

TO: EUM Church Charge Conference
FROM: Ray Voran, Pastoral Associate
November 23, 2008

2008 has been an encouraging and eventful year in many ways. God is at work and we must simply allow Him to work through us as we minister in His name. My time at the church continues to be pretty much split between the early worship service and the youth ministry.

Our church is blessed with a terrific group of committed, loving volunteer youth leaders. We all continue to be blessed as God provides an increase. Val Voran, Kathy Kurtz, Lindsey Kennedy, Margie Supplee, Karolin Kennedy, Denise Schulze, Jeff Ehly, Ryan Kennedy, Jim Blanshine, Earl Schulze and Marcos Rodriguez all help with the lessons and activities. Eileen Voran and Denise Strick have the important job of running the kitchen and Bart Delp leads us in music on most Wednesdays. Several college students also provide assistance when they are home. Attendance at Wednesday night youth activities increased when we started serving suppers several years ago and this increase has continued. We now have approximately 45 youth on most Wednesday nights. There is a good mixture of kids from our church family and also neighborhood youth. We continue to discuss various aspects of a Christian life splitting into three different groups based on the individual's spiritual maturity. While we have been blessed to have the opportunity to use the house next door as a youth facility for the past two years we had to bring that ministry to an end in September of 2008. We found that the events and activities on Wednesday nights and other youth ministry activities simply took too much time for the youth leaders. We decided that it was more important to have strong leadership on the Wednesday nights. I am sorry that we had to make that decision, but the good news is that many of the neighborhood youth who came to the Youth House continue to participate in youth ministry activities. The trustees are currently preparing the house to be rented, so it will also mean additional income for the church.

In addition to the weekly youth meetings, we participated in a number of big events such as a winter retreat, fall retreat, Super Bowl party, broomball, mystery trip, pool party, paintball, and other activities that are approximately one per month. We also helped out with a number of service projects such as the GAIN Warehouse, and the food drive during the Farm Show Parade. We are currently involved in the LUMINA Christmas project as we are sponsoring two families. Of course, the largest service project in terms of time and fundraising were the two mission trips that various youth and leaders participated in- to Gulfport, MS and Swans Island, ME.

The youth Sunday school class is now capably led by Kathy Kurtz, Patrick Morgan and Jeff Ehly.

By God's grace, we hope to continue reaching the youth of the church and the neighborhood with the good news of the Gospel. We are happy to have the chance to play a part in the lives of young people, many of whom need a positive influence in their lives. We pray that we not only provide a place where they are safe and accepted, but that God will lead them to an understanding of who He is and that they may all commit their lives to Him. Thank you to everyone who supports the youth ministry through prayers, providing meals and other actions. Thank you also for accepting those who may

look a little different, might not know how they are supposed to behave in church but are truly loved by God and need to recognize that love.

The early service continues to meet on Sunday mornings at 8:30. This service has been successful as a mixture of long-time members, those who belong but had not been attending regularly, and new-comers has kept the attendance at 80-100. We are encouraged by the new faces that we see.

I generally am responsible for preaching and leading the service. Many others work hard with the music, computer graphics, breakfast, decorations and other areas. Ken Hough chairs the 1st service worship team that meets every month or so to discuss ways to make the worship experience more meaningful and authentic. It is wonderful to see the commitment of the kitchen workers, praise band led by Wendy Fitts and Bart Delp, sound and computer techs and so many others who make that service possible. New people continue to be involved in these areas.

Of course, the most important aspect of any worship service is the one being worshiped. There are always supplies and accessories that are needed to improve the quality of the service, but the real reason for excitement is that people are honoring God through their worship.

Finally, I continue to teach the Trailblazers Sunday school class for college students and young adults. Ryan and Karolin Kennedy have also begun a group for young adults that meets twice a month for Bible Study, service projects and other activities.

All in all, we have a great opportunity to make a difference in the world around us in our church's youth ministry and also the early service. As we live out our calling as the body of Christ and become who God intends for us to be, we will continue to grow. Our goals for this service are simply to lift up the Lord not only on Sunday mornings but with lives that are committed to obedience to Him each day.

I am also blessed to have the opportunity to attend seminary at Evangelical School of Theology. As this semester ends, I have only one more class to take and will graduate in the Spring.

Naturally I must thank Pastor Eric for the opportunities he has given me this past year as well as the guidance, direction and example he provides. I also must thank my wife, Valerie and Ben and Sara for their support and patience through all the busy times. Respectfully submitted.