

May / June 2012

The Pastor's Two Cents:

Two new initiatives were started this church year; in September we began the educational aspect of the Open & Affirming (ONA) process in which we are learning why it is important for our church to welcome and affirm all genders, ages, ethnicities, races, disabilities and sexual orientations. This initiative is not only an important social justice issue but it is a critical aspect for our church to grow, let alone survive. The next, was that of the Thursday night services. These services have grown in attendance from 12 to 47 with an average attendance of approximately 25 participants. These services have not negatively impacted the attendance of our Sunday services, which was a major concern of some members and the Consistory, as on average only 2 regular attendees have switched from Sunday to Thursday. The drop in Sunday attendance has not been from a large switch but rather due to inconsistent attendance. Sunday attendance is a concern because if people don't come on Sunday it directly affects giving. When attendance drops so does the giving and then we have to start cutting back on expenses because most members don't utilize their envelopes in the manner they were developed. In order to grow, to thrive and provide the kind of church you deserve; we all must help out whether we are able to attend services or not on any particular Sunday.

Currently, you hire me as a part-time pastor and I have been volunteering a great deal of time to develop the Thursday night services in order to grow the church by providing a community outreach for Coplay residents. However, I have only so much time to give. Recently, I did not get out to see members who were homebound because I simply ran out of time in the week to care for myself and my family as well as trying to shepherd Trinity's flock. Our visitation team is going to have to fill in these holes in my schedule that I can no longer fill. There is an urgent need for members to assist with visitation; both physical visitation in the home or hospital as well as phone visitation checking in on our members.

I am very concerned that when members don't show up for weeks on end AND we as a church DON'T call them with concern if they are okay. I have been notified several times that people "WERE" in the hospital and no one notified the Pastor or the church until after they were home. Our members need to know that they are in the hearts and minds of their church family. When they don't show up for worship 2-3 weeks in a row they should EXPECT a phone call. This is how we improve our attendance on Sundays. WE LOVE OUR NEIGHBORS! We show that love through our concern. We cook meals and run errands for those who are sick or injured. This is what the church is all about.

Yes, I like our new initiatives but I believe this is an initiative that is more important than all the rest. We NEED to be more interested in the lives of our members and their well-being. I cannot give any more time as it simply doesn't exist in the week. This is a DISCIPLES responsibility; Jesus said they will know you are my followers by the love you have for each other. Let us show our LOVE for the followers of Christ in our midst. Amen

Pastor Steve