

FROM THE PASTOR'S HEART....



THE EVANGEL
Audubon Park
United Methodist
Church
January 13, 2010



THE EVANGEL

With regret I must inform you that our 2010 Annual Stewardship Emphasis did not receive the results we had hoped. It seems that APUMC is not immune to the economic downturn that our society is experiencing. We will finish 2009 just at budget, but remember, we had to pay \$14,000 less than assigned of our annual Conference fair share apportionments to accomplish this. 2010 estimates of giving are down \$15,000 from 2009, coming in at \$207,000. We always receive approximately 20% more income from non-budgeted sources. With this in mind, Church Council has accepted a 2010 Ministry Action Plan (budget) of \$254,000.

The implications of this are somber. We have reduced program expenses about as much as we can. The Trustees will have to function with thousands less than projected. There will be no increases in salaries this year. And most regrettably for me and many others familiar with the abundant improvements in our children's ministries over the last year and a half, the Church Council has decided to eliminate the Director of Christian Education position when money expires in June. Time and space does not permit me to recount the agony our financial reality has caused all of the leadership of our church, especially our Staff Parish Relations Committee and our Finance Team who had to do the "heavy lifting" to deal with this crisis. I have great respect for the way our leadership dealt with and continues to deal with this matter. I also want to express my respect for and appreciation to Bobbi Ehrgood and regret how this news has understandably caused more stress for her as she rethinks how to do her job in the interim and what her future now holds.

Those involved in making the decision and others who have heard about it have asked: Is this "written in stone?" Can anything be done about this? The answer is, of course something can be done about it. The simple solution to the crisis is income of about \$8,000 - \$10,000, income or pledged income because people are really good about following through with pledged income to their church. We must operate in this life with reasonable assurance of faith. Nothing is ever completely fail-safe. I really see three possible ways to resolve the problem, probably a combination of the three. 1) Increase our pledges/giving in 2010. 2) Cut more of the rest of the budget 3) Create other means of receiving income (e.g. auction, dinners, sales.)

This matter will be before us as a congregation as a whole and with our Church Council in the days and months ahead. I hope you will be understanding and compassionate, and communicate with our leadership about your concerns and ideas. I hope you will see this as our problem and issue not only our leadership's concern. Stay tuned for further developments and don't forget to pray.

See you in Church, APUMC.

Pastor Carl