

Elmwood Christian Church

October 2019

"Good News from your Pastor!"

Hebrews 10: 24-25a (NRSV) reads: "24 And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another..." and Ephesians 4: 11-16 (NRSV) reads: "11 The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. ...15 But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knitted together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love."

Can you believe it's fall already? Where did our summer go? It feels like our year is flying past and before we know it, we'll be hailing the year 2020! Now, I don't know about you, but the year "2020" feels like something unreal- more like something we would have heard about from George, Judy, Jane, or Elroy Jetson (remember them? I just dated myself!) than we would anticipate seeing our own hands writing on our checks in a little over 3 short months! And yet, those months, too, will fly by, and we will indeed be living in that iconic year. "Iconic" because the numbers 20/20 can refer to having clear vision in both eyes when standing back 20' away from something.

I've been doing a lot of thinking lately. Well, thinking, and maybe preparing for our upcoming year as I "stand back 20 foot" and take a good, hard look at our church. For example, we do a lot of ministry at Elmwood CC. We have an active CWF group who meet monthly and they contribute to many, many worthwhile causes such as Child Saving Institute, the women's shelter, and many, many others, and they contribute to and work at the Bess Streeter Aldrich Home; we reach out to our community through Operation Santa; this year a couple of our folks have decided that they want to lead "Trunk or Treat" for the community; we participate in the ecumenical VBS; several of our folks work in and contribute to Bits and Pieces...and the list goes on. All of these ministries are good! All of these ministries are worthwhile!

Lately, however, I've heard a lot of people saying that the same people do everything and that those people are *tired*! I've heard a lot of people saying that they feel a sense of... dryness; a sense of being... *unsettled*. What do you think is going on? Do you think God is trying to get our attention? What might that feel like?

As you all know, we recently had our Regional Minister, Rev. Chris Morton, offer to journey with us if we would chose to go through a transition into a missional church, seeking to remain faithful to where God is calling us to work in today's world. We had a "Blue Sky Planning Event" and we communed together consuming good fellowship and a meal at the event. It was good, but... I haven't heard a lot of interest since, although to be fair, I was out sick at our last board meeting so I may have missed some conversation and excitement there.

Still, I've been thinking about all of the things Elmwood Christian *could* be doing, but we *aren't*. For example, although we have wonderful Sunday School classes for all ages, we *could* have a vibrant youth group... but we don't. We *could* offer free, community meals... but we don't. We *could* offer an after-school program... but we don't. We *could* have a moms' group...or a singles' group...or a couples' group...or even a joy group (which offers group social events to all adults at once- think bus trips, movies, zoo trips, etc.)... but we don't. We *could* have a Stephen's Ministry... but we don't. We *could* have an active spirituality group...but we don't. Any other ideas floating out there? What's your idea?

I imagine that a lot of you have ministries that you'd like to see our church doing. (i.e., "I wish we'd (fill in the blank),". Here's the thing, though: you might *wish* that we had these ministries (and others!) going, but unless someone is willing to step up and direct them, they may not get accomplished. In fact, they probably won't. They won't, because unless folks step up and answer God's Call on their lives, unless folks offer their gifts and talents for the upbuilding of God's Church, things will stay pretty quiet around the building. And abundant life is *noisy*! I mean, just think how quiet it is inside a hospital room where someone is really sick vs. a room full of happy, full-of-life kids! There's a big difference, isn't there? There is.

Now, with the Blue Sky Event, we've taken a first step. Honestly, though, it was a safe, baby step. Meaning: we really didn't risk much, although we did put some time in to sincerely listen to each other and for that, I praise all of us. But, if we don't follow up on it, if we don't take another step- no matter how small- what will become of that day? Change won't come and things will revert to how they've always been? We'll remain a "nice, small, quiet country church"? Something easily manageable and as comfortable to us as an old flannel shirt? Maybe, but what if God is asking us to step out of the boat, ignore the waves and the wind around us, and, keeping our eyes fixed firmly on Christ, take another step into what scares us immensely? Do we have Peter's faith? (Mat. 14: 22-33)

Wrapping our heads around possible new ministries takes courage and vision. For example, I'm pretty sure many of us might like a vibrant youth program again, right? (and this was just the first thing that came to my mind that I've heard people wish for.) Well, it takes more than just saying we "want" that! What would a youth group look like? Did the one we used to have work? What didn't work well? Why? Where were the areas of improvement? What days would we meet? Would we serve food? Would we

take the kids on short community mission trips? Would we have 1 Sunday a month be led by our youth? We have to consider all of these questions, vision, and then talk together even more! And then... if you feel passionate about the youth, you have to step up and put your feet where your ideas are and work to ensure that God's Church can have the best program possible.

As your Pastor, I am here to help you develop your ideas and to support you in whatever ministry path God is calling you to in *this* Body of Christ. I have the resources, I have the contacts, (or I'll get them!) but if you don't come to me, if you don't talk with each other, or if you don't choose to move your part of the body, I can't move it for you- I can't make the connections nor give you the resources that would help you! We're all *parts* of the same body.

So, is God calling to you to be a SS teacher? A parish nurse? A choir director/member? The director of a clothes closet? An after-school program director? A free community meals director? Something else here? *What is that?* Have you prayed about it? Read your scriptures? And, please don't tell me that God isn't Calling you to service in the Church. As your Pastor, I know better! God calls ALL of us! (We just have different tasks to do!)

God equips us (Heb. 13: 20-21) with gifts and talents for our Call and then helps us develop those gifts as we answer God's Call. *But we've got to answer...or not. It's our choice.*

Honestly, baby steps are forward movement. Baby steps are OK, because God doesn't require us to accomplish everything in any set time frame- remember, God moves slowly- it's humans who want to rush through things, and we generally make a mess when we do! It's OK to be afraid, too- Peter made forward movement- until he looked at how different it was outside of the safety of what he knew (i.e., the boat!), became afraid, and began to sink- but even then, he called out and God still caught him so that he didn't drown. It was Peter that God made the rock of the church (18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. ---Mat. 16:18).

Folks, we *NEED* every hand, every finger, every appendage, joint and ligament pulling *together* and offering their talents and gifts in order to work and build up the whole body of Christ here. We need your faith! We need your courage and vision! And then.... Wow! I can't even imagine what God might do here! Our next step rests in your choice. And yours. And yours....And...Amen.

See you in Church!

Love, Pastor Dianna



A big THANK YOU to Kurk, Kris, Jim, Penny, Maggie, Scott, Anne, and Lily for picking up the trash along the highway south of Elmwood. We all appreciate your hard work.

Attendance and Offering

| | | |
|------|----|-----------|
| 9/1 | 27 | \$ 647.30 |
| 9/8 | 24 | \$ 214.25 |
| 9/15 | 28 | \$ 634.00 |
| 9/22 | 26 | \$ 839.00 |
| 9/29 | 26 | \$ 469.25 |

Bits and Pieces

| | |
|--------------------|------------|
| Sales | \$ 3190.91 |
| Commission | \$ 797.73 |
| Rent | \$ 400.00 |
| Labor | \$ 50.00 |
| Phone | \$ 57.31 |
| Clothes to Lincoln | \$ 80.00 |
| Trash Bags | \$ 26.00 |
| Op Santa Donation | \$ 190.00 |
| Town Clean Up | \$ 60.00 |
| Balance | \$ 1529.81 |

September



Christian Women's Fellowship September 4, 2019

President Carolyn Golden opened the meeting with the CWF prayer. Those present were Carolyn Golden, Judy Douglas, Mary Peterson, Jenifer Irons, Deb Lenz, Jan Backemeyer, Shirley Schulz, Brenda Vogt, and Kris Shrader.

The meeting was at Deb's. We enjoyed seeing her home addition/remodeling project. There were several prayer requests. The minutes from May were approved as read. Carolyn shared several thank you notes. The treasurer's report gave a balance of \$1848.87 in checking and \$359.03 in Operation Santa. The savings account has been folded into the checking and mission fund into Operation Santa.

Old Business: Carolyn reported on the Aldrich luncheon served August 27th. There were 16 ladies in attendance and we made \$200.

New Business: September 9 at 1 we will meet to organize and clean the new storeroom. There are two Aldrich luncheons in December, the 6th and the 18th. Trunk or Treat was discussed. Deb will talk to Carae and see about having it in our church parking lot on October 27th. It was decided to divide \$100 between the 3 groups representing our church for candy. A luncheon is planned for either March 14 or March 21 for the Elmwood and Murdock Methodist church ladies. These ladies always invite us to a nice luncheon in December. Judy will check with Sharon Crosby about giving her program on purses.

Community Report: September 8- lunch at the center and thrift store open; September 18-Trent Shrader program on conservation; September 21-Apple Jack festival.

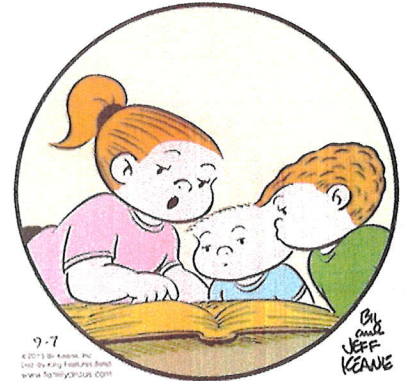
The meeting was closed with the CWF benediction. Deb served refreshments. The next meeting is Wednesday October 2 at Judy's home in Lincoln. Judy will have the lesson.

Respectfully submitted ~ *Kristyn Shrader, Secretary*



*Every time you see a discarded coin,
Stop, pick it up and say a prayer.*

~~~~~  
"In God We Trust"



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www.familygroup.com  
By  
JEFF  
KEANE  
"See? It's one of the Ten  
Commandments: You kids better  
do 'zactly what thy Mommy and  
Daddy tell ya to do."

## Church Board Minutes September 11, 2019

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Kurk Shrader at 7:00 p.m. Kurk opened the meeting with prayer. Those in attendance were Kris Shrader, Kurk Shrader, Randy Willey, Brenda Vogt, and Jim Wolcott. The board reports were reviewed. Brenda moved and Jim seconded a motion to accept the reports as submitted. Motion passed.

### Old Business:

Cass County Sheriff review: no report

Visioning activity update: The board appreciated Pastor Morton's direction at the meeting and plan to keep him informed on future planning. No action was taken on the information gathered at the meeting due to Pastor Dianna being absent.

Trees (branches over parking lot): Kurk and Jim have visited with the neighbors, who believe they have documents to prove who has ownership of them. Any action concerning removing the trees was tabled to the October or November board meeting.

Parsonage steps: Jim Wolcott, Scott Pope, and John Golden remodeled the front parsonage steps. The project is done and looks very nice.

Church directory: Kurk reported the cost of printing was \$206 dollars. \$200 had been approved for printing. Folders for the directory will be \$50. Jim moved and Randy seconded a motion to approve the additional expenditures for the directory. Motion passed.

### New Business:

Adopt-A -Highway: scheduled for September 21. Meet at 9 at the church.

Church use, members and non-profits: Pastor Dianna had inquired about allowing the yoga group that meets in the park to use the church in inclement/winter weather. Brenda moved and Randy seconded a motion to allow the yoga group to utilize the church at no cost as long as the pastor or another church member is in attendance. Motion passed.

Budgetary item, continuing education carry over: Following discussion by the board, the fiscal year (January to December), as opposed to the contract year (August to July) will be used as the guideline for spending/reimbursement of continuing education expenses with no carry over. Pastor Dianna's requested expense was within the allowed amount agreed to in the letter of call; therefore, no motion was needed.

Jim moved and Randy seconded a motion to enter executive session at 8:05. Motion passed. Brenda moved and Randy seconded a motion to exit executive session at 8:40. Motion passed.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9 p.m. The next meeting is October 9 at 7.

Respectfully submitted, *Kristyn Shrader*, Secretary

JESUS  
DIDN'T SAY,  
"I AM FINISHED."  
HE SAID,  
"IT IS FINISHED."  
HE WAS JUST  
GETTING  
STARTED.



### The World is a Puzzle—Author Unknown

There was a man who had a little boy that he loved very much. Every day after work, the man would come home and play with the little boy. One day, while the man was at work, he realized that he had extra work to do for the evening, and that he wouldn't be able to play with his little boy. But, he wanted to be able to give the boy something to keep him busy. So, looking around his office, he saw a magazine with a large map of the world on the cover. He got an idea. He removed the map, and then patiently tore it up into small pieces. Then he put all the pieces in his coat pocket. When he got home, the little boy came running to him and was ready to play. The man explained that he had extra work to do and couldn't play just now. He led the little boy into the dining room, and taking out all the pieces of the map, he spread them on the table. He explained that it was a map of the world, and that by the time the boy could put it back together, his extra work would be finished, and they could both play. Surely this would keep the child busy for hours, he thought. About half an hour later the boy came to the man and said, "Okay, it's finished. Can we play now?" The man was surprised, saying, "That's impossible. Let's go see." And sure enough, there was the picture of the world, all put together, every piece in its place. The man said, "That's amazing! How did you do that?" The boy said, "It was simple. On the back of the page was a picture of a man. When I put the man together the whole world fell into place."

(I'm sure you figured it out--- the man in the picture was Jesus!)

### Elmwood Christian Church General Fund Report

|                         | August               | Y-T-D 2019            |
|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Total Income            | <u>\$ 2,609.01</u>   | <u>\$ 28,289.32</u>   |
| Expenses:               |                      |                       |
| Mission                 | \$ (100.00)          | \$ (1,010.00)         |
| Building & Maintenance  | \$ (915.17)          | \$ (8,262.19)         |
| Miscellaneous           | \$ -                 | \$ (1,300.72)         |
| Parsonage               | \$ (150.74)          | \$ (1,423.65)         |
| Pastor                  | \$ (4,225.79)        | \$ (32,549.12)        |
| Sunday School           | \$ -                 | \$ (365.93)           |
| Total Expense           | <u>\$ (5,391.70)</u> | <u>\$ (44,911.61)</u> |
| Shortage                | \$ (2,782.69)        | \$ (16,622.29)        |
| Thrift Store Transfers  |                      |                       |
| Regular                 | \$ 200.00            | \$ 1,600.00           |
| Extra to cover expenses | \$ 4,000.00          | \$ 16,000.00          |
| Building Fund Transfers | \$ -                 | \$ -                  |
| Total                   | <u>\$ 4,200.00</u>   | <u>\$ 17,600.00</u>   |
| Cash Over/(Short)       | <u>\$ 1,417.31</u>   | <u>\$ 977.71</u>      |

Randy Willey, Treasurer

# TRUNK-OR-TREAT

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!

Start planning! We want you to help with the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Trunk-Or-Treat event hosted by the Elmwood Christian Church, Murdock Methodist Church, and Elmwood Methodist Church.



Date: Sunday, October 27<sup>th</sup>

Time: 2:00-4:00 PM

Place: Elmwood Christian Church Parking Lot

\*\*In case of rain, we will move inside the church.

Lots of fun was had by all last year. Let's continue to make this a fun and safe event for the children of our congregations and communities. Please let Deb Lenz (402-450-3034) know if you will be

joining us.

We look forward to seeing you there!

