

# reaching up to God:

## the pastor's journal

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*“My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples” John 15:8*

### Dear Central Friends in Christ,

In February 2008, our congregation made a bold commitment to a Ministry Plan that outlined a vision for Central UMC. You can read this Ministry Plan on our website, [www.centralcares.com](http://www.centralcares.com).

As a congregation, we felt led by God into a season of listening, discernment and planning in order to develop this Ministry Plan. We continue to allow it to guide our decisions and actions as we live into our mission to “Celebrate Christ’s unconditional love that changes lives everyday as together we Reach up to God, Reach within ourselves and Reach out to the world.”

How do we know if we’re accomplishing our mission and purpose? Jesus teaches that we are to be ‘fruit inspectors,’ constantly looking for the fruits that are evidence of our faithfulness. Here are just a few of the fruits that indicate Central’s faithfulness and effectiveness:

1. **Goal: Grow 10% per year in average worship attendance (indicating present health, vitality and fruitfulness of our ministries).** For the first four months of 2009, our average weekly worship attendance was 221, compared to 174 in 2008 for the same time period. That’s almost an 8% increase!
2. **Goal: Grow 10% per year in professions of faith and baptisms (indicating future health, vitality and fruitfulness of our ministries).** As of 4/30/09, we have received 27 New Members, this includes

professions of faith (new Christians), infant baptisms and 10 confirmands! In 2008, we received 19 New Members for the whole year!

3. **Goal: Begin 1 new outreach ministry per year in our local community.** We are continuing to plan for the “Change of A Dress” ministry, which will provide professional clothing to women in career transitions—focusing initially on women transitioning out of domestic abuse shelters. We are strengthening our evangelism and marketing ministry to the community. We are working with Newhouse to imagine a cooperative ministry of transitioning women and families into independent living. We will send 8 people to Mozambique in August as mission ambassadors! Our Early Childhood Center reports record enrollment with 14 on a waiting list for one classroom, and a growing interest in our extended day ministry as we transition into a full day Children and Family Center. Great outreach ministry is happening!
4. **Goal: Begin 1 new worship service and/or Christian formation experience per year to reach the local community.** New City was launched in January 2009 and is continuing to grow into the summer months and Fall semester at 7:00 p.m. on Sundays. One student committed her life to being a disciple for Jesus Christ!



Thanks to many of you who have participated in the recent Financial Feasibility Study to determine the congregation’s capacity for funding a Capital Plan for developing and renewing facility resources for our vision for fruitfulness. Even as we collect that data and continue in prayer that we might be found faithful in this vision from God, know that fruitful, vibrant ministry is already happening at Central UMC. Lives are being touched, families are being strengthened and hope is being shared through the faithfulness of this congregation.

I give thanks to God!  
See you in church on Sunday!



Rev. Amy L. Gearhart,  
Senior Pastor