

Amity

Believe . . . Belong . . . Become . . .



Pastor's Message, February 2010

2009 at Amity Report of the Pastor

As the administration of Amity is preparing our 2009 year-end reports for the conference, I thought you might like to hear about all that happened in 2009 at Amity.

- What joy it was to welcome 19 new members into the Amity's fold last year: Susie Whaley; Gail Fanarjian; Susan Wilburn; Mae Lynn Reyes; Carlos and Vanessa Muniz-Gonzales with Wilmarie, Ethan, and Michael; Ed and Shannon Tostanoski with Edward and Scott; Darrell and Rachel Kohr; Chris and Laura Horne with Knox and Charlie.
- During Lent we had the blessing of Dr. Tim Tyson teaching the Sunday School class *The Cross in Black and White*. We had more than 50 folks from beyond the church walls join us for this study and what a wonderful time of study and fellowship it was!
- 2 short-term book studies, *The Shack* and *Peace Like a River*, brought us together to talk about God, suffering and God's presence in our lives.
- Disciple Bible Study began in September and continues through May 2010. We have 10 members of this study and lovely, thought-provoking theological conversations.
- In the fall, we engaged in *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*, which challenged us to engage the following practices: Radical Hospitality, Intentional Faith Development, Passionate Worship, Risk-Taking Missions, and Extravagant Generosity. Conversation and action has been prompted in all of these areas as a result of the study.
- The first Saturday in October, a group of Amity folk had the joy of working together at Freedom House in Chapel Hill, painting and doing renovation work. And while some worked at Freedom House, others remained at the church and offered a flu shot clinic to the community.
- Centering Prayer began in November, teaching the arts of contemplation and meditation in a small group setting as a means of solace and growing closer to God and fellow-seekers through both silent prayer and faith-sharing.
- Over Thanksgiving, 9 of Amity's faithful travelled to the Dominican Republic to build relationships and walls. The generous folks of Amity (with the help of others), raised \$16,000 for this trip. These hands and feet of Jesus, in addition to the money, built a facility to house a water purification system so the people of the area can now have clean drinking water. The local people named the water "Amity Water", and 3,000 gallons of clean water are distributed each day.
- As the above new ministries were born, Amity continued to nurture its standing ministries: serving meals at the IFC every 4th Friday evening of the month; quarterly prison ministry; outstanding children's ministries and adult Sunday School class, joyful music from our choir, United Methodist



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Women, United Methodist Men, Sybil Skakle's weekly Bible Study, Healing prayer following Sunday worship services, a thriving daycare center at affordable cost, and of course our annual Christmas Tree sales which brought in \$31,000 to the mission and ministries of the church.

- It was a good year for Amity financially, as well. We paid all of our bills and apportionments, including paying off the 15 year mortgage. Amity is now completely debt free and is operating with a balanced budget.

Thanks be to God!

“Comparison is the thief of joy”, C.S. Lewis wrote. In this culture that tells us bigger is better and success is measured by size, it is often tempting to look at our small church and wonder why we're not bigger, better. And in that moment our joy is stolen. Faithfulness is not determined or measured by size, but by heart, and on that measure Amity has so much to celebrate and to be joyful for. Look at the lives and hearts that have been touched because of your love and generosity. There is always more to do, faithfulness is a journey and how exciting it is to think of the road ahead: new ministries, new lives we will encounter, new relationships that will be formed, and new discoveries about God and God's will for our lives. As for me, I thank God everyday for the opportunity to serve the Amity community. You are such a blessing!

Love and blessings,

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