

PASTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CONGREGATION OF
UNITED EVANGELICAL CHURCH
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND
Jan. 28, 1966
for
the year 1965

Friends and Co-Workers of United Evangelical congregation:

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His Holy Name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits." With these words of the Psalmist upon our lips we look at the record and life of our congregation for the year 1965. Truly our hearts ought always to bring adoration unto our God, being conscious of His goodness toward all His creation and also of the blessings received from out His bountiful hands. We say "our church" but it is "His Church" and "His Work" we are privileged to do. Thus our prospering of His work brings joy to our hearts and the challenge He gives us should result in resolution in our efforts.

The congregation has been strengthened during this past year, if not by large numbers of additions to our membership, since we receive only those who have real intent for membership and after a period of testing and instruction, then by a strength which has been evidenced by the fact that our total attendances for all services during the year was larger than last year, and the Sunday services average for all Sundays of the year increased from 438 to 445.

Total communions were also on the increase of nearly 500 more than communed last year, in spite of the fact that this year's figure did not include private communions where as the figure for last year did.

The statistics of the congregation are as follows: Baptisms, 47; Marriages, 53; Funerals, 81, of which 24 were listed as members of the church. 42 youth were confirmed on Palm Sunday and 15 adults were received into membership with the church, making a total of 57 accessions, plus 24 reinstatements, making a grand total of 81. 86 are shown as losses to the church through the year, including those transferred out, those who were called in death and those put on the inactive listing. Beginning the year with a total of 924 members, and adding the accessions and subtracting the removals, we reach the figure of 919 as our membership as of Jan. 1, 1966.

When we look at the year past, the completion of the much needed Church School Building renovation stands out as a fine accomplishment. The staff is now proud of the facilities, and is working hard in their field of Christian Education, seeking ~~max~~ to strengthen the program and seeking also to secure adequate furniture and accessories to complement the "new look" of the building. They are planning greater use of the property, for instance, the School of Religion of our Chesapeake Association has been invited here for 4 Tuesdays, in November of this year. Also more church and community features will be scheduled for this building.

We are very happy we did not have to secure a mortgage to pay for this renovation program but could use our own funds, which we must now repay over the next years, for these are in the most part protected funds of the Memorial Fund which we desire to nurture as an endowment of the church.

The membership study, completed a year ago, is the basis of continuing checking on our membership, to maintain it at an actual figure of live strength.

The greatest problem before us as a church is the matter of our youth, and adequate programming for youth. At present I feel the congregation is sinning against itself in that the youth are not being cared for as they should. We at present have no real youth work for our own youth, outside the splendid work being done by our Girl's Guild and the rather dormant Junior Council, dormant as far as other-than-Sunday organization and activity. The Friday evening teen nights ~~is~~ continuing, and we have added a some paid staff for this, but this is set up on a purely recreational b

basis and does nothing to train youth in real churchmanship and Christian living. There are no other activities outside the Jr. Hi and Senior Hi Church School departments and the Scouting programs in operation; no other activities wherein the spiritual and personal needs of our youth are cared for. We have a wonderful contingent of young people here, but they are not being saved for the church because of the lack of work among our youth. They grow up to have less than a strong tie to their church and Lord.

A second major problem is the follow-through on members and member-families who move from a state of activity to one of disinterest, a follow-through of the many who are married here, or who have babies baptized, or of strangers who come to our service and have no church home. We are seeking to use voluntary help at this point but the problem is larger than this.

Your pastor carries a very full schedule in the many-sided facets of the ministry of this large parish, and seeks to do all he can in all the areas of bringing new folk into the church and preserving those who are already in membership, but finds it an impossibility to place more in his schedule. Thus the only way of achieving these noticeable lacks in our service as a congregation, is to secure additional full-time staff personnel.

A Christian Education director, probably a woman, would be able to fulfill many of the needs, even to calling in the homes, and would probably mean less than an assistant pastor in terms of budget needs. The pastor is at the point of being willing to accept either a Christian Education Director or an Assistant Pastor. The church ought not wait too many years before securing such additional staff. However, the real point here is that to secure this additional staff, the stewardship of our folk will of necessity have to be increased appreciably over its present status. The achievement of this may require some forthright plans and procedures on the part of the Finance Committee and the Church Council, with discussion and final action by the congregation. I pray that this matter may not lie dormant for too much longer, for it is serious, and the whole life of the future of this congregation depends upon action taken at this point.

I cannot bring my report to a close but that I express appreciation and thanks for the services of those on the staff as we've worked together in a most splendid fashion; to the members of the 1965 Church Council for loyalty given the church and pastor; to the choirs, the Church School staff, and members and friends of each organization of the church for their efforts in a total program which I feel was forward looking and progressive. It has been a good year because the Lord has blessed us and because many of you have worked at your job at the church, not counting the cost, but out of love the church and for your Lord. This is excellent, and I thank you.

And now, may we pray the Lord to bless us and keep us in the future
Sincerely,

Paula Rasche