

TAX MINISTRY REPORT FOR 2013 TAX YEAR SEASON

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MISSION: This is a signature mission of FUMC. Our volunteers prepare tax returns for local people in Lancaster City and the surrounding area at no charge. This tax service is equipped to file electronically for Federal and State returns, and at the same time, prepare paper returns for the Lancaster County Tax Collection Bureau (LCTCB), and also to provide either property tax rebate or rent rebate preparation for low income taxpayers who qualify. The wireless internet infrastructure at FUMC is critical to the success of this mission.

SCOPE: We serve low to middle income (undefined) taxpayers with special attention to the elderly. The scope of the returns we can prepare is defined by the IRS and is quite detailed. We rarely have persons who are out of scope and denied service. Every tax return is mandated to have a quality review by a Team leader before being filed. The Average Gross Income of our clients was \$18,912. We secured more than \$1,600,000 in refunds for 1468 clients who filed federal tax returns at the FUMC tax office.

VOLUNTEERS: In 2014 we had 43 IRS certified tax preparers. In addition, there were 15 facilitators who review paperwork for completeness and check in clients on a first-come and first served basis. About half of the tax team are members of FUMC. Some of the others do not have a church affiliation. All volunteers must sign an agreement covering confidentiality and service protocols.

The number of client households served in 2013 was 1953. Most of these people are not members of FUMC, but are really impressed that the service is so professional and free. We have many repeat clients who come back year after year.

IMPACT ON CHURCH OPERATIONS. FUMC is listed as the point of contact and many telephone calls are taken by our front office during tax season. This can be as many as 20 per day. Some are asking for directions, parking information and hours. Others are specific requests for tax

information. These latter calls are transmitted to the team leader in the tax office where a member of the tax staff returns the call.

What are the number of hours that are devoted to the tax ministry? Taxes are prepared for 6 hours per weekday from February 1st to April 15th. All training and certification activity takes place during the whole month of January. This is in the range of 425 to 450 hours that impact the church operations. During this period of time, the church's wireless internet bandwidth is used to its capacity, as we are always running at least 6 computers connected to the AARP/IRS process site. We do have an additional 'hot spot' which can be used if the church Wi-Fi goes down.

Also worth noting is that the site is subject to visits by IRS auditors who do monitor the process flow. We did have one visit by an IRS auditor this year and passed with flying colors! In terms of community awareness, the real success of the tax ministry is that it is first come, first served, and is the only such tax preparation office in Lancaster City that takes walk-ins. This means when other sites in the city are booked, the IRS, PA Department of Aging, and United Way refer people to our office.

TAS PREPARATION SITES AFFILIATED WITH FIRST CHURCH.

FUMC serves as the base of operations for sites located in Columbia, Brethren Village, Quarryville, Willow Valley – Lakes, and Willow Valley – North. Our volunteers at Willow Valley provide technical support for the internet and work out any issues determined through the IRS returns acceptance process.

BUDGET IMPACT. Some of the clients of the tax ministry do donate small amounts of money in thanks for the service, and this is separately accounted for as "other revenue" in the budget of the church. This amount is usually less than \$1000. There is currently is no estimate of the utility and infrastructure costs being incurred by the church to support this ministry.

The materials such as printers, toner and paper are provided by AARP Foundation, so there is no impact on the church budget for these items. The computers have been donated locally or have been provided by AARP Foundation. Training materials are also provided by the AARP Foundation working with the Internal Revenue Service.

THE AARP TAXAIDE FINAL 22013 REPORT:

In total we served roughly 3500 clients (2256 Federal Accepted Efiles plus State Only, Paper Federal, Amended, Prior Year and Questions Answered).
Some interesting Individual site Statistics:

<u>Site</u>	<u>FedEfile</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Avg AGI</u>	<u>Refund</u>	<u>TotalEIC</u>
Columbia	175	39	\$17,377	\$92,213	\$5,157
FUMC	1468	485	\$18,912	\$1,647,383	\$532,085
Brethren Village	124	6	\$21,768	\$88,438	\$31,124
Quarryville	268	16	\$14,931	\$143,491	\$25,005
WV Lakes	240	172	\$44,306	\$346,160	\$6,191
WV North	81	20	\$48,516	\$147,910	\$12,319

Here are a couple of testimonials for this year:

“The tax ministry is great! Good service, community and an overall wonderful experience. They took care of everything and did a great job.” -Anonymous

“I am just so thankful for the generosity of this service ad the wonderful things this church is doing!” --Anonymous

Submitted by Steve Franz ,
Member of the tax ministry team,

Reviewed by June Wesbury,
Tax Ministry Team Leader