

One congregation's commitment story

By Rev. Brian Frederick-Gray

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“Is this a non-denominational church?”

I get that question a lot. It is part and parcel with serving a church out West, especially one with a nondescript name like First Christian Church.

I have learned to respond, “Actually, we are a VERY denominational church!”

At First Christian Church Scottsdale, where I serve as Senior Pastor, we are proud of our Disciples heritage and identity.

Two years ago we started using a narrative budget approach to our annual stewardship campaign. The results were instantly amazing: We went from a forecasted \$15,000 shortfall in our budget to a \$15,000 surplus in one stewardship campaign!

We renamed this budget surplus “The Dream Fund” and suddenly we had a very good problem on our hands: What were we going to do with the Dream Fund? We asked church members, “What is your dream for FCC Scottsdale? What do you think God is dreaming about for our church?”

One of the first things that we decided to do was immediately get our DMF Giving up to a full 10 percent tithe. After all, we are a VERY denominational church, right? We are proud of Disciples heritage and identity and the wonderful ways that our DMF Giving works in the name of Christ in ways that we as a local congregation never could on our own. Plus, it gives us the opportunity to lead by example — What do you do with a financial blessing? You share a portion of it with your church community!

We've continued with our Narrative Budget approach to Stewardship, and I'm happy to report that our budget is growing as our ministries at the church are growing. Since we have maintained a full 10 percent tithe to DMF that means that this VERY denominational church is increasing our support for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) each year too!