

The Chimes – February 2010 **“The State of the Church”**

During the last week of January each year, the President of the United States addresses both houses of Congress and delivers his “State of the Union” address, in which he attempts to inform Congress and the nation as to the “state” or condition of our country, as he sees it. By the time you receive this copy of The Chimes, the President will already have delivered his “State of the Union” Address.

As your pastor, I thought it might be useful to you that I relate to you the “State of the Church” as I see it. First, just some basic stats: In the financial realm, we had a net loss in 2009 in cash assets of \$15,594.53. This is the smallest loss we have had in a number of years. All of us have worked very hard in reducing expenses, and practicing frugality in every area, in an attempt to meet our goal of having a balanced budget by December 31, 2009. Inasmuch as we were unable to meet that goal, the Finance Committee recommended, and the Church Body approved a reduction in our 2010 budget in the amount of \$14,900.00. This reduction is spread over several budget areas, including a reduction in staff salaries. Thus, we have reduced our 2010 budget by approximately the amount of our 2009 deficit. So now, once again, we are setting a goal to have a balanced budget by December 31, 2010. You can help us reach that goal by remaining faithful in the giving of your tithes and offerings.

In the membership realm, six of our members moved their membership to other churches during 2009, while fifteen people moved their membership into our church, and we added two members by baptism. Fifteen members of our Church family passed away during 2009. Therefore, we experienced a net loss in membership of four members. This is also the lowest loss of membership in several years.

I am encouraged that we have been able to significantly reduce the flow of red ink, as well as the loss in membership. But much remains to be done. So right about now, I hope I am hearing each one of you asking, “Pastor, what can I do to help?” I am so glad you asked! Here are some things you can do to help stabilize our church so that we can continue to offer the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those in our community.

First, every single one of us can pray. From the most active ones of us to the ones in assisted living or nursing homes, every one of us can pray for our church. Secondly, you can be faithful in your attendance and your financial support. We are family. When you are not here in worship with us, you leave a huge vacancy that no one else can fill. And if you are not faithful in your financial support, we will not have a balanced budget. Third, you can invite someone to worship with us each week. It is so very important that each one of us reach out to our family members, neighbors, and acquaintances with an invitation to worship.

Other matters of interest: We have been approached by CenterPointe Assembly of God in regards to leasing our CLC building for approximately one year. CenterPointe is in the process of building a new worship center on the Beltline Highway, and needs a place for their congregation to worship while their new building is constructed. We have elected a committee to investigate the possibility of doing this lease. The committee will meet this week to begin that process. We will keep you posted.

The Ladies Week End Away will take place February 5 & 6 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Daphne. Ms. Diana Byrd, daughter of Dr. Bryce Evans, will lead the conference.

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We will continue our annual focus for Lent with a study of The Sermon On The Mount. We will conclude with Holy Week services culminating in the Easter Celebration. We will begin a study of the book of Acts during “Ordinary Time.”

Our first trip this year will be to Monroeville, where we will attend the performance of “To Kill A Mocking Bird.” Of course, we will stop at the catfish house before the performance. (LOL)

We hope to have our new Web site up and running smoothly by the end of February.

There is much, much more, but space is limited. We have much to be thankful for. We have much work to do. Your pastor and your staff count it a joy to work for you and for the Kingdom. To God be the glory....

Dr. Creel