

....A Note from the District Treasurer

There is a popular game app that many are playing on their phones and computers. I've gotten caught up in it because I love word games. It's called "4 pictures, 1 word". The object of the game is to look at four pictures and determine what word would fit all four of the pictures. Most times it's pretty obvious, but other times I have to walk away from the app and come back to it later with a fresh perspective.

OK, let's play a version of that game without pictures. Can you think of a word that might fit the following four words? Money. Finances. Tithing. Budget. Hint: it's not a bad word! Hint: it has to do with church ministry. Hint: it can happen right where you are or it can happen in another country. Hint: it's connectional.

Here it is: MISSION. What? How does Mission relate to money, finances, tithing and budget? Think of it this way: why does your church collect money? Or, why does the Shawnee Valley District and the West Ohio Conference 'charge dues' to each local church? They're just paying salaries and operational costs with it. Well you're partially correct.

BUT, the goal of the Shawnee Valley District, as well as the West Ohio Conference; and *should* be the goal of the local church, is to collect and use contributions that will better the mission of The United Methodist Church – *Making New Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World*.

The Shawnee Valley District is making every effort to abide by that statement with the apportionments collected from the local church. The District Leadership Team determines an annual budget, which is funded primarily by the local churches. This budget pays for an office and a support staff, but a considerable amount of the money each church sends goes to mission and back to the local church in the form of ministry grants, training and support. The same goes for the West Ohio Conference apportionments. That's why we speak about being connected. Could one church possibly do the outreach and ministry that the entire United Methodist Church collectively is able to do?

If you are questioning where your church's apportionments go, you can go to our District website – www.shawneevalleydistrict.org, click "District Financial Information" in the District Page Links section and look for 'How Local Church District Askings are used in the Shawnee Valley District' and 'How Local Church Conference Apportionments are used in the Shawnee Valley District'.

Dealing with finances isn't easy. I don't like it either, but my job is not just a job – it's a ministry; and it has been since the day I was hired to serve the Shawnee Valley District in 2006. I'm here to hear your concerns, your stories of success and to help you understand the connectional process we call United Methodist.

Regardless of each of the church's situations within the Shawnee Valley District, one thing is clear. We're all in this together -- whether we are supporting the Vietnam mission, whether we are serving our local church, whether we are supporting an outreach project or whether we are providing training and support for our pastors. And we are moving mountains – *One Shovel, One Basket and One Cart at a Time*.