a sanctuary apart from concerns about the amount of debt incurred.

Horizons does believe that attention should be given by church leaders to the fact that only one-third of the most deeply invested members feel the church has a forward momentum. A capital campaign whose focus is on empowering the mission and ministry of the church can be an excellent catalyst for improving momentum and spiritual growth.

**7. If you were completing a pledge card today, what range of financial commitment to the campaign might you consider for a three-year period?**

- \$250,000-\$499,999 – 0
- \$100,000-\$249,999 – 0
- \$50,000-\$99,999 – 1

\$25,000-\$49,999 – 7  
 \$10,000-\$24,999 – 17  
 <\$10,000 – 42  
 No response – 5



**ANALYSIS:**

The value that major leadership gifts surfacing early in the campaign will have on encouraging others who can consider gifts in these ranges cannot be over emphasized.

The success of St. Andrew’s campaign will, in our experience with hundreds of United Methodist congregations, depend on surfacing major leadership gifts early. For the church to raise \$3,000,000 or beyond, it would take about five to six gifts \$100,000 or above (one of which would need to be at least \$300,000) and 15-18 additional gifts above \$25,000. At present, there are no gifts that have surfaced above \$100,000. There is one gift in the \$50,000 to \$99,999 range and seven gifts of \$25,000-\$50,000.

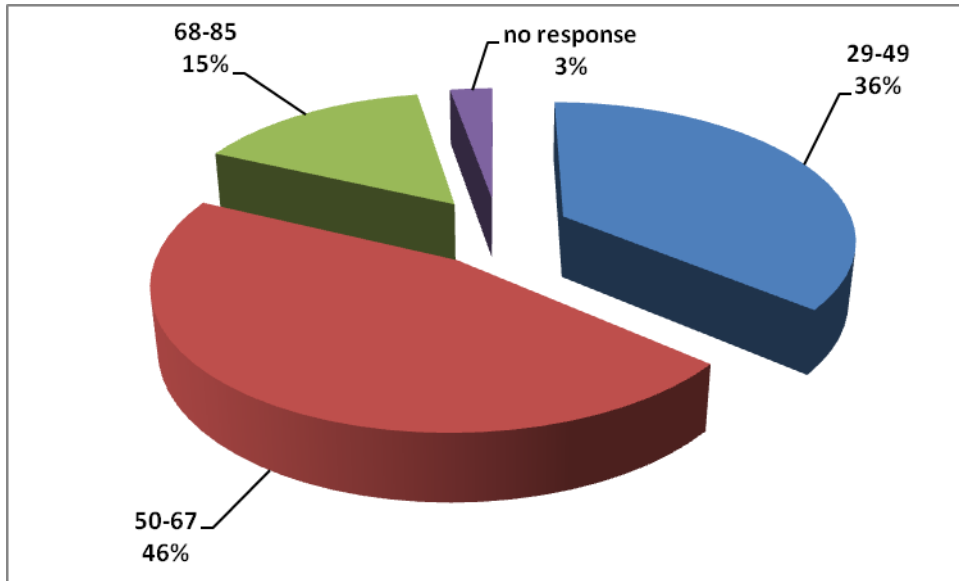
There is no question that God has placed in the hands of the people at St. Andrew’s the resources necessary to build a sanctuary. If it is God’s Vision for the church to take this step of faith, then God is going to have to lead persons to give substantially more than they are willing to share at this point.

It is the responsibility of the church leadership to build faith in God’s Vision, exemplify commitment, call the church to prayer, educate the congregation on the principles of biblical stewardship and operate the church in an effective, efficient and transparent way. What leaders are not able to do is to change person’s hearts; that is the job of the Holy Spirit. All the elements of the

campaign are designed to increase the likelihood of a life-changing encounter with the Holy Spirit.

**8. What is your age range?**

- 29-49 – 26
- 50-67 – 33
- 68-85 – 11
- over 85 – 0
- no response – 2



**ANALYSIS:**

This age distribution of the committed core of the church is a much younger distribution than is typical in mainline churches across the United States today. The chart below illustrates a comparison by age in the community and that of the committed core of St. Andrew’s for the adult population over 29 years of age.

AGE	St. Andrew’s	Population
29-49	36%	49%
50-64	46%	35%
65-80	15%	16%

By any measurement of the American church today, St. Andrew’s most committed families are far more representative of the over 29 age distribution in the community than is typical in the vast majority of churches nationwide. The United Methodist church in the United States loses over 1,500 members each week, primarily because of its inability to attract young persons and young families into weekly worship, discipleship and hands-on mission. St. Andrew’s is

to be commended because its ministry stands in sharp contrast to these tragic trends occurring in Methodism today.

## **SUMMARY**

St. Andrew's United Methodist Church finds itself located in a growing community whose prosperity is growing with its population. The area seems well suited to be served by a United Methodist congregation who has a heart for their community, families, students and children.

Yet today St. Andrew's stands at a crossroads, because the church's ability to grow and bear fruit in its mission is directly tied to its ability to create and attract persons into relevant weekly worship, discipleship and service experiences. Inviting and functional facilities are a necessary part of the equation of success in any church of today. In the case of St. Andrew's, it appears that a major factor in its inability to grow is being at 80% capacity at the worship time most attractive to visitors.

Churches offering contemporary worship in the south/southwest today generally see the greatest attendance for services beginning at 10:00-10:30 am. Worship services that occur earlier or later tend to attract less people, especially new visitors. Services which begin before 9:00 am and after 11:00 am tend to be poorly attended. Simply inviting families to come at worship times that have empty seats is not an effective strategy. Based on current attendance patterns, it appears St. Andrew's is not an exception to this pattern.

The success of a capital campaign, we believe, will be influenced by several factors.

Clarity of Vision. Aligning the congregation with God's Vision for St. Andrew's is essential. Presently, 88% of those most committed at St. Andrew's believe constructing a new sanctuary is in keeping with God's Vision for the church to live out its mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ. This unity will allow the church to move forward with the confidence of knowing that almost nine out of ten of its most committed members believe to do so is in keeping with God's call upon the church.

For the congregation as a whole to embrace its future at the same level currently present among the committed core, the church leaders must be crystal clear on its mission, beliefs and strategies to reach the community, including the discipling of its current membership. It must effectively communicate the Vision and its stories of life change to the congregation. George Barna explains it clearly when he says "... to significantly increase people's willingness to give generously, a church must speak to the issues that get people excited. The leader, first and foremost, must present a compelling Vision for the ministry, not simply keeping

the doors open and the programs running, but a clear and energizing goal that describes how lives will be transformed by the church if people contribute their time, money and skills.”

In order for the church to be fruitful in its mission, it is imperative that the committed core not only understand and embrace where God is leading the church, but that they see the importance of their roles as disciples and carriers of this Vision to others less committed in the congregation. The same is true regarding any capital effort.

Rise in Overall Discipleship. When the Vision is present and being communicated, the members must be in worship to hear it. In our experience, one of the most effective strategies to increase worship attendance is to involve persons in small groups (Sunday school or life/community groups). It is also in these groups that life-changing discipleship is most observed. There is little evidence to suggest that persons not involved in small groups will, in significant numbers, catch God’s Vision for the church and for their individual lives and join in what God is doing.

When you study rapidly growing churches today it is rare to find one that does not excel in all of the following six areas. Even if one area is under-developed it tends to impact growth and the church’s ability to live out its mission. They are:

1. Relevant Worship.
2. High levels of small group participation.
3. Excellent children’s programming, especially on Sunday morning.
4. High levels of hands-on mission involvement.
5. A “market oriented customer service” mentality.
6. Communicating to connect persons to Christ less than to the church.

Stewardship is an integral aspect of discipleship.

Rise in Overall Stewardship. Based on the Percept Group demographic study of the five mile area surrounding St. Andrew’s, the average household income for the congregation is likely to be at or more likely exceed the \$56,543 average in the study area. Prosperity affords the opportunity for exceptional levels of generosity, but studies indicate as prosperity increases so does the likelihood that persons will shift dollars away from the church. For example, an individual earning \$40,000 will, on average, give about one dollar to the church for every two dollars they give away. As a person’s income increases to above \$90,000, they will tend to give the church just one dollar for every five they give to non-profits.

Among most of the committed core of the church exists a willingness to invest significantly in the ministries of St. Andrew’s, but for the remaining 80%, despite

their prosperity, they give very little of their wealth to support the ministries of the church. The financial success of the capital campaign will depend heavily on the willingness of the families who underwrite the majority of the church ministries to be willing to step out before the rest of the church with Godly leadership, sacrificial giving and testimony. However, the greatest opportunity for the long-term health of St. Andrew's lies in the discipleship of the remaining church households who, at this point, are demonstrating a lack of a Kingdom focus in their lives.

With approximately 80% of the church members supporting the ministries of St. Andrew's at a level of about \$10 each week, it is clear the joy of generosity has not been realized in the hearts of most of the members. A capital campaign is an excellent opportunity to invite those outside the committed core of the church to enter into a conversation with God about their level of commitment in all areas of stewardship (time, talent, prayers, gifts and testimony), which will benefit both the annual budget and the capital campaign.

National Economy. It is also true the national economy plays a role in people's thinking about their own financial situation, the church's financial status and the success of this campaign. Currently, there is fear in society about what the future holds economically. If such fear wins over faith, it will be difficult to navigate these waters.

Our task as a church is to focus on our faith in God's Vision for our lives. As people of faith, we trust in God's leading, not in our circumstances. Communicating this message with clarity and conviction will be critical to the success of a campaign, as well as the long-term stewardship health of the church.

While the current state of the economy will have an impact on the total commitments raised, Horizons has witnessed over the last year that the lower cost of construction and attractive current interest rates are more than offsetting any reductions in commitments.

Leadership of the Committed Core. The committed core of the church is clear in their belief that to build a new sanctuary is consistent with God's plans for St. Andrew's. They also strongly believe that the pastor, staff and lay leadership is capable of such an undertaking. Yet they also express concern the church has lost much of its forward momentum and that they are vague on the present disposition of the new sanctuary.

Forty-four percent (44%) indicate discomfort with long-term debt in excess of \$2,000,000 and two-thirds (67%) would be uncomfortable if this debt exceeded \$3,000,000. Any plan that leaves the church with more than \$3,000,000 in long-term debt would likely face stiff opposition. In Horizons' view, decisions

regarding the level of long-term debt are likely to drive decision making among church leadership and the committed core of the church.

For the church to raise \$3,000,000 or beyond, it would take about five to six gifts \$100,000 or above (one of which would need to be at least \$300,000) and 15-18 additional gifts above \$25,000. At present, there are no gifts that have surfaced above \$100,000, one between \$50,000 and \$99,999 and seven gifts of \$25,000-\$50,000.

Beyond prayer, the most powerful action a person can take toward a successful campaign is to be willing to lead in this effort with an early and sacrificial gift. 1 Chronicles 29 witnesses to the power of this kind of leadership as King David led the nation of Israel to raise the gifts necessary for the building of God's temple. He led with his own sacrificial gift then challenged those most committed to follow his leadership. The leaders followed and the people rejoiced and responded with their own generosity.

## **CONCLUSION**

The absence of even a single gift in excess of \$100,000 and only one gift in excess of \$50,000 indicates that it is unlikely that St. Andrew's would be able to raise enough funds to construct a new sanctuary and keep total long-term debt below \$3,000,000.

**Because the committed core so strongly believes that a new sanctuary is in keeping with God's plans for St. Andrew's Church, Horizons recommends proceeding with the fall of 2011 capital campaign for the purpose of eliminating the existing \$1,500,000 debt, it's corresponding \$140,000 annual drain on the operating budget of the church, and to underwrite design and pre-construction costs of a new sanctuary.**

The church's ability to reach this goal will be impacted by its attention to the aforementioned factors and the keys to success listed below. The church possesses the capacity to significantly surpass \$1,500,000; but, for this to occur, it would be heavily dependent upon increasing buy-in from the committed core and the early surfacing of leadership gifts at a level considerably beyond what can be identified at this point.

Horizons recommends that the campaign be centered upon connecting the elimination of the existing debt as the first step in making possible the construction of a new worship center and reconfiguration of the existing worship center which is widely desired by the church.

Horizons further recommends that commitments raised above that which is needed to retire the debt be used to fund the design and soft costs of a new

worship center, which would allow the church to launch construction at the conclusion of a successful follow on capital campaign.

Horizons also recommends using the summer months for the quiet phase (recruitment of volunteers, training, and planning) so that the public phase of the capital campaign be launched shortly after school resumes. This allows collections to begin in October of 2011 and run through March of 2014 (30 months) but four tax years. The planned follow on campaign would be launched in the late fall of 2013 with collections to begin in April of 2014. This schedule would allow construction to begin in the summer of 2014 because the building design, engineering, and city approval would have been completed by the fall of 2013 and funded by proceeds generated from the fall 2011 campaign. It also allows the church the opportunity to build excitement during the design phase through many updates and public information meetings. It also provides time to develop generosity among the 80% of the congregation not presently displaying this characteristic and the major gifts necessary to properly underwrite a major building effort.

## **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SUCCEED**

If it is in keeping with God's Vision for St. Andrew's to phase in a facilities master plan, then God surely has a way for each member of the congregation to participate in this purpose. The following tasks must be successfully accomplished to build the faith required among this congregation of believers to, without reservation, ask "Lord, what do You want to do through me?"

1. Increase understanding and buy-in within the committed core of the church by connecting the debt elimination and new construction to its ability to strengthen ministry. For success, the leadership and committed core of the church must project a high level of understanding and commitment to the selected projects, but also to how it will allow the church to be more effective in its mission of life changing ministry, especially in growing attendance. Leadership must have a clear strategy on how to explain what will be different with a successful campaign besides a more attractive space.
2. Once the campaign is initiated, there must be a strong emphasis of major gifts by the leadership team and pastor. It is extremely important that leadership gifts surface early in the campaign to have the effect of raising the belief and willingness of others to honestly pray for God's guidance in determining their family's gift.

For example: To raise \$1,500,000 the top ten gifts would need to reach the \$500,000 to \$600,000 range. Typically, this would necessitate the top three gifts averaging about \$90,000 and the next seven gifts averaging about \$45,000.

3. Raise enthusiasm for participation in the campaign. Members and regular attenders, who actively support the campaign with their service, will at a rate of over 90% support the campaign financially. The blessing they receive for their gifts of service and financial support to this campaign often will serve as encouragement to enthusiastically support other ministries and mission efforts of the church. It will be the goal of Horizons to include 50-60% of the active church membership in service through the campaign.
4. Produce an abundance of good clear communication, in all forms (written, oral and visual) that causes the congregation to understand that God's purpose for St. Andrew's is to see persons help you **know Christ, grow in Christ, and be equipped to go in Christ to share His love and grace in the world.** And, that the effectiveness of this mission is based on an active obedience to God's individual will for each of their lives. Excellent gifts will take time to be prayerfully considered.

**God will not call persons to give sacrificially to simply build a building. It is always in response to God's Vision to reach people through life-changing events.**