

PASTOR'S REPORT – JANUARY 2010

(Sorry, my computer had a melt down on Sunday. It is back up and running.)

1. VISITORS – We lost some good members in 2009. Some to moves, some to the vote taken by the ELCA this summer, some to life changes. It is always hard to say good bye to people we care about and who we have shared ministry with. But we continue to attract visitors and new members. Here are some of the folks who are worshipping with us and may join our fellowship in the coming months. (I wonder how many you have met?)

- Susan Bunic (the Winters)
- Beth LeBlanc, Aidan (Adult Forum)
- Marv and Peggy Peterson (Pastor Mark)
- Carl and Karen Sum
- Pat and Dean Wilder (the Hebberts, Adult Forum)
- Bev and Troy Coody, TK and Katie (The Paynes, youth group)
- Nathan and Wendy Dau (Adult Forum)
- Adrienne Dorman (adult choir, Revelation choir, sanctuary art)
- Brad and Amy Johnson, Samantha, Max, Jack (Coopers, Sunday school)
- Jeremy Kloth and KayLynn Baker, Benjamin (adult choir)
- Brandi Curtis, Ali, Trevor, Kyle (Baltrums)
- Jean Messinger (Gloria Peterson)
- Marisa and Brian Carlson
- Todd and Tyger Pinson (Baltrums)

What stands out in this group is how many are coming because someone from Bethlehem invited them. (I appreciated Roger Jurgen's comment at the recent adult forum. He is a new member. He was encouraging those present to invite friends and neighbors to Bethlehem because it is such a great church. That seems to be happening.) A number of them have already gotten involved in the ministry. (I gave many of their names to Audrey Dillan and they will be invited to Dining for Eight.) And a few have even pledged, before joining. Many come from strong, active church backgrounds. We are blessed to have them.

2. BUDGET FORUM – I thought the budget forum on the 3rd was very positive. I think people understand the current financial situation. It has been somewhat of a "perfect wave" this past year with the recession and the vote affecting giving. It was a blessing to finish the year so strong (\$24,000 in the black). The \$25,000 gift certainly made that happen. We will carry that gift into the New Year. The members gathered were very positive about the program, the outreach and the staff. I would say that we are staffed

appropriately for a congregation of our size, but we are overstaffed for our proposed budget.

3. **CHRISTMAS** – Christmas can be an indicator of the health of a congregation. Again, I thought it was a very positive message. The 4:30 combined service with LOC was packed. The narthex was completely full. At 6:30 the sanctuary was full, with a few folks in the narthex and the 11:00 was fuller than have seen it in several years. A number of “inactive” members did attend which says they still see themselves as members here. We will look at our membership rolls this month. We were blessed with almost too much music at the 6:30 service. It was wonderful. John was very pleased with how many choir members made the commitment to sing on this busy night.
4. **NOMINATING COMMITTEE** – I am very pleased with the new people that are committing to council. We had 12 slots to fill (4 on Executive Council, 8 on the Ministries), which is more than most years. I am very pleased with the people who have agreed to serve again and those who will be new to council. We still have two slots to fill.
5. **STAFF PLANNING RETREAT** – We recently had an excellent staff planning retreat looking to our new year of ministry. We mapped out the whole year and came up with some exciting new visions for ministry that we will share at our council retreat next month.

I am looking forward to the coming year of ministry,

Pastor Peterson