



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Horizon Texas Conference
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RUBEN SAENZ JR.
Resident Bishop

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First UMC, Commerce
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"Honor God with everything you own; give God the first and the best. Your barns will burst; your wine vats will brim over." - Proverbs 3:9-10, The Message

Dear Rev. Murray and beloved members of First UMC, Commerce,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our risen Lord Jesus Christ!

Your congregation has achieved something truly remarkable -100% completion of your 2025 apportionments before the end of the year! This extraordinary accomplishment isn't just about a debit on a church ledger; it's a testament to the spiritual vitality pulsing through your congregation and your unwavering commitment to the transformative power of our connectional ministry.

When John Wesley first envisioned the Methodist movement, he understood something powerful: God's saving grace advances best, not through isolated efforts, but through the collective faithfulness of congregations bound together by a common mission. Your 100% apportionment giving embodies this very principle. You have boldly declared that your church is not an isolated community of faith, but a vital part of the magnificent body of Christ, stretching across continents and generations.

This is what extraordinary stewardship looks like. It demonstrates that your congregation has embraced a vision that extends beyond your own walls, trusting that together we can accomplish what no single church could ever dream of achieving alone. Your faithfulness reveals a mature understanding of stewardship - not as mere obligation, but as sacred partnership in God's ongoing work of transformation through the United Methodist Church.

Through your generous giving, you are actively participating in miracles happening across the Horizon Texas Conference and beyond. Your apportionments are fuelling our five strategic priorities that are reshaping lives and communities:

Multiplying Disciples: Right now, because of your faithfulness, new church plants are taking root in rapidly growing communities, existing congregations are experiencing revitalization, and emerging leaders are being equipped to carry the gospel into an ever-changing world.

Championing Children and Youth: Your gifts are changing young lives every single day—through dynamic youth ministries, transformative camping experiences, and Project Transformation initiatives that serve over 270 children across Texas, ensuring that our youngest neighbors receive the spiritual, educational, and emotional support they need to flourish in life.

Maximizing Christ's Care and Healing: When disaster strikes, when communities hurt, when healing is desperately needed - your apportionments become instruments of God's compassion, supporting care initiatives and response efforts that bring hope to broken spirits and places.

Pursuing and Embracing Diversity: Your generosity is building bridges, tearing down dividing walls that separate, and creating spaces where every person can experience the radical inclusivity of God's love. You're helping us become a conference that truly reflects God's beautiful diversity.

Telling Our Story: Through your giving, the incredible stories of transformation happening in our churches are being shared far and wide, inspiring others to join this movement of hope and renewal.

But your impact extends far beyond Texas. At this very moment, seminarians are preparing for ministry in institutions your giving supports, missionaries are serving in communities across the globe, hungry children are being fed, disaster victims are receiving aid, and countless individuals are encountering Jesus Christ for the first time - all because congregations like yours chose to honor God with your first fruits.

This is God's work at its finest! This is what it means to be United Methodist! This is the power of connectional ministry unleashed!

As we look toward the future, I see incredible opportunities on the horizon. Our conference is positioned in one of the fastest-growing regions in America, with new communities emerging and hearts open to the gospel. Your faithful stewardship positions us not just to meet this moment, but to seize it with both hands, planting new churches, revitalizing existing ones, and multiplying disciples who will carry our Wesleyan tradition into the next generation.

The promise of Proverbs remains as true today as it was thousands of years ago: when we honor the Lord with our wealth and our first fruits, God's abundance flows back to us. Not always in material ways, but in something far more precious - the deep, soul-satisfying joy that comes from knowing we have participated in God's great work of healing the world.

Thank you for your visionary leadership.

Thank you for understanding that we are infinitely stronger together than we could ever be apart.

Thank you for choosing to invest in a future where every person can experience the transforming love of Jesus Christ.

As you gather for worship, know that you are part of God's eternal and magnificent enterprise. Your faithfulness is writing a story that will continue through the ages - a story of generous hearts, united purpose, and boundless hope.

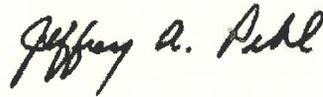
May God's abundant blessings continue to overflow in your congregation as you honor the Lord with your first fruits. May you experience the deep satisfaction that comes from faithful stewardship. And may you continue to be a beacon of hope in your community and a model of connectional commitment for churches throughout our conference.

The future is bright, and together, we're just getting started.

In Christ's service and with profound gratitude,



Bishop Ruben Saenz Jr.
Horizon Texas Conference HTC



Rev. Jeffrey Pehl
Chief Financial Officer/Conference Benefits Officer

"We are followers of Jesus, seeking the loving, just and free world God imagines for all people."

**This letter may be read during Sunday morning worship as a celebration of your congregation's faithful stewardship and commitment to our connectional ministry.*