



The United Parish

ECHO



January 2005

Elkton United Parish Church 605-542-7102
PO Box 218 Elkton SD 57026
website: <http://www.elktonunitedparish.org>



Happy New Year

Last year, I shared my cynicism about New Year's resolutions and pointed out that real change has to take place in the heart. This year, I would like to share an encouraging little tidbit I ran across in the last month. I'm pretty sure it was Men's Health that reported that 70-80% of people making a life-change commitment actually do succeed – eventually. The key is sticking with it.

For about a year, I had a simple little sign on the wall that read “Set Goals” and below that “Follow Through”. That sign reminded me of what it really takes to succeed in something. Those two simple little steps are, in fact, where most people fail. They either do not really set goals, or they do not follow through on them. Having no goals leaves you drifting aimlessly through life. Not following through means you are nothing more than a dreamer.

Our church has just this past year acted out those two steps and it feels good, doesn't it? Early in the year, we held a congregational meeting that let us brainstorm several possible goals. The highest priority by far turned out to be following through on previous plans. So even as the absence of the Peace building may cause echoes of emotional pain at times, the open lot testifies to future possibilities.

You probably know me well enough by now to know that I am not going to leave this article as just a typical management lesson. The reason is that church is more than just a human organization. It is the body of Christ. As such, we don't just simply pick any goal that seems good at the time, but we must learn to seek what direction God wants His body in Elkton to go.

What we are certainly called to do is to grow into a living temple for God. Just like a physical building you start with surveying the needs, preparing the surface, and then laying a foundation. I spent the first year surveying the needs and we discussed them together at several of our meetings – Congregational and Parish Board. In many of the sermons and board meetings, we have been preparing the surface. Now with our upcoming bible study we will lay the foundation.

I know many of you are excited about the prospects of starting on a physical building, and I want you to keep that fire for the long process that leads to such an undertaking. I'm sure it will happen. First we have to make sure we have a good strong church to put into a nice new building. You see, there was one phrase missing on my sign of ten years ago. "Wait on the Lord." Such waiting is not the idle waiting we think of as in a waiting room, but an active waiting as the preparations many were doing before the holiday season we have just finished. This will take patience. Let's get the foundation laid right. We can do this. God has promised to lead those who commit their way to Him. We just have to stick to God's plan.

"Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain."
Psalm 127:1 (NRSV)

In Christ's service – Pastor Daren

UNITED PARISH BOARD MEETING

The Parish Board met Dec 8, 2004 in the church basement. Officers present were Ed Timm, Rufus DeZeeuw, Donna Magnus, and Dawn Boltjes. LaRee Farnham was absent. Others in attendance were Linda Kampmann, Gert DeZeeuw, and Carol Styf.

Ed Timm called the meeting to order and Pastor Daren gave devotion from Paul's Prayers to the Church from Ephesians.

Minutes were read by Linda Kampmann in the absence of LaRee Farnham. Gert stated that she meant that she would like to hear the piano played more often. The minutes were approved with that correction.

Dawn gave the treasurers report. Dawn questioned the price of the new toner for the copier so she will be doing a copy count to compare the amount of copies we get per toner.

The total charge for Rick Brownlee to remove the Peace church down

was \$700.00.

Financial Secretary reported income from selling the pews and other items from the Peace Church covered most of expenses of removing the building.

Committee reports

PPR. Rufus reported on attending the ordination council meeting in Parker for Pastor Daren.

Trustees: Donna Magnus talked to Susan S about the ceiling tiles in the entry of the church needing replacing. Outside light has been repaired. Daren's father has volunteered to replace the back steps on the parsonage in the spring with the church paying for the materials used. Ed had the report from the state reporting that the Peace church was asbestos free. The report will be filed with all other papers about the Peace church removal. Daren reported the roof on the front porch area of the parsonage needs to be repaired in the spring. It is leaking. Troy Wiskur has agreed to clean out the rain gutters on the church.

Worship. Gert reported that the 2005 list of ushers and acolytes will be published in the Jan Echo.

Christian Ed. No one present but Dawn Boltjes reported that the Christian Ed had repaid the church for VBS bill that the church paid in error and also the church has paid the Christian Ed the full amount of the pledge. Practice for the Christmas program is in full swing.

Mission. Linda reported that the Prison Angel Tree program was very well received and gifts need to be turned in by Dec 12 and Linda and Patty DeZeeuw will deliver them the week of Dec 13, 2004

UPW. Christmas potluck was Dec 1. Mittens were donated for the Mitten tree and all enjoyed a great meal, singing and a short program as well as a cookie exchange. The UPW is sponsoring a caroling party on Dec 12, 2004 beginning at 3pm and ending with a meal at the church. This is for the entire church.

Finance committee. Dawn reported that the committee consisting of

Dawn Boljtes, Donna Magnus and Bruce Kinner met and they had a budget proposal ready for the board. The board reviewed the proposal and after a few changes they approve it to be submitted at the Annual meeting.

Old Business. Linda read a thank you from the Banquet in Sioux Falls for all the school supplies that the United Parish donated in the fall.

Pastor and Rufus have traveled and looked at several vans for release time. Finding it hard to locate a reliable vehicle in the price range voted on in Nov. Dawn made a motion and Linda seconded it to raise the price to \$6500.00 to include taxes and license. Rufus also contacted Rainbow Play System and they indicated they may be selling some of their vans. Rufus will try contacting them again. Ed reported that a member of the church has offered to donate a 7 passenger van to the church. He will try to get more info on the van and report back to the board.

New Business

Ron Clausen has inquired if we will need him for snow removal. It was tabled until Jan. meeting.

Advent wreath will be put out and used in worship for the remaining Sunday's in advent.

The Annual meeting /Charge conference will be held January 23, 2004. The nominating committee chaired by LaRee Farnham needs to review the constitution and find out what positions need to be filled for the next year. A person can hold an office for not more than 2 consecutive 2 year terms.

Meeting adjourned with all present repeating the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted

Linda Kampmann (for LaRee Farnham)

UPW

The UPW's Annual Christmas Potluck was held Dec. 1st. At 6:30 pm in the church dining room. Approximately 24 ladies, Dana Junker, and John Boltjes enjoyed a delicious meal and festive decorations.

A program and JOY was given by Ann Aaker and ended with the Lord's prayer.

We were asked to bring hats, mittens, or scarfs instead of a gift exchange. Linda said the items will be used to decorate our tree at the Community Center (Festival of Trees). When the trees are taken down the items will be donated through the school to the Domestic Abuse Center in Brookings and/or the Banquet in Sioux Falls.

We welcomed Georgianna Jensen as a new member of UPW. Happy Birthday was sung to Ann Aaker, Sherry Bauman, Georgianna Jensen, and Karen-Marie Bryanne.

Christmas cards were signed and will be sent to our servicemen.

The last event of the evening was a cookie exchange. Everyone was asked to bring 2 dozen cookies. The cookies were divided so that everyone was able to take home a plate of assorted cookies.

Hostesses: Executive Committee
Our next meeting will be on January 5th.

Secretary
Bev Buller

PS Pres. Linda reminded us of the upcoming caroling party to be held on Dec. 12th at 3 pm. We will meet at the church, go caroling, around town and end up at the church for a light supper.

THE GRAPE VINE

** Virginia Fixsen wants to thank everybody who has supported and helped her during the past months in connection with her surgeries/health. The outpour of care has meant so much to her.

** Please pray for the Tsunami victims and please help in any way you see fit. The destruction and despair is so immense, it is hard to really understand.

** **This is so COOL!!** Pastor Daren is starting a Bible Study called BETA. I have had a chance to have a sneak preview and it is so good. This Bible Study is for ALL Christians, no matter how long you have been a Christian. It helps you take the next steps and finally weave faith into every aspect of your life. BETA teaches you how to have the life Christ intended for you. Pastor Daren has made sure to enable ALL to attend by eliminating obstacles; we are providing childcare and will have sandwich materials available in case you don't have time to eat otherwise. We will meet in the Sanctuary so there are fewer steps to navigate.

So many from our congregation have already signed up for this Bible Study and please remember that it is open for all, so if you know someone who might be interested, bring them along. Please make sure you sign up so we can order a book for you.

When?? We will meet every second and every fourth Wednesday of the month, starting January 12th at 6:30 – 7:30 pm.

What about Confirmation?? All confirmands are attending this Bible Study. On the Wednesdays we have no Bible Study, there will be regular Confirmation Class.

If you have any questions or wish to start this study, please call Pastor Daren (542-7101).