

## ***THE PASTOR'S TWO CENTS:***

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! My hope and prayers for you and your family is that this season brings confidence in your heart that Christ is with you always. The season of Christmas is upon us and we celebrate Christ's coming into the world. Two thousand years ago, Jesus was born in Bethlehem, was resurrected in Jerusalem and today Christ is born "again" in our hearts.

So, often I hear people make the statement that they wish the attitudes, the love, the generosity and even the sentimentalities of Christmas would last all year long. The good news is that it can. Yes, when we decide to follow Christ's teachings of loving God and loving each other with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength; the good tidings of Christmas can last throughout the year and for the rest of our lives.

This past year we have realized a 5% increase in our membership, we have seen a 9% increase in our giving and a 100% increase in the spirituality of our church. Our mission of the month program is working wonderfully as we received a beautiful banner from the Christmas Fund for tripling our giving in 2010. We are blessed with so many positive changes for our church that the future certainly looks bright.

Yet, even with such wonderful news we continue to have challenges in our midst. We have ever increasing costs to operate and maintain our building, we need to make our downstairs accessible to all, we continue to need disciples to do the work of the church and the needs of our community, inside and outside the church, continue to grow. This is a time for us to commit to one another, to God and to our church that we will come together in relationship so to meet the needs of the Body of Christ.

Shortly after the first of the year, Trinity UCC will be conducting a Thursday night worship service for those who are unable to come to church on Sundays. The order of worship will be different from Sunday morning's traditional service in that there will be educational themes that will be discussed and outside speakers who will participate in our service. Our hope for this service is that those in our community who don't have a spiritual home might find this type of service more affirming.

We continue to be confident that this next year will bring with it new visitors, old friends and a vibrant commitment from our members and friends to support the work and ministries of Trinity United Church of Christ in Coplay. May you have a joyous and prosperous New Year and we look forward to seeing you soon.

*Pastor Steve*