

Fillmore Free Methodist Church

2013-2014 CONFERENCE YEAR PASTOR & DELEGATE REPORT

Pastor Mike Hopper; Associate Pastor Janet Hopper; Delegate: Scott Rain

Jesus told His followers: "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field." (Matthew 9:37-38) The equipping and deployment of workers and leaders to serve Christ is an important part of our mission "to plant spiritual seeds through evangelism, cultivate spiritual growth, and harvest dedicated workers and leaders for Christ." Please join us in celebrating some of what has been accomplished in this mission during this conference year.



(1) Planting Spiritual Seeds (Outreach and Evangelism):

During the past year, 5 adults and 8 children committed their lives to Christ; and others have taken forward steps in their faith. Three individuals (one adult and two children) gave testimony and were baptized in the nearby Root River. Worship services have been an effective outreach. Over 230 persons attended the children's Christmas musical program "All I Want for Christmas." And about 280 came to the Easter morning services. Twelve new families have begun attending worship services regularly.

Outreach to children has been a priority. Over 150 children attended our "SonWest Roundup" Vacation Bible School –

staffed by 80 adults and youth – and at least 6 children prayed to accept Christ in their lives and many others rededicated their lives to the Lord. Several babies have been dedicated.

A personalized letter was sent to each unchurched family in the village of Fillmore to let them know that they were being prayed for and to contact the church if they had any concerns for prayer. In October, our church provided water and a restroom break for about 250 bicyclists going through town. Our church collected quite a bit of used clothing to share with those who need that in a nearby community this month. A Bible study has been launched to minister to the Whalan / Lanesboro area.



Our "World Missions Celebration" included a procession of national flags from the countries where Fillmore persons have served or provided finances over the past 12 months. These included the United States, Asia, Bolivia, Haiti, Honduras, Jordan, Kenya, and the Philippines. The Fillmore Church raised over \$1,600 for recovery efforts in the Philippines following a recent typhoon; nearly \$700 was raised on "Freedom Sunday" to help free those in slavery around the world; and over \$1,000 was raised to purchase a motorcycle to help two pastors in Haiti to minister and to receive Bible training. In January, a



team of 9 individuals traveled to a Christian Orphanage in Azacualpa, Honduras. Ministry there included the construction of a home and food distribution. One couple provided short-term medical care along the Amazon River in Bolivia.

Our church has financially supported missionaries Jim & Deb Wilson in the Philippines and two children (one in Haiti and the other in Kenya) through the childcare sponsorship ministry. We also are supporting ministry to refugees in Jordan and missionaries in Asia. Around Christmas, our children and adults filled 59 shoe boxes with new toys that were delivered to children around the world through "Operation Christmas Child." In addition, the children of Vacation Bible School raised over \$2,000 to drill four water wells for schools in Bolivia.

The prayer quilt ministry has reached out to hurting families. The Fillmore Church supports the Olive Branch Mission in Chicago. Our church also prayerfully supports persons serving away from the church. Attenders of this church have been encouraged to share their faith wherever they go; and many are doing it.

(2) Cultivating Spiritual Growth (Spiritual Growth Encouragement): Spiritual growth has been encouraged in the lives of children and youth through Sunday School. In addition, several children memorized Bible verses and competed this season in Bible quiz tournaments in Rochester, MN. In addition, several children and youth benefited from the ministry of our conference Sky Lodge Christian Camp. Every other week, the youth play basketball in our Christian Life Center. This has been helpful in building relationships. A youth bonfire and a time of snow tubing were held.

Opportunities for spiritual growth for adults have included Sunday School, home Bible studies, and our contemporary and traditional worship services. Six different Bible studies have provided spiritual encouragement and instruction for about 60 adults. Four men are now mentoring other men. New persons are participating in Bible studies, in Sunday School, and in the worship services. Each week those who miss the worship services receive a copy of the Sunday message (sent by e-mail or the postal service).

To help strengthen marriages, the "Laugh your Way to a Better Marriage" DVD seminar was hosted. "Faithful Warriors" continues to encourage and equip fathers to disciple their sons. A group of men traveled to an uplifting Promise Keepers event in Cedar Falls, IA, and video recordings of the messages were later shared in a men's event at the church.



Between our two morning worship services, a monthly Friendship "Donut Day" Time encourages persons to get to know one another. Other social events to build relationships have included a Harvest-Time Dinner and concert, a winter "Cabin Fever" Party, and Easter breakfast. Periodic "Girlz Nite Out" activities encouraged women in their relationship with the Lord and provided great times of fellowship, and two simulcast events were held for women at the church. The Fillmore Church hosted a Women's Retreat Weekend at Ironwood Springs Camp with 74

local women participating. "Clothing Yourself with Christ" was the theme of this event which included uplifting worship; Bible instruction; good food; and fun activities.

(3) Harvesting (Worker and Leadership Development): An important focus of the Fillmore Church is on involving individuals in ministry. Attenders have been regularly challenged to take a spiritual gift questionnaire and explore opportunities to serve God in ministries that match their giftedness and passions. Over 135 persons are serving in some church ministry.

Training is important in equipping workers. In the fall, our teachers participated in a time of orientation and training for Sunday School. And in the spring, about 25 persons came to the orientation and training time for Vacation Bible School. Twelve persons attended the "What is a Free Methodist?" class sessions. 30 children and youth served together as a team to present the Christmas musical drama. The American Heritage Girl ministry has doubled in the number of participants as they seek to become "women of integrity through service to God, family, community and country."



In the fall, the Fillmore Church Board of Administration confirmed Kelli O'Byrne for her third year to serve as "Executive Assistant to the Pastor." She has effectively assisted in a variety of ways including organizing children's ministry and overseeing the care and use of our new Christian Life Center.

(4) Equipment for Harvesting: (Resources): Our new Christian Life Center expansion has been extensively used as an effective tool for ministry to children, youth, and adults. In May, the annual one-day Building Offering received in the worship services helped us move toward becoming debt-free. After 2 and ½ years, we are 4 and ½ years ahead on paying off our 20-year combined loan.

A number of improvements have been made to our facilities. A new projector was mounted in the sanctuary. Our parking lot was resurfaced and striped. Bushes have been trimmed, and a large storage area was created under our chapel. Recently a new Rolland electric piano was purchased.



Our greatest resource is God--Whom we have approached through prayer in a variety of ways. These included the Emergency (email) Prayer Network (about 80 persons praying), prayer in the Bible studies, pre-service prayer times in the church office, and prayer in the worship services. In addition, a network of persons around the country regularly prays for the pastoral family and ministries of the Fillmore Church.

Over the past 20 years, Pastor Mike and Janet have enjoyed being a part of the Fillmore Church team, and are thankful to God for so many serving in some kind of ministry. As we seek to faithfully serve the Lord in the 100th year of ministry of this congregation, we pray that God will work through the Fillmore Church to regularly send persons into the harvest fields that many lives might be transformed by the power of God. May God help the Fillmore Church team to honor Christ as we "plant spiritual seeds through evangelism, cultivate spiritual growth, and harvest dedicated workers and leaders for Christ."