

United Church of Christ
Baltimore, Md.

Annual Report for the year 1968

Here, in the first days of 1969, on the beginning of a new year of grace, all the folk of United Church ought to be grateful to Almighty God as we are privileged to meet to review this past year. In many ways this year has been a good one for our congregation, for the spirit of togetherness and fellowship has been intensified during the year. We can attest to a lack of dissension in the congregation which is always worthy of commendation, for a congregation must be unified to be strong. I feel that in this year in which we celebrated our 95th birthday, there were signs of real life in the congregation for which we are grateful to Almighty God.

Though this was a good year, we cannot report an advance in average attendances at the services of worship. The trend of unconcern for one's presence in God's House, which began some years ago in our nation in all areas but the suburbs, has continued. Coupled with this is the effect that the change in our own community has upon the church. We are beginning to realize more severely the movement of young couples to areas outside Canton and the irregularity in attendance that this distance factor seems to foster. Though still above the 50% mark in average attendance for the months of the year, save July and August, our average figure has dropped to 390 for the year 1968. Likewise our communion total for the 21 communion services has dropped to a 3211 total, nearly 200 less than last year.

Other statistics show there were 42 baptisms, 44 weddings, 62 funerals. The number of additions to membership, including the 28 confirmands, stands at the figure of 63, the highest in my pastorate here. However, the subtractions show 10 transferred out, 16 deaths, 37 deletions, also making a total of 63. Thus our membership at the beginning of 1969 stands exactly as it was a year ago - ~~225~~ 704

Review of the year

Chief among our achievements for the year was the celebration of our 95th birthday with the special services and the anniversary dance. All who labored on committees did such a good job that we can look back upon a very successful celebration.

Another achievement was the Retreat at New Windsor in which pastors and about 25 laymen spent some solid hours on a Friday evening and Saturday in looking at the church, our church, in terms of its real mission ~~in~~ in our day and our time. Since then there has been a follow-up meeting which brought together even other leaders in which concentration was directed to the life of the congregation in more precise detail. I am confident that much wonderful good will come in the congregation ~~in~~ in this and succeeding years because of this Retreat.

This achievement can be reported as a reality because of the presence of Pastor Weisser in our midst. He has made a valuable contribution to our church life, not only in getting into homes for visits but also in beginning a concern for adult work in our parish. Of a certainty, our total church life will be enhanced because of Pastor Weisser's presence with us.

This year has seen the birth of two new organizations - the

United Men's Fellowship and the Youth Fellowship. We pray for both of these good success in this new year. Also we have begun operation of a Sunday Worship-time Nursery, wherein we can have our children cared for during the 10:15 worship experience. And, I believe, the Tuesday Sewing group had its inception this ~~Appreciation expressed~~ past year also. This is another fine group which is doing very well.

Appreciation expressed

One of the reasons I desire to present an annual report is that it gives to me the opportunity publicly/ to express appreciation to co-workers in the church without whom the work could not be accomplished at all. I am so grateful for wonderful service and loyalty given the church on the part of my staff. I have already thanked Dr. Weisser. Now I give special mention to the ~~other~~ other staff members - the secretary and helpers in the office, the caretaking staff, the Director of Music. Further I need to specially include the members of the Church Council, each of them individually, for the loyalty they have shown the church. I point up that ~~four~~ four good men left the Council and we shall miss their presence with us - namely Alfred Johnson, Richard Single, Wm. Single, III and George Sauer. Thank you, each for services given. We also welcomed new members to the 1969 Council, and glad to have them with us. Then too, a vital part of our church life are the organizations and the Church School. To all people in responsible positions in 1968 in this phase of the church life, I say 'thank you.' This includes those also who served in Scouting, the Teen Nites as well as in the choirs.

Challenges of the new year

Further thought and planning will be made by the small group I referred to above as to making our Sunday experiences more meaningful. Their deductions will then be brought before Church Council for implementation and incorporation into our life. Some of these promised activities will require cooperation on the part of individuals from our church family to put them into operation. Please give your help when asked.

Each of the members needs to be challenged to assist in offsetting this trend of dropping attendances by making certain that as far as each one is concerned, the individual attendance at God's House for worship will be very regular. Just because a trend seems to be functioning elsewhere does not mean it must be operative here. Not if we don't want it to and will work to prohibit it from occurring. Also we could have such a love and loyalty for our church that we are eager to tell others about it, and thus invite others to come with us to worship.

A physical challenge will be the provision of new carpeting for the sanctuary during this year, for our present carpet is badly worn in spots. This has been written into the budget by the Finance Committee and it is hoped you members will make your envelop contributions of a size which will allow the Church Council to expend the funds necessary for the ~~expedition of this~~ fulfilling of this plan.

Closing

I appreciate being the pastor here and having such a fine congregation. May we continue to be devoted to the doing of God's Work in our church as well as in our lives. God bless you all.

Cordially submitted,

Jan. 31, 1968

Paul G. Rank