



“WILL YOU STAND WITH US?”

1 Corinthians 16:1-4

November 25, 2007

Let's Open the Gates in 2008

Pastor Eric S. Ritz

I would like to open with an illustration from Coach Bill Belichick of the New England Patriots. Shortly after they won their first Super Bowl – they held a banquet to celebrate their achievement of the past year. Near the close of the dinner he presented every coach – trainer – and player with a specially made T-shirt and sweatshirt. However, the T-shirts did not say ‘Super Bowl Champs’ like everyone thought they would. Instead the T-shirt contained the playing schedule of the next year’s games. Beside each game scheduled was a large question mark. It was the coach’s way of saying last year’s victories guarantee absolutely nothing for the coming year. The same hard work – sacrifice – and teamwork that propelled them to victory would be needed in the coming year.

We here at EUMC have had 5 great years. For the fifth consecutive year we will show growth in our church membership. For a church that had been declining for 20 straight years – that is a significant achievement. This year we will show a net gain of **12**. Two thirds of all Protestant churches across the United States of American declined rather than show a gain. We are on the right track – and we must not allow ourselves to derail and get off the track ever again. Jim High and Laverne believe we are on the right track to meet all of our financial and faith commitments this year.

However, our achievements do not mean we can take the year 2008 for granted. Next Sunday the **2008 Ministry Action Plan** will be available for you to review. It will be presented to the Administrative Board this coming Tuesday night. Some folks call it a budget. For me it is our **Ministry Action Plan**. It really is a theological and faith document about our church fellowship. It is a Mission Statement with numbers.

Once again we will try to put a face or picture onto our Ministry Action Plan. I hope this presentation will inform – illuminate – and inspire us to once again invest our lives and resources into the kingdom of God.

Today, I have invited various professional staff and members of the Lay Ministry team and Multimedia Team to make this Ministry Action Plan come alive. In that spirit – I invite you to give your undivided attention to this presentation.

God's Children Sing

Cindy Sierk

Children are innately drawn to music. They learn best through moving and listening. God's Children Sing is the faith based curriculum of Musikgarten, an early childhood music education program. From birth children love music and as we meet each week we help them channel their energy and focus their attention as they enjoy learning (and they don't know they are learning because it is fun).

This program uses music and movement to provide musical, physical, emotional, social and cognitive growth. We have fun learning simple musical concepts like pitch and rhythm, moving to music, playing singing games and activities.

There are numerous benefits from this program, including language, concentration, social interaction, fine motor skills, problem-solving skills and teamwork. These skills contribute to success in all areas of the child's life.

Our focus is on building a foundation of music enjoyment and success. The emphasis of God's Children Sing is not preparing songs for presenting in church, but children attending will be ready for more formal music training when they reach the recommended age. That next step will be a children's choir setting. By next fall we will have the potential of having enough children to begin a choir. Thankfully our children's department is growing in number and we will be able to offer this activity.

I encourage all parents of children ages 2-7 to take advantage of this program. We meet Sunday mornings at 8:30 am., Monday evenings at 7:00 with the parents and on Wednesday evenings the children come without the parents.

Worship Commission

Doug Wimer

What Cindy has been talking about is the earliest level in the building of the church music program we described last year. To refresh your memory, we discussed a biblical music ministry that consists of the cultivation in the Holy Spirit, the development of the necessary musical skills and abilities, and increasing musical and textual understanding. Our goals are to glorify God, serving Him in worship and outreach and equipping His church for worship and mission.

There are many levels to the program and God's Children Sing is the earliest level. The second level of the program will be a primer choir. At this level, children may engage in an organized musical activity with the very practical goal of performance, for lack of a better word. You see, God's Children Sing is a program of awakening the child's musical senses and developing motor skills, etc. It is not and should not be used for performing. The very young which make up the class should not have the stress of preparing a presentation – they are to develop skills and not be aware of it but just enjoying the fun of

music with a parent or other relative. Furthermore, the young children very quickly become aware when they are just a spectacle for the amusement of adults. The primer choir, however, is designed for musical presentations but without being tied to a schedule. When they are ready with a song, it is scheduled. When they sing a song or anthem, it is for worship and not for amusement or entertainment. They may at this time begin the process of reading music from the printed page, being taught all the things necessary to get a firm foundation as a Christian singer and chorister.

As Cindy noted, next fall we may have enough graduates from GCS to begin this next phase of our program. Just so you are prepared for this, we will need at least three adults in addition to the director to help the children along. So when the primer choir arrives, we will be soliciting adults, that includes you teenagers, for help. This is exciting to report to you because it is an activity I have been looking forward to for years. It is a ministry that can engage and bind a church together because it is the ministry of discipleship in Jesus Christ, given by the Holy Spirit, to the glory of God. Will you stand with us?

Trustees Report Don Weaver

The Board of Trustees team oversees and is responsible for many things, such as church buildings and properties, insurances, supplies, office equipment, electric and fuel usages, heat and cooling maintenance, elevator service and inspections and many other items. These costs and services require about 16% of the annual budget or \$80,000. However, when capitol improvement is required such as new windows, large painting projects, building additions and renovations, this all requires additional giving by the church.

The Board of Trustees are nine people who have been asked to serve by the Lay Leadership Commission for a 3 year term. They are not allowed to serve more than 2 consecutive terms in a row.

The members on the board are:
Don Weaver – Chairman
Fred Brownlee – Vice Chairman
Betty Layton – Secretary
Harper Layton
Gary Bich
Mary Lowry
Tim Martin
Bob Myles
Jim Rayfield

Dick and Anna Law are administrators of the cemetery and work with the Trustees as part of the team.

Much has been done and is happening to keep the church buildings and property in good condition.

The custodian, Keith and Sharon Benton, are doing a satisfactory job and respond to the directions of Betty in this area.

Fred Brownlee is the one who has been in touch with our contractor for mowing and snow removal.

Betty and Mary along with the others have been housecleaning the kitchen at least quarterly in the past.

The spring and fall maintenance for the heating and air conditioning systems is done by the Witmer Company and Bob Myles is the person who contracts and deals with them. Bob also has been programming the thermostats.

Harper assisted by Betty painted halls and rooms, trimmed shrubbery, scrubbed many areas, cleaned and organized closets, cleaned windows and blinds, repaired broken and damaged things, etc. They will be missed after six years of much appreciated hard work. Their talents and dedication to the congregation and our God has been impressive.

Jim Rayfield has made many cabinets, expanded stages, painted backboards, made furniture, weather stripped doors and more.

Looking ahead, the sanctuary ceiling needs to be painted. We're looking at security for the preschool children and the building. The carpeting will be cleaned in needed areas.

Christian Education

Beth Keretzman

In Dr. Israel Galindo's book, The Craft of Christian Teaching, he shares that "one of the most critical components in the health of a church is the quality of teaching that is available to its members...Done well, [Christian education] has the potential beyond any other congregational influence to deepen faith and commitment." In a study done by the Search Institute in 1990, they found that "involvement in an effective Christian education program has the strongest tie to a person's growth in faith..." This finding was true for adults & teens, not just the children. Robert Schnase, author of Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations says that "vibrant, fruitful, growing congregations practice Intentional Faith Development....the followers of Jesus mature in faith by learning together in community....[with] the total participants in all classes, choirs, and teams exceed[ing] 50 percent of their weekly worship attendance."

So how are we doing? Currently we have 6 adult SS classes that meet every Sunday, and adult elective classes that are offered throughout the year during the SS hour. The women's Bible Study meets on Monday afternoons, an adult Bible Study meets on

Wednesday evenings, the choir meets each Thursday evening, and other small groups meet throughout the week. We are also blessed to have superb teaching during our VBS week, and we have the privilege of learning together when other speakers share with us on special occasions.

In looking at our Sunday school attendance of children, youth and adults during the past year, an average of 56% of our worship attendance is represented in the Sunday School hour.

What does it take? It takes first and foremost dedicated teachers who are willing to devote themselves to scripture, prayer, study, and lesson preparation. I value the teachers that we have here at EUM.

It also takes willing learners who commit themselves to a community of faith, who demonstrate a willingness to search scripture and be held accountable by their Christian brothers and sisters. It takes learners who have open hearts and minds, a willingness to grow in their faith, and walk the walk.

What do we need? In order to continue to be a growing, vibrant faith community, the next generation of teachers, at all levels, must step forward. This is your time to be mentored by some of our very best teachers, co-teaching or team teaching with them, to begin to develop those skills of teaching and leadership, keeping in mind that ministry is the journey, not the destination. Will you stand with us in Christian education and be a teacher/leader for Christ? I would be glad to talk with you.

Our growing and vibrant faith community needs to continue to add new members to our classes - as each one deepens his/her faith commitment, the whole community will become stronger, better equipped to take care of each other and to offer service to others in the name of Jesus. If you have never attended a Sunday School class or Bible Study at EUM, will you stand with the community of learners, deepen your personal walk of faith and be an active member of this faith community? Will you, today, decide which class or study you will attend this week? As Pastor Eric put it just last week, we are **all** in the class known as Word processing 101, and we never graduate.

While we have an average of about 130 people for Sunday School each week, about 20/130 are children,-infants through grade 6. This is an area of ministry that needs our increased care, support, time, and attention.

Stand With Me – Kids Alive

Lori Potts

Every Wednesday night at Kid's Alive, we gather to learn about who God is. When we know who God is, we can learn how to love Him. When we love Him, we will want to do His will.

Proverbs 22:6 says Train up a child in the way he should go.

And in the Gospels we read Jesus saying, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

Have you ever seen a horse pull a wagon or a farm machine? One horse by itself has great strength. They can be trained to pull wagons, farm machines and plows. Horses have a great ability to work together. When they are yoked together into teams, they can pull an astonishing amount of weight!

Would you like to be able to do greater things for God? Our children need us to do greater things for God. They depend on us to be obedient and train them in the ways of the Lord.

As a team of horses, when one horse gets tired, it is still connected to the team. The strength of the other horses then can help a tired horse keep going. In the same way, each of us is part of this team. We are a part of this church and connected to God's family.

I want to be on this team to train up our children in the ways of the Lord. Together, we can help each other to keep on going. We can stand together and do great things for the Kingdom of God. WILL YOU STAND WITH ME?

Youth Outreach Ray Voran

In Matthew 5:13-14 Jesus tells his followers that we are to be the salt and light, not just to our family or to those who look like us but to the world. One way we have been blessed with the opportunity to be the salt and light in our corner of the world is through the youth ministry of the church.

Now we are excited to have an impact on many lives through the service projects we participate in in our community and the wider community, such as the mission trip we are taking to New England this summer, but there is cause for excitement close to home as well.

The committed group of youth leaders and I continue to experience exciting Wednesday nights filled with food, games, music, Bible lessons and discussions as youth from inside and outside of our church attend regularly. We generally have about 35 youth at our Wednesday night meetings.

We also open the youth house on Mondays and Thursdays to give the kids a safe place to come for games and fun and as an opportunity to build relationships.

We stay busy with monthly activities such as our Fall Retreat last weekend which not only was a lot of fun, but also gave us the chance to learn more about what it means to be forgiven and forgiving people.

As we stay busy with meetings, activities and projects, the ultimate goal is always

to lead the youth to a saving relationship with God and then a closer walk with Him. As we can all remember, the teen years can be a difficult time but it has been our privilege to witness this spiritual growth in many of the youth God has sent to this church.

Young people today face many trials and temptations. They are bombarded by images and competing worldviews. More than anything, they need to be shown what it means to know God and have His love demonstrated to them. It is wonderful to be able to share the Gospel message with so many teenagers from the church and community.

Thank you for your concern, your support, such as meals and prayers as we strive to shine God's light to the youth He brings to our corner of the world.

First Worship Service

Ray Voran

A significant ministry that exists to shine God's light to our world is the worship services on Sunday morning. We believe that both services exist to exalt the Lord, glorify Him and provide the opportunity for those who attend to establish a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

I will also present a report that Ken Hough prepared regarding the early service.

As a church, we started the early service as a response to the concern that too many people outside the church were not being reached with the gospel message. Many of these folks had either a bad experience or no experience with the church and found a traditional setting to be intimidating.

Therefore, we desired to provide another option so that more people could be reached and also, to provide an opportunity for service.

The setting is very welcoming with the tables that encourage fellowship and the coffee and food that draw people together.

The Praise Band led by Wendy Fitts and Bart Delp works hard and does a great job of providing musical leadership to the worship experience.

We always attempt to provide a clear and simple presentation of the gospel message of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Many folks work together and there continue to be opportunities to serve in ministries, such as the Praise Band, Kitchen Ministry, Greeters and Ushers, Service Set-Up (as we use the Fellowship Hall for many other activities) and the Multimedia Team for the PowerPoint presentations.

We are encouraged that over 20% of those who attend this service were not part

of our church when the service began. It is up to us to continue to look for ways to reach our neighbors with the love of Christ.

EUM Kitchen Ministry Sally Delp/Lisa High

Romans 12: 13 says: “Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.”

The EUM Kitchen ministry contains many individual missions including Fellowship luncheons, Youth Dinners, VBS Dinners, Funeral Luncheons, Cup of Fellowship and the Casserole Ministry.

One of the most popular events is our month **fellowship luncheons**. Usually held the first Sunday of the month we serve about 100 – 130 people. The lunch is a time for us to share a meal together and fellowship. This has been a highlight for many members and this is a great way to invite some friends to church and to share a meal. You may wonder what goes into a meal for the congregation. Here is a typical grocery list for one of our special luncheons, 80 lbs of roast beef, 45 lbs of green beans, 20 dozen rolls, 2 gallons pickles and olives, 2 full sheet cakes, 5 pt of sour cream and 6 lb of butter. That’s a lot of groceries.

The kitchen is used to feed the **Youth Group** on Wednesday nights. This has been a tremendous outreach to the kids of our community. We usually serve between 30-40 kids on a Wednesday night. This is coordinated by Eileen Voran and Denise Strick. These ladies are always looking for volunteers to provide a meal for the Youth. This is something where two or more people may want to go together to provide the meal.

During our First Service and in between Sunday school and the second service we have the **Cup of Fellowship**. Coffee, muffins, snacks and cereal are served each Sunday morning. This is greatly appreciated by the members of the first service who arrive before 8:30 am, knowing they can get some breakfast at church. The coffee is always hot and plentiful. During the scheduled cooking nights we prepare muffins and cookies to have at the Cup of Fellowship time. Narene Dowlin and Valerie Gregory take care of getting the volunteers to run the cup of fellowship time. They also do the grocery shopping to make sure we have enough milk, snacks and coffee.

The kitchen ministry prepared meals each night of **VBS**. This has been very well received, not only by the teachers, but also the families coming to Bible School. We generally serve a light supper and usually feed between 50-65 people each night. Then the last night of Bible School we have a sundae bar for all to enjoy.

You might say so far we’ve talked about “in house” ministries, in that the food has been prepared and served here at EUM, the Kitchen Ministry also reaches out by it’s **casserole ministry**. We have baking/cooking nights about every two months in the church

kitchen where we prepare casseroles to put in our freezer. These casseroles are used as an outreach to members of our congregation or anyone in the community who are ill or just had a baby and could use a meal. We deliver a casserole, some rolls, a can of peaches and some cookies. We have bags that are decorated by the children's department that we put the food in. There is also a card included with the meal stating who we are and when our services are being held. There is a need for someone to take charge of the casserole ministry. This is something that can be done with some guidance from Sally. We feel that this has been very well received by any one who has received the casseroles.

When a family of the church has a death in the family and a funeral is held at the church we have a **funeral committee** run by Faye Hurst. This committee will provide a luncheon after the funeral. They are able to prepare a light lunch according to the family's wishes. What a blessing to know that at a difficult time this can be taken care of.

Some other things the church kitchen is used for is the Youth pancake breakfast, special event, such as weddings, Sunday school class banquets and church special events.

All of these missions of the kitchen are run mostly by donations. At our luncheons there is a basket on the dining tables for donations. We almost always cover our costs for the luncheons. A typical luncheon cost about \$300.00 That is less than \$3.00 a person for lunch. Where can you go and spend less than \$3.00 for lunch. The Youth Group meals rely on donations and help from the members to prepare some of the meals. We hold our cooking and baking nights so we can keep our costs down for the cup of fellowship. For VBS we rely mostly on donations and do purchase some items. There is also a donation basket for the meals of VBS which can help with our costs.

There are many other aspects of running our church kitchen. The Trustees help keep our kitchen clean and maintain the equipment. We are very grateful for the professional kitchen we have. It allows us to cook for a large group with ease.

How can you help further the ministry of our kitchen? A lot of things go into keeping our kitchen running and many hands make light work. It requires many volunteers to provide the meals that we do. I have prepared a list of ways you can help. There is a list of ways you can help please review this list and provide us with you name phone number and email address if you have one so you can be part of the Kitchen Ministry.

Finance: The Spirit of The Twelfth Man Jim High

The tradition of the Twelfth Man was born on the second of January 1922, when an underdog Aggie team was playing Centre College, then the nation's top ranked team. As the hard fought game wore on, and the Aggies dug deeply into their limited reserves, Coach Dana X. Bible remembered a squad man who was not in uniform. He had been up in the press box helping reporters identify players. His name was E. King Gill, and

was a former football player who was only playing basketball. Gill was called from the stands, suited up, and stood ready throughout the rest of the game, which A&M finally won 22-14. When the game ended, E. King Gill was the only man left standing on the sidelines for the Aggies. Gill later said, "I wish I could say that I went in and ran for the winning touchdown, but I did not. I simply stood by in case my team needed me."

This gesture was more than enough for the Aggie Team. Although Gill did not play in the game, he had accepted the call to help his team. He came to be thought of as the Twelfth Man because he stood ready for duty in the event that the eleven men on the gridiron needed assistance. That spirit of readiness for service, desire to support, and enthusiasm helped kindle a flame of devotion among the entire student body; a spirit that has grown vigorously throughout the years. The entire student body at A&M is the Twelfth Man, and they stand during the entire game to show their support. The 12th Man is always in the stands waiting to be called upon if they are needed.

This tradition took on a new look in the 1980's when Coach Jackie Sherrill started the 12th Man Kick-Off Team composed of regular students through open tryouts. This 12th Man team performed very well and held opponents to one of the lowest yards per return averages in the league. Later, Head Coach R.C. Slocum changed the team to allow only one representative of the 12th Man on the regular kick off team.

Currently, on this past Thursday's Thanksgiving Day game against their rival the University of Texas, which was played for the 114th time, Junior Nick Lamantia from Mission, Texas was the Aggies 12th man. This honor was given to him for the 14th consecutive game and the 23rd time during his career, which matches the school record for appearances. The game was won by the Aggies in an upset by the score of 38-30.

As we stand together, the Finance committee hopes all of the members of our congregation will adopt the spirit of the Twelfth Man. Please accept the call to help.