

*What does God require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God. — Micah 6:8*

## The Pastor's Report

Sometimes even for those who are heavily invested in our church it is hard to keep up with what is going on. Lately, I have heard several recurring questions being asked. The first question has to do with budget. The second one has to do with the group appointed by Deacons and Personnel to address staffing issues. And the third question is about Sabbath Sunday. Here's what I can tell you about each of those questions.

Having entered 2010 with a deficit of \$44,000 for 2009, Pullen people generously and graciously responded to an early January challenge to close that gap. As a result, we ended 2009 with an \$8,000 surplus. An amazing turnaround! Now, we are faced with pledging our 2010 budget and as we approach February 14—the day we vote on our budget—we are still some \$80,000 from our goal. If you have seen our 2010 proposed budget you may have noted that the personnel and program budgets represent a 7.7% decrease over last year's budget and an overall budget decrease of 5%. The 2.7 percentage difference is due to the \$14,000 increase in our debt payment service for 2010. While these numbers present a challenge for us, the budget that the Finance Committee has put before us is not out-of-reach for our congregation. Pledging our 2010 budget will require those who have not yet made a financial commitment to do so and for those who have to consider if they are in a position to increase their pledge. I am confident, that if we choose to, we will pledge our budget and continue the important work that we are doing in so many places and with so many people.

In mid-December, the Deacon Council and Personnel Committee appointed representatives from their respective groups to design a process for our church to discuss our staffing needs. This group consists of Serena Buckner, Sue Creech, Lou Fabrizio, and Jonathan Sledge from Personnel Committee; and Jack Lemons, Ann Sayers, and Brooks Wicker from the Deacon Council. As you may have read in the last issue of *PullenNews* they have been meeting since late December. It is my understanding that they will make their first report to the congregation at our February 14 congregational meeting. It has been, and continues to be, my understanding that they will suggest a process that will provide everyone with an opportunity to have input into any staffing decisions made by our church. Pullen has a rich history of making sure our decision-making processes are transparent, honest, and inclusive. I trust this process will be no different.

As for Sabbath Sunday—the Deacon Council voted at their January meeting to continue honoring the fourth Sunday as “Sabbath Sunday.” While honoring the fourth Sunday as church-wide Sabbath time can present programming challenges, there is great benefit in taking time as whole community to rest and experience a different pace. It is my hope that each of us will continue to reflect on all the ways we keep the Sabbath holy. Such reflection calls for intentionality. Honoring the fourth Sunday as community Sabbath time is one simple practice that nurtures our spiritual growth.

I want to close by sharing with you what I said in my pastor's report to Deacons at their January meeting. 2010 offers us an opportunity to discover, discern, and recommit to what we feel God is calling us to be, at this time, in our world. There is no question that there are challenges facing us. But as I shared on Sunday, I believe that it is in facing our challenges and in choosing how to use our power as a congregation that we will find clarity about our calling and our place. It is my great hope and expectation that we will become, through this year of challenge and opportunity, exactly the church we are meant to be right now. As I enter 2010 I feel tremendous gratitude to be a part of the Pullen community.

—Nancy



### Congregational Meeting

Please plan to attend a regularly-scheduled congregational meeting on February 14 at 12:15 PM in Finlator Hall. Light refreshments will be served. Please let Libby Stephens know if you need childcare ([lstephens@pullen.org](mailto:lstephens@pullen.org)).

On the agenda:

- The Finance Committee's recommendation for a final 2010 budget.
- A report from the Deacon/Personnel sub-committee to discern the staffing process.
- Other agenda items may be presented at the meeting for discussion.

—Ed Gibbon, Chair  
Coordinating Council