

## PASTOR JON'S ANNUAL REPORT

Verse 11 of Psalm 76 reads, "Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice." That verse was part of the reading for the third day of Advent this year. In the Advent devotional booklet Take Back the Season, Martin Copenhaver shares some thoughts with regards to this verse: "*This psalm issues a call to rejoice. It's a common theme in scripture. Over and over again we are enjoined to rejoice, instructed to rejoice and, indeed we are commanded to rejoice. Obviously, someone thinks this rejoicing business is pretty important.*"

I for one, think rejoicing is pretty important! As I look back on the year 2010 from a point in mid-December, I find many reasons to rejoice in our ministry together. First of all my thoughts go to the people with whom I am privileged to work with on a daily basis. I think we have a wonderful church staff and the joy of that is enhanced by the fact that we enjoy being together.

**Associate Pastor, Jerena Keys** does wonderful work in her ministry of worship leadership, pastoral care, resourcing the Commissions, and general pastoral leadership.

**Teri Hook** has been our Office Administrator for five and a half years now. I suspect you know what a gift we have in Teri! Her administrative, financial record keeping, organizational, and word processing skills are outstanding; but it is the gracious, caring, positive, friendly, and cooperative spirit of her personality which make her a very special colleague in the church office.

**Leslie Daniels**, our Director of Christian Education continues to do outstanding work. When we brought new members into the congregation this fall, I heard the same theme repeated over and over again: "My children love coming to Sunday school. It's a major reason we are joining the church."

**Yvonne Kilbourne**, our Parish Nurse, pours countless hours into her ministry of keeping in touch with our sick and shut-in members on a weekly basis. Her gifts of compassion, empathy, and medical knowledge have been very helpful to many of our congregation.

**Cate Arroe, Paul Heidemann, Judy Tressler**, and our new Children's Choir Director – **Emily Garlick** – lead our ministry of music with incredible skill, inspiring and delighting us week after week.

**Elizabeth Morningstar** does good work keeping our building clean on a very small number of hours. It is a monumental task given the number of groups who meet here and use our facilities on a weekly basis.

I was delighted when over fifty people signed up to be part of the adult study which read and reflected on the book If the Church Were Christian this fall. I often tell participants in these study groups that this is where I "get fed spiritually" as a pastor. I remember reflecting with a couple of people after a particularly spirited discussion one Monday evening, in which a person

new to the church played a vital part: "That's why I love my job!" In the spring a slightly smaller number of participants finished the second half of a book titled The Phoenix Affirmations.

A quick glance at my pastoral record reveals that I have performed five baptisms, nine funerals, and four weddings in 2010. In October we welcomed ten new members into the congregation, and grew the Sunday school with the addition of their nine children. You can do the math of adding our new members and subtracting those of the congregation who died this year, to see that we maintain a fairly stable membership figure. I am excited about the fact that we have several individuals, couples, and families who have started worshiping with us since our last new member reception.

We can make the same kind of statement with regards to the financial aspects of our church. Our actual income we have received from pledges has tracked remarkably close to what we anticipated throughout the year. I suspect that at the end of the year we will be right on target with regards to our church budget. This is quite remarkable in comparison to the stories coming out of some churches with which I am familiar. Thank you for your faithful giving. Bob Hampson will give a full year to date financial report at the Annual meeting.

We have a fine group of lay people who serve as Elders on the Governing Board and as members of our Commissions. Led by Moderator Alice Bandstra and Vice-moderator Jim Cook these people deserve our thanks. No report would be complete without thanking Bob Hampson, Terri Cook and Mary Jane Cook who serve as our church Treasurer, Financial Secretary and Clerk for their service to our church.

The author of the Epistle to the Thessalonians wrote words appropriate for bringing this report to a close. "We (I) always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers constantly, remembering before our God your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." Friends, I rejoice in our life and work together as pastor and people. Thank you for the privilege of serving as your pastor.

Peace be with you!

Pastor Jon