A few years ago, I was sitting in a room with other pastors and lay leaders from our denomination considering how to best prepare servant leaders for the church of the future. During our gathering, the chair of our committee said to our team, “The pastors of the future need to be prepared to serve churches on Mars.” We all laughed together and imagined for a moment what a church on Mars might be like.

While we did not suddenly transport to Mars in 2020, this year our world has often felt like another planet. Nothing has been normal. Everything including how we worship, how we gather, and how we serve seemed to change overnight. We are learning and discovering new ways of doing things when the familiar is not possible. And although scripture does not explicitly define how God’s people are supposed to react and respond to a global pandemic, this is not the first time God’s people felt like they were experiencing customs and patterns of life they did not recognize.

In 1 Peter 2:11, Peter describes disciples of Jesus as “aliens and sojourners.” Moses and the Hebrew people were strangers in the land of Egypt (Exodus 2). During the exile, the Israelites lived in Babylon away from their temples and traditions. Yet, the good news is that even in exile, God’s love remained steadfast. Even when God’s people felt far away from God or one another, God pursued God’s people and made a way, even when there seemed to be no way.

This year has been a strange and unprecedented year. And yet, God’s love remains steadfast. Even when some of us have felt far away from God or one another, God has been pursuing us, reminding us God is making a way. I give thanks for our church family this year, and all you have done to share God’s love with one another and with our world. God is at work in each one of us and in our church. Thanks be to God.

FROM PASTOR TIM
Lead Pastor, Apex UMC Family

In his letter to the Philippians, the Apostle Paul instructed God’s people to: “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.” (Philippians 4:4). When I look back on this year at Apex UMC, especially these past few months that held so much uncertainty and change, I hear Paul’s words echo in my heart. Despite a global pandemic upending our church’s rhythms, there is much in which we can rejoice. This report highlights the powerful ways the Holy Spirit has been at work in our life together. In these pages, you’ll find numbers and words that describe how our church has been intentional about empowering and equipping one another for meaningful, authentic discipleship, especially when the ways we previously practiced our discipleship were unavailable. As a result, I rejoice in all the ways you are BEING the Church in your neighborhoods, your virtual meetings, and your homes. Your devotion to daily discipleship not only brings you closer to God, it also helps you live out our mission to invite and equip all to follow Jesus in transforming the world. Your generosity makes this mission and our shared ministry possible, and I thank you for your deep devotion to our Church and God’s Kingdom. As you read through this Annual Report, my prayer is that you would hold fast to Paul’s words and “Rejoice in the Lord” with me!

FROM PASTOR KYLE
Lead Pastor, Apex UMC Family

I think we can all agree that this has been a year like no other! And while it is easy to reflect on the negatives, I recently got to thinking about all of the incredible things God has done in our church in 2020. For instance, as we transitioned to online worship, our church has grown, rather than shrunk. Through our Summer of Servanthood initiative, you all (safely) committed over 30 random acts of kindness toward your neighbors. And, during a time when we need connection the most, we are starting 5 (yes 5!) new small groups! During our Vision Night last August, I shared that a church that seeks to “welcome those who feel disconnected” is needed now more than ever. And if God can accomplish these things while we are scattered, just think of what Jesus is preparing for our future! 2021 will be our year and I cannot wait to see what’s in store!
In a year unlike any other, I continue to be inspired by the way 519ers choose to love well and live differently each and every day. Y’all have fed kids (and families), loved neighbors, created spaces for holy conversations around race, justice, discipleship, and you still log on and worship as a community each and every week. Your financial support is the reason we get to do what we do. Now, more than ever, we are invited to come together and continue to propel this ministry forward so that all people experience the radical love of Jesus and take it to the places they live, work, and play. Thank you for all that you do. It is an honor serving alongside you as your pastor.

APEX UMC FAMILY LEADERSHIP

Mendi Nieters PARISH COUNCIL CHAIR
Our charge to live into our covenant as multiple, interdependent congregations is to invite and equip all to follow Jesus in a transforming world. Our world and how we connect and serve transformed more than we ever could have imagined at the beginning of this year. But yet Jesus has been in the center of it all transforming us and our community.

FROM PASTOR ANGELO
Campus Pastor, 519

In Matthew 7:7 Jesus tells his disciples: “Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you.” Seeing how the pandemic has disrupted our daily lives and the challenges it represents for the Hispanic community, these words are a call to seek God with intensity, diligence and perseverance. This Annual Report is a glimpse of ways that this past year we have been asking/searching/knocking to advance God’s kingdom even in the midst of uncertainty. But these pages also capture dreams for the future. Of course, as disciples of Christ, we ask/search/knock for those things that are consistent with what God desires for us and our neighbor. Giving of our tithes and offerings is an integral part of our searching. Jesus’ words in Matthew assure us that God is willing to provide, but we must also respond faithfully. We can be sure that as we ask/search/knock, God walks with us, comforts us, and helps us to live out our mission to invite and equip all to follow Jesus in transforming the world. More than a church a family!

FROM PASTOR JOSÉ LUIS
Campus Pastor, Fiesta Cristiana

In Matthew 7:7 Jesus tells his disciples: “Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you.” Seeing how the pandemic has disrupted our daily lives and the challenges it represents for the Hispanic community, these words are a call to seek God with intensity, diligence and perseverance. This Annual Report is a glimpse of ways that this past year we have been asking/searching/knocking to advance God’s kingdom even in the midst of uncertainty. But these pages also capture dreams for the future. Of course, as disciples of Christ, we ask/search/knock for those things that are consistent with what God desires for us and our neighbor. Giving of our tithes and offerings is an integral part of our searching. Jesus’ words in Matthew assure us that God is willing to provide, but we must also respond faithfully. We can be sure that as we ask/search/knock, God walks with us, comforts us, and helps us to live out our mission to invite and equip all to follow Jesus in transforming the world. More than a church a family!

From Pastor José Luis

In this unprecedented time, 519 continues to live into its vision of loving well and living differently. Our ministries remain strong through online book studies, virtual youth lock-ins, and 519 community Zoom calls. Our heart for service and justice shines through our active food ministries, 519serves, and the fight for racial equity. These are some of the many testaments of how God is moving in our church.

Oz Franco FIESTA STEERING TEAM CHAIR
As our churches redefine what church life looks like, we witness the disparities and inequalities that our disenfranchised communities live through. God has prepared us to act with strength and conviction to make a real and meaningful difference; we are called to live into the teachings of our most revered social activist, Jesus Christ.
The Apex UMC Family is committed to becoming an anti-racist parish that is actively participating in and leading work that supports racial justice and equity in our churches and our community. As a family of congregations with members from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, we believe this commitment is a vital part of our shared identity.

Our commitment grows from our understanding that God creates all human beings with the divine image stamped upon them (Genesis 1: 26-27). Part of our most basic calling as Christian people is to be able to recognize that image of God within each person we encounter. This recognition requires us to treat all people with dignity and respect, as well as to honor both their uniqueness and their identity as a beloved child of God (Romans 8:16-17).

In light of those convictions, our parish has been engaged in racial justice and equity work in previous years, but we also recognize the urgent need for a more purposeful, driven plan now more than ever. The events of the past several months, the recent murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and countless others in the past and the unrest that has pervaded our nation’s consciousness prompts us to refocus and restrengthen our efforts. It is our continual prayer, alongside the prophetic echoes of the

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to “let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an everflowing stream” (Amos 5:24).

We plan to engage anew in the work of racial justice and equity as a focus for our shared mission. This effort will be led by our Cooperative Parish’s Racial Equity Bridge Team (REBT) and our Parish Missions Team. We hope to include mission efforts to address racial justice and equity, particularly in terms of education and affordable housing, in addition to our internal pursuits of equity assessments and training. We have already begun this internal work as a staff team, starting with the IDI (Intercultural Development Inventory). This assessment has provided insight and direction as we seek to be a culturally humble institution. We will continue with the REDI Assessment (Racial Equity, Diversity & Inclusion), which will help grow and challenge our understandings.

With this work, we hope to live into our call to be disciples of Jesus Christ in a holy and sanctified church that is working for the redemption of the whole world. We believe part of this redemption will involve repentance for the sins of slavery, racism, and white supremacy and a commitment to repairing and renewing what has been damaged or destroyed by those forces of evil. We believe in a vision for our world like the one we have been promised: a world where death, mourning, crying, and pain are no more, where the earth and all of creation within it are made whole and perfect, and where God will make a home in our midst (Rev. 21:1-5). This world will be characterized by justice and equity for all people, and Christ has called us into the shared work of building this Kingdom. We are eager to continue living into our calling together.
Last year, our Parish Council voted to change our fiscal year to align with the mission and ministry calendar of our congregations. This means budgets are now being proposed and tracked from July 1 - June 30 every year.

To effect this change, our church held a “short year” from January 1, 2020 - June 30, 2020. Total giving and other revenue for this “short year” were $1,524,823 with total expenses of $1,596,611.

Our Finance Team was also able to apply for and receive an additional $299,700 from the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which helped to cover our deficit and put our church in a strengthened financial position entering our new fiscal year, July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021.

Throughout this Spring and Summer, our Parish Finance Team worked closely with Steering Teams, pastors, and staff to develop budgets for our new fiscal year, July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021. Due to the global pandemic, and economic and programmatic uncertainty, the budget process was delayed one month to give our teams more time to adapt plans for the current environment.

In August, we passed a new FY 2021 budget with a total projected income of $3,030,633, which our finance team believed reflected conservative estimates given all that was happening in our world and our community. Our teams budgeted total operating expenses of $3,081,885.

If our church family meets our budgeted expectations, this would result in a net deficit of $51,133. Due in part to the received forgivable PPP loan, and diligent work of our Finance and Steering Teams to build an unrestricted cash reserve fund exceeding $300,000, our teams felt comfortable that we would be able to cover this shortfall in the coming fiscal year. However, the Finance Team also feels strongly that plans will need to be made in 2021 to reach break even for the following fiscal year (2021-2022).
APEX CAMPUS

At Apex UMC, there are four primary things we do together: we Worship, we Connect with God and with another, we get Involved in mission and ministry, and we Invest with our time, talents, financial giving, service, and witness. Our average worship attendance was 699 people before March when COVID-19 caused us to move to online worship online, and since we began online worship our average worship attendance is 527. People are connecting with us through a hybrid of virtual and in-person opportunities, like online classes, online worship, and drive-in events. Since we began sharing our services and educational content on YouTube in March, we’ve seen more than 35.6 thousand views. Our membership continues to be involved in caring for one another and our community. Sewing masks for front-line workers is one of the many service projects we’ve prioritized. And people continue to invest in the church by joining our family of faith. We’ve welcomed 90 new members into the church this year, 39 of whom are confirmands. Indeed, for all of this, we can “Rejoice in the Lord!”

AVE WEEKLY ATTENDANCE
699 (527 ONLINE)

VIRTUAL VBS 2020

On March 18, 2020, the final plans for VBS 2020 were done. After hours of preparation, the Children’s Ministry team was ready to bring VBS to life in the usual crowded, loud, interactive way. On April 15, we scrapped nearly all the work we had done and started a new plan for Virtual VBS 2020.

This was not VBS in the usual way. We created a kit that contained lesson plans, video links, and materials for activities to do at home or in small groups. We worried how people would feel about doing VBS this way. Would it provide a meaningful spiritual experience for families? Would it be enough? The positive response from parents was overwhelming. “(My kids) looked forward to doing this every day. They always asked when we were doing VBS again. Thank you for making it possible!”

Vacation Bible School this summer did not look like VBS is supposed to look. Yet God showed up to work through the at-home kits and He used them to build faith, connection and missional hearts amongst our children and their families. And our church family stepped up to give generously, as we always do to support all of our missions and ministries. Over and over throughout this pandemic, we have seen how our God surprises us and challenges us to think beyond the usual boundaries that we construct. And we’ve seen how our church shows up to meet those challenges. We are imagining new ways of being disciples in the world and embracing everyday spiritual practices that allow us to grow in faith throughout the week. When we are tempted to worry about whether or not our new practices and new rhythms will be meaningful or will be enough, we can hold on to the beautiful reminder that God just gave us through Virtual VBS. Our imagination is limited by “the ways things have always been,” but God’s imagination is limitless! All the more reason to “Rejoice in the Lord!”

NEW MEMBERS
90

CLOTHS MASKS MADE FOR ESSENTIAL WORKERS
5,000

YOUTUBE VIEWS
36.6K
LOOKING AHEAD

What will 2021 bring? While we can’t know for certain how our world will be changed as a result of this pandemic, our church’s mission hasn’t changed. We are continuing to invite and equip all to follow Jesus in transforming the world, and in 2021 we plan to especially do this by focusing on Relational Connection and Equipping for Discipleship.

We want to provide opportunities for church members to deepen their connections with one another, so that everyone in our family of faith has a meaningful place to belong in God’s family. And, we want our church members to feel equipped and empowered for the everyday discipleship Jesus asks of us. We want you to be confident and empowered as you pursue the ways of Christ in your daily life. We want to equip with you the knowledge, tools, and inspiration you need to stay connected with God and live as Christ’s representative every day.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to reckon with the important theological truth that the church is not a building. As we’ve worshipped virtually throughout the pandemic, we’ve had to live into this truth: the church is the Body of Christ. Meaning, the church is a Community of People who God empowers and mobilizes wherever they are to carry on Christ’s mission and ministry in the world.

So, what does 2021 hold? For us, 2021 will be a year of spiritual growth. It will be a year when we grow in our practices of daily discipleship, so that we feel sufficiently trained and mobilized to be faithful representatives of Christ wherever we go - from the grocery store to the workplace, from the soccer stands to the family dinner table. Together, we will emerge from this pandemic with a stronger faith, a deeper commitment to discipleship, and an unshakable commitment to care for one another and for our neighbors in need. No matter what 2021 brings, together we will “Rejoice in the Lord!”

BY THE NUMBERS

Our budget for 2021 reflects our priorities for Relational Connection and Equipping for Discipleship. We are investing in new technology and new tools to help us better connect with one another and communicate online in creative ways. Your generosity enables your church to strengthen and equip thousands of people for the mission of inviting and equipping all to follow Jesus in transforming the world. Thank you!

REVENUES AND EXPENSES

FISCAL YEAR 2021 BUDGET - JULY 2020-JUNE 2021

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This year brought a lot of challenges, but it also brought a lot of great things, too. We are worshipping more people than ever! Not only are people tuning in on Sunday mornings, but they are watching on YouTube and downloading our podcasts in record numbers. Speaking of podcasts, we launched the “Cutting Board” mini-series, featuring in-depth conversations with Peak members and friends in the local community. We also launched the Summer of Servanthood, in which our members performed more than 30 random acts of kindness. We started seven new small groups! That’s seven groups of people who are now in community together, something we all need more than ever. Nothing could stand in the way of our Annual Youth Fall Retreat; we had 27 youth engaged in this virtual event. Finally, we helped our unsheltered neighbors prepare for the winter, with more than 350 items donated in partnership with Care Point Triangle. We are so proud that we could help our community in this way and others throughout the year. The Peak really is “The Peak of Good Neighboring.”

In February, The Peak celebrated its 10th birthday. That’s ten years of friendship. Ten years of laughter. Ten years of service. And ten years of growth. In those ten years, we have grown from a church of ~70 folks gathered in the Apex UMC sanctuary to a church averaging over 400 people in our new home at 1200 N Salem Street. What a testament to all of the great things God has done!

And now, we find ourselves in a time where God needs more and more churches like ours. Those that are fully welcoming of all people. A church that engages faith with both heart AND mind. A church that understands a well-balanced faith is one that seeks to love God and neighbor equally.

And you (yes you, the person who is reading these words right now!) can help them find it. Really! Even during this time of virtual gathering, we are still called to look out for those disconnected friends that God might be putting in our path. So grab one of our Peak yard signs. Wear your Peak t-shirt when you are out and about. And when you run into those who are feeling especially isolated and despairing about the state of our world, don’t shy away from welcoming them into a family that will love them unconditionally and point them to the very person we are all clinging to right now.

So much has changed in ten years and so much will change by the time we reach 2030. But the mission of this great church will remain the same. We know that with your help, it will be just that.
LOOKING AHEAD

In the fall of 2018, we purchased our very first home at 1200 North Salem Street! This was a huge step as we continue to dream about God’s future for our church. Simultaneously, we launched our very first capital campaign, called the Welcome Home Campaign, in attempts to secure our facility and raise funds for potential renovations and enhancements. As the capital campaign enters into its final year, we’ve begun working with our trustees and a local architect to begin dreaming about what kinds of things your gifts could make possible. One idea we’ve been praying about is increasing the lobby space so as to become more inviting to new guests and give us new space to commune together once that opportunity comes again! Check out some conceptual drawings of what our (new) space could look like in 2021!

REVENUES AND EXPENSES

BY THE NUMBERS

When creating our 2020-2021 budget, we focused on missions, as well as discipleship and opportunities. We want to be good neighbors to those in our community, people who we may not have a relationship with but know we can walk alongside. We also want to walk alongside you! We know Covid-19 has made it hard for many of you to stay engaged with church so we encourage you to join a class, small group or bible study and really take the time to get to know those around you. Our goal is to provide you with resources to maintain your relationship with our church and with Christ.

FISCAL YEAR 2021 BUDGET - JULY 2020-JUNE 2021

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519 CAMPUS

We have been busy the past several months. We relaunched our YouTube channel that now has tailored playlists created to invite you into spiritual formation at any time. We’ve grown that channel to 122 subscribers with an average of over 200 unique viewing units a month.

Even while physically distant, we’ve found ways to engage one another on critical topics such as anti-racism as 519 led a book club effort that included participation from across our family of faith. And when our community needed it more than ever, our Feed the Kids team stepped up to feed hungry children and families as schools began to close. All of this work is made possible as a result of your partnership. Thank you!

AVE WEEKLY ATTENDANCE
153

YOUTUBE SUBSCRIBERS
122

CHILDREN SERVED WEEKLY THROUGH FTK
289

HOW TO BECOME AN ANTIRACIST BOOK DISCUSSION
150

FEED THE KIDS

In 2013, Susan Alvey began Feed the Kids with a few volunteers, providing weekend food bags to one school and an average of 11 children per week. Today, Alvey still serves as leader, but helps oversee a volunteer organization that features 17 team members. The program now reaches 10 schools, serving an average of 289 kids per week.

“According to teachers and school counselors, the children who receive the food bags come to school ready to learn, able to stay awake and focus on the learning tasks at hand, and able to demonstrate confident and positive interactions with peers and adults,” said FTK team member Susan Hester.

For the year ending June 30, 2020, 8,994 bags were distributed and the retail value of food distributed was $54,318. Even in the early months of the pandemic (March 17–June 30), an average of 240 kids were served weekly. Overall, 36 volunteers per month donated a total of 11,085 hours of service to Feed the Kids.

None of this, though, would be possible without the generosity of the church and community. For the Fiscal Year 2020, the Feed the Kids Restricted Fund received $18,590.
LOOKING AHEAD

It is said that “crisis is an accelerator,” and for us at 519church, that has certainly been the case. The COVID-19 pandemic required our church to make decisions to ensure the long-term sustainability and health of our congregation, most notably, the decision was made in August to exit our facility in large part due to the financial reality of not being able to generate income off the building during its closure.

Crisis may be an accelerator, but it is also a cradle for innovation, and that is exactly what we are doing at 519church. We are innovating across all mission and ministry areas to new ways to keep us connected to one another and to the mission of our church. With the money saved from building expenses, we are ensuring that our missional endeavors are well supported, and we are increasing our capacity to bring you the best and most engaging weekly worship experience for you and your family. We are revitalizing ministry teams that have been on hold for a season, and we are preparing big things to launch us into 2021 and beyond.

As we move forward together, it will take all of us to ensure that our community of faith remains active in its mission and ministry while holding onto financial stability. When it is safe to regather, we will also be looking for the next space that God will be calling us into. Your financial support helps us continue in this effort together.

BY THE NUMBERS

Our hope with this budget is to ensure that we don’t miss a beat with our mission and ministry as our community continues to feel the effects of COVID-19 on our physical, emotional, mental, and financial health. We don’t want to slow down because we believe there’s never been a more important season for the church to be leading the charge on loving our neighbor. To do that well, we need to ensure that we are able to invest faithfully in local mission and ministry initiatives while being confident that we are not stretching too far beyond our means. This budget attempts to do just that.

REVENUES AND EXPENSES
FISCAL YEAR 2021 BUDGET - JULY 2020-JUNE 2021

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At Fiesta Cristiana our vision is more than a church, we are a family. We Worship as a family. We Grow as a family. We Serve as a family. One of our goals is for Hispanic/Latino families to improve their spiritual well-being by participating in Fiesta Cristiana’s diverse worship activities. Prior to Covid 19 our average worship attendance was 80. Our Sunday online live viewer averages 20-30 with many other people watching throughout the week. People are also growing through online classes and other faith/leadership formation opportunities. This year in the midst of it all we had 6 confirmations; our biggest class ever! Our work is made more complete when families receive emotional, economic and physical support. Since the pandemic started, we have served more than 1500 people with food security and covid19 prevention. Our Semillas tutoring program has also skyrocketed, going from 40 to 70 children in a matter of months.

Fiesta Cristiana, like many other community agencies, adapted to meet the needs of the local community. Early in the COVID pandemic in Wake County, 41% of the cases were found in Hispanic individuals; a significant disproportion given that the Hispanic population in Wake County is 10%. During the stay-at-home orders, Fiesta Cristiana worked with community partners to reach 300 households with food, health information and face coverings. Fiesta Cristiana has continued to reach out to households with health updates and resources available for the Hispanic/Latino community.

Diana signed up for one of the assistance boxes. She began talking to the staff and agreed to volunteer to pass out more assistance boxes the next time Fiesta Cristiana organized distribution. We discovered that she had a middle schooler at home and invited her to youth Bible Study. She is not a member of Fiesta but has found a way to meet her emergency needs and participate in our community development work.

In addition to emergency hunger relief, Fiesta pivoted to make sure the children participating in Semillas, our tutoring program, continued to receive educational support. We shifted to a virtual platform to finish the school year and went from serving 40 students to 57 students. With our volunteers, we are ensuring that Hispanic/Latino students have the opportunity to improve their educational skills and maintain their grades.

Fiesta is proud to be a leader in building a multicultural parish. The Racial Equity Bridge Team (REBT) has identified concrete goals. Participants have educated themselves on concepts such as diversity, inclusion and equity. One of the most powerful moments was when the REBT created the bilingual prayer used at all online services across the parish after George Floyd’s murder. REBT implemented a parish-wide assessment on organizational readiness to grapple with racial equity and our seedling the idea of a parish-wide equity campaign to secure resources for the parish equity work, including Fiesta Cristiana’s community-based mission work.
LOOKING AHEAD

Fiesta Cristiana holistically restores Hispanic/Latinx individuals, families and their neighbors to create a diverse and loving Kingdom of God.

As a result, Fiesta Cristiana is working to build its capacity to meet the spiritual and social needs of all members of the family and of our neighbors. Sometimes this means advocating in the community for systems change, including systems within a predominantly white parish. Other times it means applying for funds to foundations or the government for grant funding to meet the needs of Hispanic/Latino families across the region, ensuring all family members have the resources to thrive and grow.

And still other times it means working with the Anglo congregations in our parish to design an annual equity campaign to support Fiesta’s mission.

BY THE NUMBERS

Fiesta Cristiana has a vision that everyone is a part of God’s Kingdom. In order to achieve this vision, Fiesta Cristiana holistically restores individuals, families and their neighbors to create a diverse and loving Kingdom of God. With COVID-19 disproportionately impacting the Hispanic/Latino population, we are invested more than ever to create opportunities for families to participate in our worship or available community development services, to feel God’s love and care.

REVENUES AND EXPENSES

FISCAL YEAR 2021 BUDGET - JULY 2020-JUNE 2021

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ESTIMATE OF GIVING

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Email(s): ___________________________________________________________

Address: _______________________________________________________________________

☐ Please update my contact information

My/Our yearly all-in estimate of giving for 2021 ______________________

I/We will make a one-time gift in 2021 of ______________________

My/Our total annual commitment for 2021 + ______________________

You may mail your pledge to the church (100 S. Hughes St., Apex, NC 27502); bring it to the church office and put it in the white, locked box next to the front door labeled “1;” or make a commitment online at apexumcfamily.org/giving by Oct. 31, 2020.