

PASTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CONGREGATION OF
UNITED EVANGELICAL CHURCH
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND
JAN. 31, 1964
for
the year 1963

Friends and Co-workers at United Evangelical Church - -

Through God's goodness we have been spared for another year, and His Church has been prospered for another year. We are grateful for His providence over us and in behalf of His Church at large, but we are particularly grateful for the blessings on this our beloved United Evangelical Church. We are mindful of those who were with us in this church militant just a year ago, but who now have been received into the church triumphant, to glorify the Lord in His very presence. We thank Him for the witness of these faithful ones who have been called, and pray that we too may be faithful at all times to this high calling to which our Christian faith calls us.

In gratitude to God we would review the past year and look into the unknown future. Beginning at the point of our services of worship in God's House on the Lord's Day and upon other occasions, we can report that services were conducted regularly each Sunday and at the special seasons of the church year. For all the Sunday services of the year, the average attendance was 437 per Sunday, a figure which reveals that a fair representation of our membership have not followed assiduously the desire of our Lord that we present ourselves very regularly in the House of the Lord for the services of worship. This figure reveals that only 41% of our membership was in church on an average throughout the year. Only at Easter, in the two services, did we have an attendance which represented 100% of our membership. We need to continue pressing home the admonition that regularity of attendance at the services of worship is the first responsibility of a Christian Church member and all other responsibilities are secondary.

Last year the decision was made at this meeting to include the Sacrament of Holy Communion at both services on the first Sunday of the month on a regular schedule and not alternate the communion services. This decision did bring an increase in our total communions for the year, the figure rising to 3482. However, again our membership need to be convicted of the necessity of more regular attendance at the Sacrament. Too many consistently depart from the sanctuary before the Sacrament instead of remaining for the Holy Supper. There is none of us so good that we cannot profit by attendance at the Holy Communion monthly.

Other statistics for 1963 are - weddings, 75; baptisms, 51; funerals, 65, of which 24 were of members. 9 Junior confirmands were given the Rite of Confirmation. 28 adults were received into membership with the church, making a total of 37 additions. Removals from membership were: by death 24; by deletion, 17; transfers out, 18; folk commended but not transferred to other churches, 14. Our total membership dropped during the year from 1048 to 1012, a net loss of 36. Nearly half of this net loss is due to the study of our membership records by the Spiritual Committee and Church Council as ordered by our Constitution and a beginning of the cleaning up of our files to bring these files into a very current condition, removing all such names of those who have no further interest in our church. This process has just gotten started and will bring further results. The constitution says that any one who has been inactive for 2 or more years and shows no interest or does not react to letters of admonition from your Council, is to be deleted from

membership. This action is not taken heartlessly but only after all attempts to reinstate the individual or family fail. We do need to bring our membership files up to date inasmuch as the requests by our denomination and Synod are based upon membership figures, and if these figures are not accurate, then our benevolence askings will not be accurate either.

The financial record will show we have pretty well met our budget locally and have made big strides forward in our benevolent contributions as a church in 1963. We have not achieved the total goals given us by our Synod and denomination as well as local denominational mission ventures. As you study the Finance reports as tabulated in the Endeavor, you can ascertain how we have striven toward these goals. Our total benevolent giving for 1963 ~~approximately~~ approximates nearly 25% of our total income, which is a commendable percentage. We still need to strive to the goal that each member of the church be an envelope contributing member, and that our continuous stewardship can be that of advocating percentage or proportionate giving. Though not all our folk are seemingly placing their voluntary giving on this Scriptural basis, your pastor feels many have prayerfully adopted this approach, and commends them for the same. May more of our folk in 1964 and beyond look at their giving to the church as being that percentage of total earnings which is taken off the top of the pay check, as cream is taken off the top of a bottle of milk, rather than being the money one has left over when all commitments have been met. The work of God through His Church is important enough to receive first place in our lives.

In reviewing the year, the chief memory has to do with the 90th anniversary, celebrated in September. This was a fine experience and its success was the result of many hours of planning by many individuals and committees. It was all very worthwhile and we can look back upon a very successful anniversary celebration. Also in this year much headway has been accomplished by our capable Council in the strengthening of our records and the clarifying of those elements which pertain to the status of active membership. Great efforts have been made to impress our folk with the necessity of maintaining active membership.

Through the efforts of Council and our people we were able to paint the gym and Friendship Hall, setting forth also a program looking to the refurbishing of our sanctuary in 1964. Also, through the contribution of our women we were able to provide the equipment whereby our sanctuary and chancel lights can be dimmed at will. We are grateful for this gift to the church.

Finally, during the year further steps of inquiry were taken to provide an interne from a Seminary or some like person to augment the staff and give assistance to the pastor. Nothing definite can be reported at this time, but definite information should be forthcoming within a month. The pastor is appreciative to Mr. Wm. Laukeman, one of our retired members, who has been serving as Parish Visitor and making certain visits under the Pastor's direction. This has already proven a most worthwhile program and will be continued into this new year.

Recommendation for 1964

The only recommendation I have regards the commitment of our church as a Blood Assurance group of the Red Cross, a program wherein for regular contributions of blood from our people, the families of our congregation are assured of having their total blood needs met. More details are needed, but a general approval at this meeting could well set this program into action.

Respectfully submitted,
Paul A. Ranke

AN OPEN LETTER TO ALL FROM YOUR CHURCH -
United Evangelical Church

Each year in November the church has to begin looking to the needs of a new year as related to the program of the church and the cost to administer that program. Each November the Finance Committee prepares the budget for the new year, for submission to the congregation for consideration and eventual approval. Each year the pastor has been using two Sundays in November to bring the message of Stewardship to the congregation.

This year, rather than speaking merely to those in the services, we would desire a concern be expressed to all the congregation, therefore we choose this open letter type of communication.

Our concern is for the effectivity of our present congregation and its growth, not merely in numbers, but also in each of our lives, to make us more effective individual Christians. These things can be brought to pass through the practice of stewardship on the part of each one, which is nothing more or less than becoming more involved in the total Christian cause. May we become specific -

1) one of the major challenges which faces this congregation is the care of its youth (from junior age up through young adulthood) and a building of these young lives into the church as consecrated Christians. Not only the future of the church but the well-being of the community is at stake. Our youth as well as our adults need to be imbued with Christian principles, to live Christian lives. United Evangelical Church has a responsibility to our people and to the community in this regard.

2) a major step in the direction of accomplishing the end would be the employ of a full-time Christian Education worker on our staff, one who would deal with youth particularly, but also with adults, and would function in the total church life. This addition to our staff would necessitate an increase in our budget of some \$5,000.00 to \$7,000.00 annually. While our stewardship has been such that we have been able to meet the expenses of the church from month to month, we have not been able to build up any excess in funds from our contributions. Thus, there is no possibility of enlarging our staff on the present income. If we did, we would suffer financial embarrassment very shortly. This we do not desire. If, then, we are to achieve this somewhat necessary staff enlargement, it can be accomplished only by an increase in our receipts through the offerings - - for instance, if our younger, non-working members and the aged pensioners would increase their giving 10¢ per Sunday and those employed at fairly good to good jobs would see fit to increase the Sunday giving by 25¢ or 50¢, with

perchance some even contributing \$1.00 more each Sunday. In this manner we could increase our total income across a year, and within a year or two achieve this necessary expansion. This is the problem, how we meet it will depend on the willingness of many of our members to do something about it.

3) in the meantime, this challenge to serve the needs of our youth, as well as in other segments of the church life, can be met if there is a willingness on the part of more folk to give some time out of the week in Christian service as volunteers in the youth work and in other phases of the program at United Church. Many of us have need to consider our commitment to Christ in terms of the time we give our church in addition to attendance at the services of worship and the meeting of our groups.

The pastor, the workers on the Council as well as those who serve in the Church School, the choirs and in official capacities in our groups, are anxious to increase the effectivity of our total service to our people and our community. But the present staff of volunteers cannot do it all. Many cannot, perceptibly, increase the amount of time they are giving to the cause of the church and its impact upon people. Thus the need for further workers on a volunteer basis is very real. As each one of us has a responsibility as a steward under God, may we consider these great needs and respond to the call as it comes to us.

Yours for a more effective work at United Evangelical.

The Pastor and Church Council