



Riley Williams: Trustees Chair/Music Ministry

How long have you been at BUMC and what does this church mean to you and your family?

Believe it or not, I have been attending BUMC since 1959 (that's 59 years!). BUMC has been integral in my life from that time on through Sunday School, various children's and youth choirs, and now about 41 years with the Sanctuary Choir. Obviously music has been a huge part of my life here. It's where I made some of the best and closest friends of my life as well as where I met my wife Gail. Our two sons, Reid and Ben were both baptized and confirmed at the church and (occasionally) attend when they're in town.

You've also served in a number of other roles. Tell us a little bit about that.

My work as an architect and connection with the building trades, has been beneficial serving on the Trustees, which oversees the care and maintenance of the church building and property. I have also served on the SPRC committee, Church Council and most recently on the "Dream Team", which is looking at the future mission of our congregation. For several years in the late 70's and early 80's I served as a youth counselor and went on MANY work camp trips. In later years I have gone on VIM trips to New Orleans and Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

How does your faith inform your choices regarding service in and through our church?

I believe that it is each person's responsibility for the "care and feeding" of their fellow person and community. It's easy to sit back and let others do the heavy lifting, but that doesn't fulfill my personal call to be a part of the larger community. Only by participating and serving can one truly appreciate the value of what is being done.

You recently became chair of our trustees, a job that some might regard as quite challenging in view of our aging building and limited resources. Why did you agree to take this position and what do you see as priorities for our building in the next few years.

This is not the first time I have served as chair of Trustees...in fact I believe it's the third time...but whatever. Yes, the church facilities are aging and require constant maintenance. I purposefully took a break for several years to "recharge," but I found that each time I am in the building (regularly), I notice things that need "attention." These items run the gamut from existential (heating and cooling equipment, roof leaks) to aesthetic (carpet and paint). It would be wonderful if we could just call an appropriate plumber/roofer/electrician every time an issue arose, but the fact of the matter is, we need to be good stewards of the church resources and not wasteful in our spending. This often calls for us asking church members to offer up their talents and services in making repairs. Thank heaven for *Tony Andrews* who has served diligently as Chair for the past several years, keeping things from getting out of hand.

A few items we are currently assessing: ❶ Water infiltration (flooding) in Founders' Hall that requires constant surveillance and occasional cleanup. This really needs to be addressed with a more permanent solution. ❷ The "new" heating and cooling equipment is now over 20 years old and will undoubtedly require replacement in the next several years. Unfortunately, with new code requirements, this may be VERY expensive. ❸ Recent events nationally and the fact that we are located in an increasingly urban setting have forced us to take a serious look at the building security. Yes...the carpeting...particularly in Founders' Hall is in need of replacement.

How can other BUMCers pitch in to help our building function as a home for our many ministries?

There are some simple things that we are all capable of helping out with, such as: ❶ Keeping the church neat and tidy—if you see something that needs to be picked up and disposed of, please feel free to do so. ❷ If you have concerns with heating or cooling temperatures, please report them to either the Trustees or the Church Office. Thermostats set up or down for extended periods of time end up costing us all. ❸ Maintain classrooms and public space furnishings as you found them. Be aware of your surroundings—please don't leave exterior doors unlocked or propped open.

What is one thing you wish people knew about our building or facilities?

Our building was originally constructed in two phases. The first, consisting of (most of) the Sanctuary, current office and choir room space was built in 1948. The second portion, consisting of the Chancel area of the Sanctuary and the entire Education (north) end of the building was built in 1958-59. We undertook a major renovation of the entire building around 1996, where we added air-conditioning to the Education Building and opened up and re-designed the Narthex and office spaces, creating a much more welcoming entrance to the church.

Where have you seen God working through our church family or ministries?

I see God at work constantly at BUMC particularly through our service and mission ministries. I believe the youth are learning how to live their faith through participation in work camp trips and involvement in such programs as Wounded Warriors and the Welcome Home ministries. This will serve them all well as they grow. I am in awe of the congregation's actions in addressing broader social issues. These can be divisive, but are also educational and provoke a more serious discussion of these issues. I have seen many changes at BUMC over the past years, many subtle, but some more challenging. Through all of them, I have seen the congregation discuss, perhaps disagree, but eventually come together as a family in faith. BUMC truly is a congregational family which is dedicated to serve each other, the community and the world.

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