

From Our Pastor – April 2016

SIGNS OF GLORY

How wonderful it is that God should schedule Easter this year on the three-month anniversary of our time together. It is as though the good news of Easter morning and the good news of what God is doing among us were intended to share a common celebration. And what a celebration it is, for we are seeing exciting progress in each of the goals the Session set for our interim season. I have also had enough experience with God to know that where signs of glory appear, they represent only a fleeting glimpse of what God is doing behind the scenes, beneath the surface, and way beyond our wildest dreams.

For any one person to take credit for our progress would be to miss the greater miracle that the Lord of Life is at work among us. Let us, therefore, engage in our First Quarter Reflections with wonder, love and gratitude.

Goal: To build a viable membership.

This goal is measured by signs of increased commitment to the life of the church, and we have been blessed with encouraging signs—like the promise of two of our members to gift the church with \$100 for each new member in 2016. On Easter we received one new member, and acknowledged others whose reception had never been recognized; even as efforts are underway to encourage more to strengthen their commitment to Christ through membership in our church.

The Session has also resolved to draw upon all of the talent that the Lord has entrusted to our keeping, and will be proactive in inviting all members to participate in the work and witness of the church.

Goal: To build a sustainable stewardship.

This goal is measured by signs of increased generosity—not only financial but also in the generosity of spirit that inspires willing volunteers. From church leadership, fellowship groups, and personal gifts of time, talent and treasure, we have seen the spirit of abundance that the Lord is awakening in our church family. Projects long stalled because of lack of resources are moving forward because the spirit of the congregation is excited about the future that God is unfolding before us.

Goal: To build a world mission outlook.

This goal is usually measured by an awakened sense of adventure—the realization that what the Lord is doing locally He is also doing globally—and by the excitement with which we are drawn to participation. Though we do a lot of things with an eye to mission, we have been detached from the work that our denomination is doing globally; but when the call went out to

attend a global mission seminar this month 15 attended. That's almost 10% of our congregation!

Furthermore, at the annual meeting, a motion was made and unanimously approved to raise an additional 1% of our 2016 budget for world mission, and to increase that commitment by 1% each year until a 10% tithe was dedicated for our denomination's world mission. The Lord's influence is surely behind it.

Goal Four: To build a program that inspires growth.

This goal is measured in increments by the educational experiences we share. They begin with worship where we learn to appreciate the variety, and depth, of our relationship with God, and mature in the program life of the church, as we identify and implement those programs that encourage the kind of growth we believe the Lord is inspiring among us. Many ideas are being considered, and I am certain many more will follow as the Lord leads us into the future that He has already envisioned.

I can still hear the sound of our Easter congregation singing about the Risen Lord and of the dedication by which He draws us together and leads us forward. It is exciting!

David