

MERIDIAN STREET

United Methodist Church

5500 North Meridian Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46208

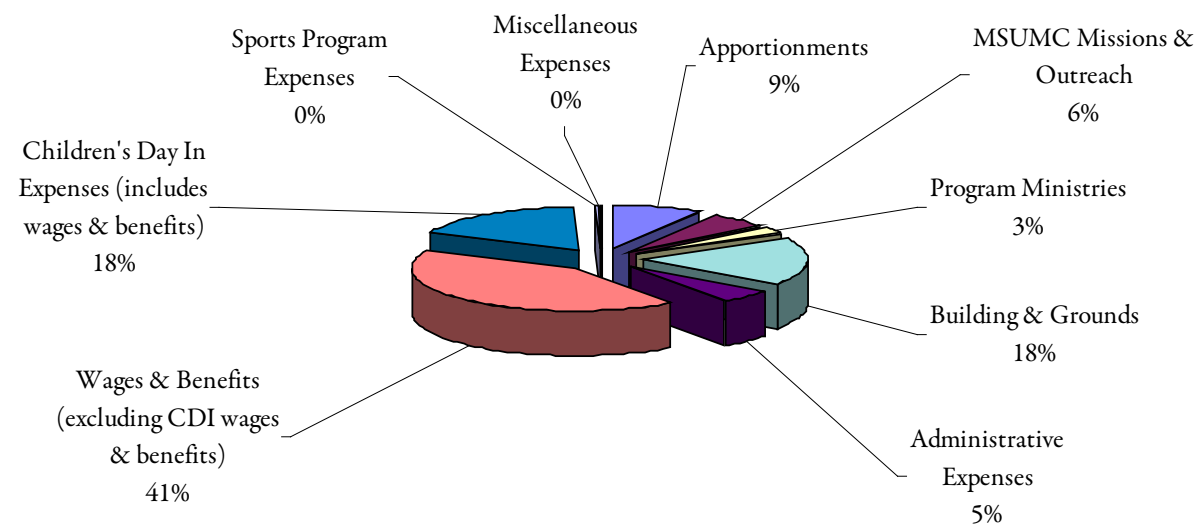
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For those of you who prefer a visual approach, the pie chart below represents our total first quarter expenses by category. This includes both budgeted expenses and expenses that are supported by endowment or temporarily restricted gifts.



Discipleship

Dollars & Sense

Meridian Street United Methodist Church
Statement of Revenues and Expenses
Quarter Ended March 31, 2008

	1st Quarter Actual	1st Quarter Budget	1st Quarter LY
Revenues			
Pledges & Gifts	\$263,890.68	\$249,375.00	\$256,872.81
Other Income (weddings, cell tower rents, room rentals)	6,040.82	11,247.00	11,489.00
Children's Day In (CDI) Income	108,383.00	97,120.00	96,699.40
Sports Program Income	2,741.44	2,975.00	2,580.00
Total Revenues	\$381,055.94	\$360,717.00	\$367,641.21
Expenses			
Apportionments	\$33,859.00	\$33,859.00	\$35,127.00
MSUMC Missions & Outreach	5,710.00	8,349.00	3,300.00
Program Ministries	5,135.48	11,260.00	10,369.19
Building & Grounds	52,076.74	66,226.00	52,296.33
Administrative Expenses	20,634.79	22,647.00	24,339.62
Wages & Benefits (excluding CDI wages & benefits)	156,480.69	153,631.00	156,807.90
Children's Day In Expenses (includes wages & benefits)	66,227.82	72,698.00	65,655.91
Sports Program Expenses	1,291.69	1,350.00	1,441.26
Miscellaneous Expenses	565.00	253.00	8.00
Total Expenses	\$341,981.21	\$370,273.00	\$349,345.21
Net Operating Income (Deficit)	\$39,074.73	\$(9,556.00)	\$18,296.00
Restricted Revenues			
Endowment Income	\$12,003.18	\$-	\$493,480.82
Real Estate & Parsonage Income	4,394.94	-	7,140.86
Temporarily Restricted Income	16,891.38	-	10,713.26
Total Restricted Revenues	\$33,289.50	\$-	\$511,334.94
Restricted Expenses			
Endowment Expense	\$12,003.18	\$-	\$493,480.82
Real Estate & Parsonage Expense	4,394.94	-	7,140.86
Temporarily Restricted Expense	16,891.38	-	10,713.26
Total Restricted Expenses	\$33,289.50	\$-	\$511,334.94

Notes to the Quarterly Statement

As you can see, our first quarter results are very positive. Giving is better than budgeted and also ahead of last year. Thank you for your generosity! Expenses continue to be monitored. Those with programming oversight are searching out creative ways to grow their programs as they hold expenses in check. Because of your generous gifts and careful spending by staff and committees we ended the quarter with a positive net position rather than the slight deficit we had planned for. The same held true for the first quarter of last year but as you can see, we are in a much stronger position than last year. Again, our thanks. It is because of your generosity that we can say this. It's too early to project the extend to which we might reduce our year-end deficit. We began the year facing a significant budget deficit. Together, we will continue to do our best to reduce it.

Our Second Mission Team Travels to Cuba

As we mentioned in last month's Messenger, we are changing the format of Discipleship Dollars and Sense to include more of the "sense" of discipleship—to report on the gifts of time and talent that you offer on behalf of our church. Last month's mission trip to Cuba is a perfect example. Seven members of Meridian Street— Cyrena Gilman, Mitzi Boilanger, Bonnie Strate, Sally Dyer, Carolyn Kingen, Brian Buchanan, and David Gorden—traveled to Buey Arriba, a small village in southeastern Cuba. What follows is excerpted from reports submitted by Carolyn Kingen and David Gorden. Full versions of their reports can be downloaded from our web site at www.msumc.org Our thanks to Carolyn and David for bringing the trip to life for us!

Yes, the Cuba mission team of March '09 traveled many, many miles to reach the small village in southeastern Cuba. Over those many miles, the team had the opportunity to observe rural Cuba. Oxen plowing the fields, tomatoes harvested by hand, moms walking children to school, elementary children aligned outside their school saluting the Cuban flag and singing the national anthem, political billboards celebrating the Revolution. Traveling down the spine of Cuba, the group passed through the country's main agricultural regions. Fields of sugar, rice, pineapple, banana and tobacco lined the roads being used by modes of transportation as varied as horse drawn carts, motorcycles with sidecars, and trucks with their beds loaded with passengers. The colorful American cars of '50s vintage so prominent in Havana became scarce once away from the city. After two days on the road we arrived at the town of Buey Arriba. With a population of about 30,000, it is located literally at the end of the road at the base of the Sierra Maestra, Cuba's highest mountain range.

Our work assignment in Buey Arriba involved construction on the new parsonage for Pastor Miguel, his wife Mercedes and their 3 precious children, Ricardo, 9, Emmanuel (nicknamed Manny by David), 4, and "Princess" Anna Isabella, 6 mos. Currently the family is living in a tiny home attached to the Methodista Iglesia which has three small rooms and a bathroom. The family had vacated their simple three-room parsonage so that we could move in. A detached kitchen was adjacent to the home. All meals were shared with Pastor Miguel and his family outside beneath a large open patio. The kitchen was staffed by four women of the church who kept us well fed with a variety of local dishes including a lot of fresh fruit and vegetables. We learned that guava was particularly plentiful at the time.

Our work during our stay was to assist with construction of a new parsonage to be located just a couple of doors down from the church. With the structure's walls and roof in place, David and Brian worked alongside three local men making and pouring the cement. All floors in the home were cemented and the foundations for a wall that will enclose the property were poured. "Mas Cemento!!" The five women and our translator worked as a team to stack bricks and move many, many large rocks and dirt via a wheelbarrow, when available, or on large Vietnamese rice bags....rocks and dirt that became the foundation for the floors and the wall. Tylenol and Ibuprofen became our best friends.

The most memorable part of our week in Buey Arriba was spending time with Pastor Miguel and the congregation. From the teenagers to the seniors, we were engulfed by their warm, caring manner, their jubilant smiles and their quiet natures. Our group attended several church services which included liturgical dancing, contemporary Christian Cuban music, prayers, and a brief sermon. During the service, children played, people walked in and out of the church and roosters crowed. Yet God's spirit totally filled the small Cuban church. Though poor in resources, the congregation of the Methodista Iglesia is rich in their joyfulness for God. It is very difficult to describe the impact God had on our lives. Though we could not speak one another's language, we knew in our hearts that the congregation of Buey Arriba spiritually connected with us and we with them.

The Methodist Church appears to be thriving in Cuba, with churches scattered across the country, many just starting or in the midst of expanding. We witnessed no religious suppression, at least in Buey Arriba, and in fact found the Methodist Church there to be a vibrant part of the community. Nevertheless, we did experience firsthand the authority of Cuban government when Pastor Miguel was summoned by local officials who questioned our presence. We were instructed to report to the Ministry of Interior office in the provincial capital about an hour away to present our credentials and explain ourselves. With Castro's framed portrait hanging on the wall behind, our cordial interrogators after checking our passports and visas and hearing the Pastor explain our activities and itinerary, wished us well and sent us on our way with only a few restrictions on our activities.

Our group wishes to thank our own church community at Meridian Street for its thoughts and prayers and contributions towards our trip. The donated medical supplies we delivered were thankfully received for use by the Methodist Church's health related services in Havana. Thank you also for your continued support of all Missions fund raising projects throughout the year.

First Quarter Attendance

These are such gratifying numbers to report to you because they represent the heart of our church—individuals and families—young, not so young, and somewhere in between coming together on Sunday morning as the family of God at Meridian Street, and the numbers are very exciting. At the time of this writing attendance has been entered for the first 15 weeks—a bit more than the 1st quarter. This year's average attendance is 433, compared to 400 for the same period last year, and our average for all of last year was 362.