

Pastor's Reflections

By Jeffrey Frantz

Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

(Acts 3:43-47)

Looking ahead in 2012. As your pastor, teacher and friend, my goals for our church in the year ahead are:

- (1) to continue to build up the spirit of our church through prayer and a ministry of love and compassion,
- (2) to improve the quality and the reaches of the different ministries we offer and, in the process,
- (3) to increase the attendance at our Sunday morning worship.

Worship and music. Throughout 2012, we're aiming to add to our service of worship—through ...

- (1) diversifying our music and finding new ways of using music in our service and,
- (2) tapping into the gifts of our laity through the periodic use of drama and other lay involvement with worship responses and the reading of scripture.

This will require a considerable amount of planning and coordination with our Worship and Music Committee.

Use of social media. Those of you who know me, know that I am not well versed in the use of *social media* (i.e., Facebook and Twitter). However, at the same time, I realize that the creative use of these forms of *social media* can be very helpful for churches.

Last week I met with a professional business colleague who uses both Facebook and Twitter in effective ways in his business. After meeting with him, I am confident that, over time (three to six months), we should be able to utilize these media forms in ways that promote the ministries of our church.

Our church already has a Facebook page, as does our United Church of Christ Conference here in Florida. Finding new ways of using these *social media*, and tying them in workable ways to our website, will help us promote the many fine ministries our church offers to the wider community.

I invite your prayers for me and our staff on this *social media* challenge.

Invitational evangelism. For many of us, I know the term *evangelism* makes us a little nervous and uneasy. Much of our problem is the way we choose to understand it and explain it. *Evangelism* is simply being excited about—to the point of sharing and inviting—the gospel of Jesus.

If we find ourselves *drawn to* and enlivened (i.e., called to life) by God's message to us in Jesus of compassion and love, it's a matter, simply, of sharing this with others. What we want to encourage in our church—in all of us—is a church culture of *invitational evangelism*, where we all seek to be more aware of opportunities to invite people.

In recent weeks, I've been focusing on this myself and it is surprising the number of opportunities that present themselves throughout the day/week to invite people to a worship service or to a particular event (CROP WALK comes to mind, for example).

I have a good feeling about 2012. Let's all *catch the spirit* at our church and seek opportunities to share and invite with greater intentionality in the year ahead.