

## **Pastor's Annual Report**

*November 16, 2008*

I'm writing this report two days before my third year anniversary as your called Pastor. On my northwestern wall of my office is a wood burning of the following passage from Jeremiah 29:

*...for I know the plans I have for you ~declares the Lord, plans to prosper you~ to give you a future and a hope.*

*And when you call upon me and search for me with your whole heart I will hear you and you shall find me and I will gather you up...and bring you to your homeland and you shall be my people and I will be your God.*

Over the past year God has amazed and astonished me with the blessings He has bestowed upon us. We continue to be a congregation grounded in mission and willing to faithfully respond to the gracious gifts God has given us. We must be ever mindful what we experience as “prospering” is a gift from God. Every good gift is given by God and we then respond with faithfulness to a gracious God.

God continues to bless this congregation with growth in most areas of ministry here at St. Paul. Over the last year eighteen of our sisters and brothers have joined the Church Triumphant. Following the command to “go and baptize” we have been blessed with fourteen baptisms, two of which were adults. Through the working of the Holy Spirit we have received twenty new disciples since our last Congregational Meeting. Working the math, over the past year, statistically we have gained sixteen disciples to our congregation. As of two weeks ago our average weekly worship attendance was three hundred and ninety-six worship participants. This statistic is now showing a three year growth trend. For a mainline denomination this growth trend over the past three years is truly a blessing from God.

When I prepared to write this report I started making a list of what has happened at St. Paul over the past year. I became overwhelmed with the list and finally after much prayer and discernment decided to give a different type of report. The bottom line is—I could not list all that has happened over the year in a typical written report without writing a very l-o-n-g dissertation. I believe this is a good thing. However, with the growth we have experienced, there is a need for attention to all the reports of this congregation in order to even begin to grasp the depth and width of our ministries.

The concept of “multiplication” of ministry, the need for me as pastor to equip and empower and then to get out of the way, is the faithful way for leadership at this juncture in our partnership of ministry. I admit it has been a challenge for me as your pastor, but one in which I firmly believe is paramount for our faithfulness to our call in ministry. I also hope and pray the

modeling of this leadership style will witness to each of you in your various ministries here at St. Paul.

With the continued growth come challenges. One of the transitional issues we have experienced is the result of being a mission-centered congregation. Our Current Account is now working with expenses that are “benevolent account” driven. For example, as our outreach for mission expands and grows our facility is being used much more—therefore utilities such as electric, heat, water, sewer, and general maintenance are on a constant rise. Our three pocket envelope thinking is no longer working because we are operating out of a one pocket model of ministry. Our giving has grown and our challenge is in the structure, not in the giving. This congregation will be looking at a significant overage in benevolence for the second year in a row—what a blessing. You will hear more of this from our financial treasurers. By the first of January 2010, we will need to look at a Unified Mission Plan (Budget) so we can continue to grow our ministries without financial constraints.

One of the goals as Lead Pastor was to have an employee evaluation process put into place as soon as possible. After two and one half years we are at that point. The first part of this process was to rework all the staff job descriptions and create an Employee Handbook. A few weeks ago we conducted the first series of evaluations and will continue to deepen and expand this process.

My review, as Lead Pastor, included working with the Mutual Ministry Committee and feedback received through the congregation. One area I was asked to look at as a possible growth area was my involvement with the community as a whole. I have begun working on this, for next year, by doing the following: currently the President of the Carlisle Area Ministerium, attending the monthly Community Partners meetings headed by Dickinson College, offered the invocation for the Annual Carlisle Chamber of Commerce Meeting held at the Hotel Carlisle, hosting and presiding at the Community Interfaith Thanksgiving Service, and attending the monthly West Cumberland Conference Meetings of the Lower Susquehanna Synod.

Our confirmation program continues to grow and expand. Thanks to the Confirmation Task Force, parents, confirmands, teachers, and our congregational council, this very important ministry continues to be a “cutting edge” program. Over the past year we held two confirmation Sundays with a total of six young disciples being confirmed in their baptisms.

Continuing Education is an important aspect of my ministry as your Lead Pastor and as a child of God. This year I had the opportunity to attend and participate in The Leadership Summit held on August the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> in the Lancaster area. I attended this conference with several parishioners and sisters and brothers from Grace United Methodist Church from Carlisle. Over the next few months we will be offering workshops throughout the Greater Carlisle Area based upon what we learned; I am looking forward to participating in that process. I attended

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our annual Bishop's Conference this fall. Later this month I will be traveling to the Upper New York area to attend a three day Spiritual Retreat.

I continue as a supervisor with our internship program here at St. Paul. Vicar Terry and I work through pastoral issues and much time is spent in evaluation, as demanded by the Seminary. This year evaluation time has expanded to include preaching evaluations. I am also working with Dr. Holly Hoffman as she develops a ministry called the W.A.Y. (a youth mentoring program) to fulfill her diaconal project requirements. I participate with her Task Force that has been formed out of our congregation.

A few weeks ago, a parishioner gave me a book to read and one of the quotes at the beginning stated: "We've been given one piece of life's jigsaw puzzle. Only God has the cover of the box." Jeremiah tells us that God has plans for us with a future and a hope. Sisters and Brothers, all we need to do is respond, in a faithful manner, to awesome graciousness God's call has bestowed upon us. May we continue to be blessed by God's awesome power and listen to the stirrings of the Holy Spirit in this partnership of ministry.

In Christ's Service,

*Pastor Tim*

The Rev. Timothy W. Sadler

Lead Pastor