



Hill Top News

Markesan United
Methodist Church

January 2010

2009 PASTOR'S REPORT TO THE CONGREGATION

Following is my annual report to the congregation which was part of the packet of information presented at our Annual Church Charge Conference held on Sunday afternoon, December 13th. We had only around twenty-five in attendance so I present that report here to reach a wider audience.

2009 has seen some changes, some different programs, and yet much has remained the same. Our denomination's bishops initiated a program in late 2008 that all United Methodist Churches would be required to prepare a four-year plan of ministry to be done in early 2009. We invited Barbara Heather Heywood to lead us through this process and we completed our Long-Range Plan, a copy of which is included in this packet of material. We were disappointed that more members did not participate in the process; however, bad weather was a contributing factor.

In June the Worship committee experimented with moving the time of 10:30 worship to 10:00 a.m. and also moved it from the sanctuary to Common Ground which provided a more intimate atmosphere for this more contemporary worship service. However 10 a.m. conflicted with Sunday school and so was pushed back to 10:30 in the fall. Otherwise the change of place has been good.

For the second year for Lent we did a dinner and video study, but with one change. We added a Wednesday noon opportunity and this increased our number of participants significantly. We will do this again in 2010 with some minor tweaking of the meal to make it less challenging to those in the kitchen.

New for 2009 was a fall stewardship program. A stewardship campaign has not been done for some time. We used the *Enough: Discovering Joy Through Simplicity and Generosity* program. Giving estimates were requested of members and a 38% participation level was achieved with many planning an increase in their giving for the coming year. Armed with this information a budget was generated based on the pledges and the prior giving history of non-pledging members. This resulted in what Finance believes is a more realistic budget of both receipts and disbursements than in recent years.

The worship committee and church leadership held an extensive discussion this past summer of our Sunday worship schedule of two different styled worship services at the behest of some members desiring one worship service. Whenever we have had just one service of worship on a Sunday (picnic, Calvarymen, this past November 29th) we have seen diminished numbers in worship, even after heavy promotion. Invariably some people still show up for the worship service that was cancelled that day. We even tried a potluck to provide for more fellowship—the implied desire of having one service—and were disappointed at the participation. We are very hesitant to try this again. Indeed, many churches are adding more worship opportunities, not less, to facilitate society's busy lifestyles.

As we near the end of 2009 it appears we will not be able to pay all our Annual Conference apportioned expenses, being short several thousands of dollars. With that in mind no salaries were increased in the 2010 budget and some benefits were reduced to "balance" the budget. So we are anticipating we will pay all our apportionments in 2010.

Our Trustees contracted extensive repairs and maintenance of our physical property this fall with the replacement of all of the lower level windows with new energy efficient windows, tuck-pointing of the brickwork around the building, re-roofing and repair of the entrance canopy, and replacement and grading of the driveway under the canopy to prevent rainwater from running into the basement. Thank you to all in the congregation who supported this effort with your financial gifts through the Adopt-a-Window and Tuck-a-Brick Campaign.



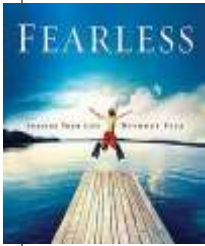
This past summer we saw a growing group of youngsters and youth involved in Bible Study and activities under the leadership of Andrea Plueddeman. We pray her health and family situations will improve so this promising program might start again.

This worshipping community continues strong ministry in worship, in the community with Samaritan House, Appliance Fest, leadership with the Food Shelf, Gifts Anonymous, Prison ministries, nursing homes worship and Bible studies, and great second mile missions giving providing ministry around the world. We have a two-year confirmation class with several youth, many more kids in Sunday school, several adults in a Sunday school class, and many more adults in short-term studies at different times throughout the year.

In 2010 we anticipate more short-term Bible study programs and look forward to continuing to be a loving, healthy, joyful, witnessing, fruitful, outreaching, and growing congregation of disciples of Jesus Christ.

In Christian love,
Pastor Paul

Second Mile Giving - Gideon's Have you ever thought about what life would be like, if God had never spoken? What if He had never communicated with man? What if He had never given us His word? Imagine having to go through life without knowing anything of the promises of God, the commands of God, the love of God, the will of God. Thankfully, we do not have to exist in such a spiritual vacuum. God has given us His Word, where He reveals Himself to us. As Gideon's give out the Scriptures, we hear it over and over, how His word and spirit are powerful and speak to people. Francisco Vazquez from Mexico tells us: For 25 years I spent time in different jails around the Republic of Mexico for stealing, using drugs, etc. I would visit my brother in the USA from time to time and would often be stopped for driving drunk, but I would just return to Mexico without showing up for court. I lived in Mazatlan at the time and worked as a parasailing instructor on the beach. It was the perfect place to sell drugs, drink, steal, and get involved with lots of different women from all over the world and I did this for many years. I used to steal credit cards, airplane tickets, and whatever else I could sell to make extra money, and when the season slowed down in Mazatlan I would go to California to visit my brother. The last time the police stopped me, they found that there were five warrants out for my arrest. I went before the judge, and he gave me a one-year sentence. They put me in a small cell for 30 days, and the only book I had there was the prison rule book. One afternoon, they took us out of our cells because there was someone who had come to visit all the prisoners. The man who had come to see us had some blue books in his hands and he started talking to us about Jesus. I didn't pay much attention, but I was happy to get out of the cell and to take one of the books that he offered. I began reading the Word of God for the first time. I told God if He was for real, I wanted Him to help me stop smoking cigarettes. When I awoke the next morning, I could not stand to even smell the smoke, and that's when I knew that God was there and Jesus Christ was real. I kept reading and eventually I turned my life over to God. When I got out of prison, I started telling everybody about Jesus. Today, I serve in a local church, and I'm a Gideon, too! Thanks be to God and to the Gideons for that little book. The Gideons are now in 190 Countries. Won't you support and be part of this ministry?



EACH SUNRISE SEEMS TO BRING FRESH REASONS FOR FEAR

They're talking layoffs at work, slowdowns in the economy, flare-ups in the Middle East, turn-overs at headquarters, downturns in the housing market, and upswings in global warming. The plague of our day, terrorism, begins with the word *terror*. Fear, it seems, has taken a hundred-year lease on the building next door and set up shop. Oversized and rude, fear herds us into a prison and slams the doors. Wouldn't it be great to walk out?

Imagine your life, wholly untouched by angst. What if faith, not fear, was your default reaction to threats? If you could hover a fear magnet over your heart and extract every last shaving of dread, insecurity, or doubt, what would remain? Envision the day when you can trust more and fear less.

Can you imagine your life without fear?

Above is the back jacket cover from the book *Fearless* by New York Times Best Selling author Max Lucado, who is Minister of Writing and Preaching of Oak Hills Church in San Antonio, Texas. Beginning Sunday, February 14th and for the following five Sundays this will my sermon series that Sunday and the first five Sundays of Lent. We will also lead a time of discussion and study of the book at noon and 6:00 p.m. following a light meal each Wednesday from Ash Wednesday, February 17th through Wednesday, March 24th—the last Wednesday before Holy Week.

Watch later this month for publicity and forms to order the book *Fearless*, and also for the study guide if you will be participating in the weekly discussions. We will obtain these books at a discount for you.

Pastor Paul

CHURCH LEADERSHIP CHANGES FOR 2010

We begin 2010 with some slight changes in those in leadership roles in the church. Before we welcome those in new leadership positions we need to express our thanks to those who are leaving leadership or service positions: Lorraine Behrs our Lay Leader for the last couple of years, Jim Hilke our Chair of the Board of Trustees who will remain a member of the committee, Sieglinde Abendroth will no longer serve as a Trustee, Cindy Hilke will no longer serve as Membership Chairperson, Don and Yvonne Leider as Communion Stewards, Robin Schweder on the Missions Committee, Jean Hollander as Kitchen Coordinator and Paul Plueddeman (Doc) is no longer in charge of Appliance Fest. Thank you so much, each of you, for your faithful service.

In new or different positions of leadership in 2010 are the following: Clark Buchanan as Lay Leader, Shirley Parker as Membership Chair and Heidi Allen as a member of the committee, Diane Wilde and Diane Preuss as new members of Trustees, Jason Davis will serve on the Staff Parish Relations Committee, Robin Schweder and Karen Davis will both serve on the Lay Leadership Committee (formerly nominations), Clark and Carla Buchanan are new Communion Stewards, Ernie Allen will help Jean Hollander with the Library, and Paul D. Plueddeman will run Appliance Fest. Welcome to your new positions and we pray all will give you their support through prayers and assistance as they are asked or volunteer to help. The Trustees will elect their chairperson(s) at their first meeting in January and you will note we are in need of a person or persons to coordinate the Kitchen and there is always room for more to help with missions, prayer teams, and other service teams. Please note that we do not and have not had a nursery coordinator or nursery team. The lack of a nursery can be a deterrent to guests and visitors joining our congregation.



2009 Chili Fest Report
Receipts

Free Will Offering	\$1,517.50	
Sale of Leftover Supplies		72.00
	Total	\$1,589.50

Expenses

Meat/Cheese/Groceries		522.50
	Net	\$1,067.00

Projects Money Contributed To:

Markesan Food Pantry	100.00	
Markesan Gifts Anonymous	100.00	
Campus Crusade For Christ	100.00	
Webster Missionary	100.00	
Wilkinson Missionary	100.00	
Hope School	100.00	
Voice of Martyrs	100.00	
UMC New Sign Fund	300.00	
	Total	1,000.00

December Church Attendance

	8:30 a.m.	10:30 a.m.
12/6/09	90	14
12/13/09	68	15
12/20/09	79	24
Christmas Eve		163
12/27/09	67	26

Regular giving in December

12/6/2009	\$ 4,235.00
12/13/200	\$ 2,975.75
12/20/200	\$ 3,212.50
12/27/200	\$ 9,500.00

Tracts-

Thank you to Paul Plueddeman for helping me distribute 50 gift door hangar bags containing a New Testament, free 30 day access to the ESV Online Study Bible, Christmas Tract and invitation to our Christmas Eve program with other service dates for the unchurched. We pray that even if our church doesn't gain any new visitors, someone will be saved through heeding the information received, to the Glory of God!

YOU TOO CAN BEAR WITNESS TO GOD'S TRUTH, BEAUTY, AND HOLINESS!

SHARE THE GOOD NEWS OF SALVATION AND HOPE BY distributing this month's featured Tract: "Hope for Hard Times."

Happy New Year to All
Lorraine Behrs,
Tract Ministry

Restricted Giving in December

Adopt a Window	\$ 1100.00
Tuck a Brick	\$ 50.00
Sign Fund	\$ 300.00
Window Repair	\$ 100.00

2nd Mile giving in December

Porchlight	\$ 1429.91
Voice of the Martyrs	\$ 450.00
Wilkinson support	\$ 100.00
Webster support	\$ 150.00
Hope School Student	\$ 200.50
Campus Crusade	\$ 100.00

**Administrative Council meeting minutes—December 1, 2009**

Attendance: Margaret Whirry, Russ Hirschy, Lorraine Behrs, Jim Clark, Dick Horn, Jan Horn, Kathy Wagener, Pastor Paul.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by chairperson, Margaret Whirry. Pastor Paul led us in prayer.

The secretary's report was approved. (Motion by Dick Horn, second by Russ Hirschy).

Old business:

There was nothing new to report on the strategic plan.

New business:

All nominations from SPRC are complete. There will not be many changes this year.

Budget as proposed by the Finance Committee was reviewed. Motion by Russ Hirschy, second by Dick Horn to pass the budget on to the charge conference as proposed.

Worship committee reported that the Christmas Eve service will be held at 7 pm. Pastor Paul reported that he had received positive comments about the single service held on November 29. He also reported that the Lenten program will be a 6 week study by Max Lucado starting the week before Lent.

Mission committee has finished the schedule for 2nd Mile Giving for the coming year.

Samaritan House reported that Saturday hours will be changing to 9-1.

Appliance Fest did have a pick up during the past week.

Motion by Lorraine Behrs, second by Russ Hirschy to approve Nina Zick and Shirley Parker to continue as Lay Speakers.

Russ Hirschy reported that he continues to pay bills as the money becomes available. Second Mile Giving has held steady. It was reported that there seems to be some inconsistency regarding offering envelopes as far as which youth have received them and which have not. This will be looked into. Pastor Paul shared a stewardship message from the Bishop.

Lorraine Behrs reported that the Daily Bread booklets have been taken very quickly. A free will donation basket will be put out to help cover the cost of the booklets. Lorraine also mentioned that this would be her last meeting and wished the rest of the council well in the coming year.

Membership will be meeting Wed, Dec.3 at 8.

Margaret Whirry reported that the church window cards will be available for sale during the next week.

Some discussion was held regarding the amount of potlucks being held and who should be in charge of the set up for them. The Administrative Council will take care of the set up for the pot luck preceding the charge conference on December 13.

Next administrative council meeting will be February 8 at 7:00 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm; motion by Lorraine Behrs, seconded by Dick Horn.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Wagener

**Thank You-**

The officers of the Markesan Community Food Pantry thanks the members and friends of this congregation for the overwhelming response to our request for peanut butter, jelly, pasta, tuna, beef stew, etc. This food was shared with 80 families and 12 single individuals at the Christmas delivery.

Thank you for sharing your cookies, being a delivery person both at Thanksgiving and Christmas, the \$50.00 second mile giving check and for your on going support throughout the year.

May God bless each one in 2010.

Co-Chairs
Marlene Hanson & June Page

January Birthday's & Anniversaries

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 Karen Panten | 14 John Cotterill |
| 2 Jenny Davis | David/Helene Severson-Ann. |
| 6 Denise Roehl | 16 Helene Severson |
| 7 Sharon Doxtator | 18 Jathan Schmerse |
| Evelyn Jahnke | Erma Daye |
| Dr. Paul Plueddeman | 21 Carol Davis |
| Carson Davis | 23 William Fox |
| 9 Elery Marquart | 24 Sue Powers |
| 10 Myrtle Arms | 25 Lurah Sanders |
| 11 Andrew Jahnke | 26 Tom/Diann Wilde-Ann |
| 12 Renee Vande Streek | 27 Shirley/Jack Parker-Ann |
| Adam Panten | 28 Dean Abendroth |
| Robert/Kathy Wagener-Ann. | 29 Nancy Cotterill |
| 13 Emery Cluppert | 31 Louis Jahnke |



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			JANUARY 2010		1 11:30 Prayer in Prayer Room	2
3 8:30 .Traditional Worship 9:30 - Hospitality/ Sunday School/ Confirmation 9:35 am—Adult SS 10:30 Celebration Worship	4 Pastor Paul on Vacation	5 6:30 Men’s Prayer Break- fast & Bible Study at Sandy’s Diner	6 9 am Sew Blessed 6:30 p.m.- Celebration Singer Practice 7:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Practice	7	8 11:30 Prayer in Prayer Room	9
10 8:30 .Traditional Worship 9:30 - Hospitality/ Sunday School/ Confirmation 9:35 am—Adult SS 10:30 Celebration Worship	11	12 6:30 Men’s Prayer Break- fast at Sandy’s Diner	13 9 am Sew Blessed 6:30 p.m. Cele- bration Singer	14	15 11:30 Prayer in Prayer Room	16
17 8:30 .Traditional Worship 9:30 .Hospitality/ Sunday School/ Confirmation 9:35 am. Adult SS 10:30 .Celebration Worship	18 Pastor Paul at Cont. Ed Class at Pine Lake	19 6:30 Men’s Prayer Break- fast & Bible Study at Sandy’s Diner 7:00 p.m.— Worship Committee Mtg	20 9 am Sew Blessed 6:30 p.m.- Celebration Singer Practice 7:30 p.m. Chancel Choir Practice	21 7:30 p.m.- Friendship Circle at Carla Bu- chanan’s home	22 11:30 Prayer in Prayer Room	23
24 8:30 am-Worship 9:30 - Hospitality/ Sunday School/ Confirmation 9:35 am—Adult SS 10:30 Celebration Worship	25	26	27	28	29	30
31 8:30 am-Worship 9:30 - Hospitality/ Sunday School/ Confirmation 9:35 am—Adult SS 10:30 Celebration						