

Pawnee City United Methodist Church

2010 Lay Leader's Report

By Sharilyn Karjala

As we review our Discipleship Plan for 2010 it has been a very rewarding experience. There are few goals we haven't accomplished. As long as our parishioners leave church feeling the presence of God as we worship, teach, read God's Word and sing praises---Hallelujah!

The future of our church looks very promising as for the first time in sixteen years we have a full-time minister. We also have strong leadership. Thanks be to God!

Our congregation's mission statement is "Reaching out in love and fellowship to all" therefore, we strive to intentionally welcome new people to Pawnee City. After a heartfelt invitation to attend our church we offer to pick them up and try to make them feel more comfortable during worship by assisting with introductions of our church family.

Our handicap accessible Fellowship Hall allows us to serve the entire community— Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Weight Watchers, Red Cross Bloodmobiles, after church dinners, family dinners, funeral lunches, special mission programs, "1st Sunday of the month Meal for Missions," which is open to the public as is the United Methodist Men's annual pancake and sausage feed, United Methodist Women's November soup luncheon, district meetings, and community fellowship times. It is indeed a 'blessing' to have such a functional building not only for our members but also for special occasions.

Connectionalism and communication have certainly been increased by having social coffee times after the 4th Sunday worship services at which time we honor those having birthdays and anniversaries. We also utilized our facilities by hosting the community's annual "Evening of Music" and Our Community Vacation Bible School which included the Presbyterian Church and Christian Church. All are indeed welcome. The Pawnee County Art's Council uses our sanctuary quite often for their programs because the acoustics are great and we have a quality sound system and a functional pipe organ.

We continue to use the “United Methodist Music and Worship Planner” to plan worship services and special events. Hymnal page markers were an addition this year plus better utilization of the pew Bibles. Our teachers are using the “Faith We Sing” books, hand bells, noise makers and the children are singing special ‘action’ numbers during church, all helping to make church a memorable experience for all ages.

Worship attendance is stable which makes it easier to do special presentations.

We had one youth and alternating adults attend Annual Conference and they gave their report to the congregation on the following Sunday. Our Pastor was commissioned at Annual Conference this year (2010) during a very inspirational ceremony.

We continue to have noisy coin collections for missions. The children love to be the ‘collectors’ with their little buckets. The church also collects school supplies, clothes and non-perishable food items for the local SENCA food pantry. Through a trust fund that we administer, the church is able to pay for milk bills and other items the school identifies for any child whose family cannot afford these things. An adult Sunday school class has been started with weekly discussion and sharing time centered on the lectionary readings. This outreach-minded class now serves a free meal every 2nd Sunday to those who are hungry, feel alone or may have near empty cupboards at home. Free community meals are planned by Pastor Alan and sponsored by the church on the 5th Sunday of the month as well as on Thanksgiving, Easter, and Christmas Days. We participate in ecumenical services during Thanksgiving, Christmas and Lent with the special offerings that are taken benefiting those less fortunate than ourselves.

Although weekly offerings are down, we are on track to fulfill our Pledge to Missions, especially since we have just experienced another good harvest and received bountiful lease contracts for our church owned farms.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow---Hallelujah!

Sharilyn Karjala
Lay Leader