

Arlie E. Davis, Lead Pastor

2015-2016 Annual Report

“One day an expert in religious law stood up to test Jesus by asking him this question: ‘Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?’ Jesus replied, ‘What does the law of Moses say? How do you read it?’ The man answered, “‘You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.’” And, “‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” ‘Right!’ Jesus told him. ‘Do this and you will live!’ The man wanted to justify his actions, so he asked Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’” Luke 10:25-29

“Who is My Neighbor?”

Can I just start my report with gratefulness? Can I just say, I am so grateful to be a part of a congregation that loves God, loves their neighbor, and demonstrates it by their lives? Amidst the disheartening news that 80% of the churches in America are plateaued or declining, it is so encouraging to be part of a growing church. When only 6% of the churches in America are considered healthy and growing, it is exciting to remain in that smaller percentage. According to recent statistics, church attendance of Americans is not in the 40% category as Gallup polls have shown. It seems that Americans overrate their positive behaviors and underrate their negatives. Many statistics say there are as few as 18% attending church on any given Sunday, making America the 3rd largest mission field behind China and India. Even more startling estimations indicate that our percentage of Christians attending church in 2050 could be lower than 10%. So, the importance of asking the right questions is at the forefront of our thinking as a church leadership team.

When Jesus answered the questions, he also said, “Do this and you will live!” Keeping our focus amidst all the changes in ministry is necessary if we are to continue to experience life! An annual assessment gives us the opportunity to reflect on the past year and to ask those questions that assist us in corporate evaluations. The questions we ask help us to identify our heart for God and for our neighbor. The questions identify healthy and unhealthy trends, giving us the criteria needed to evaluate our present and determine our future. Scripture encourages us to examine our faith to make sure it is aligned with God’s heart and God’s Word. ***“Examine yourselves to see if your faith is genuine. Test yourselves. Surely you know that Jesus Christ is among you; if not, you have failed the test of genuine faith.” 2 Corinthians 13:5.*** Thus, the importance of church evaluation is critical as we move forward.

Lifeway Ministries, at www.lifeway.com, gives an article on “Twenty-Five Signs of a Healthy Church” by Marvin Owen including three vital areas: Spiritual Vitality, Personal Vitality, and Relational Vitality. Many of the indicators of these signs are general but I am excited to say that all twenty-five are operating at Christ Wesleyan. Eight other signs of church health are listed in a similar article: *“People are friendly and speak to me, I see signs of mission involvement and evangelism, there is an air of expectancy, the church has children, people are carrying their Bibles, warmth, a variety of age groups, and in the parking lot and at the front door, servants are showing me Jesus in their very actions.”* Once again, these are indicators of life within the church. All these and more are why “I love my church!”

This year marks 35 years of ministry for Sharon and me at Christ Wesleyan. I started as an Assistant Pastor to my dad, then started Meadowbrook Christian School the second year. For seven years, I was an Assistant Pastor/School Administrator. In 1989, I began the journey as Lead Pastor. It continues to be a joy and a privilege for us to serve the family of believers at this local church. Although there have been many changes in our areas of service, the ministry has always been about people. The numbers in these reports we share are not nameless faces or facts, as they represent much more. They represent family! We have prayed for God to touch lives through our lives and He has done just that! Each of you matter to us...and we care about you. For all of this I am grateful. I am especially grateful for my partner in ministry and partner in life. God knew what He was doing in bringing us together.

For a church to experience life, certain characteristics are necessary...

Loving God - “*You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.*”

Our love for God is evidenced in our desire to be with God’s people and to grow in our relationship with Him. We have been grateful to see growth and life within the fellowship. Our morning worship attendance reached a new average high of 1,522 with 870 first-time guests. On any given Sunday, we could see 17 new families attending worship. Our second highest number of salvations was reported with 222 locally and 431 internationally, giving a total of 653 lives changed for eternity. There were 22 believers baptized and 17 new members welcomed into our fellowship. Our Easter attendance this past year reached a new high for us at 2,545! Your giving continues to bless the body of Christ locally and beyond at 3.2 million dollars. Praise God for your faithfulness in responding to God’s call on our lives. God always seems to provide exactly what is needed to fulfill the ministry He has called us to offer. Our youth set a new record of 153 students in average attendance with 381 unique attenders. Our children’s ministry serves over 232 children each Sunday and is always in need of volunteers.

Our love for God is often evidenced in our serving and your volunteer service opportunities reached 1,547. These serving opportunities include everything from our incredible Theatre Productions to our Sunday morning services. Ministries could include children, teens, encouragement, visitation, fellowship events, welcome ministries, worship opportunities, teaching, prayer, and the list continues! Contact Julie Dorman, our Connections Director, to see how you can be connected!

Loving Others – “*Love your neighbor as yourself.*”

Your giving has equipped us to love our neighbors and continues to be a model of excellence. Dr. Jo Anne Lyon, our General Superintendent, often refers to Christ Wesleyan as the church of generosity! Locally, we provide annual support to Meadowbrook Christian School, Haven Ministry, Expectations Women’s Center, local veterans, Oasis of Hope, our Christmas Blessing gift card project, a benevolence fund for those within our fellowship, a food pantry supporting 55 families per month, as well as a Fresh Express food distribution providing for 117 families per month, a baptismal tank for Journeymate Wesleyan Church, and operating support for The Well Ministries. Our mission budget also supports our Hispanic Ministries, including the salary and benefits of Pastor Immer. This year, our mission budget reached a new record of \$709,000. This amount includes our 9% from tithes and offerings, special projects, mission teams’ support, and child sponsorships.

Our counseling ministry has served our church and community through 431 sessions, a Wellness Fair, and guidance to our support ministries. These support ministries include: Stephen Ministry, DivorceCare, DivorceCare 4 Kids, GriefShare, Cancer Hope Support, Transforming Hearts (an overcomers group), as well as a meal ministry, home repair, Seriously Dating or Engaged (a preparation for marriage and a marriage enrichment), and Financial Peace University. You have served at funeral meals as well as provided food. You have cared for your neighbors in a host of ways: physically, financially, emotionally, and spiritually!

Our Well Ministries continue to gain strength in reaching our world. These community ministries were never intended to be a financial income, but rather a service to our world. Knowing this, our mission budget has supported these ministries in their start-up period, believing they will become self-sustaining as they grow. We believe they are an open door to show Jesus to those

we would not have any other way of reaching, and that is exactly what is happening! In a world where bookstores are disappearing, we believe that the sale of Christian material and Bibles is an investment in discipleship. Thus far, we have sold 3,020 Bibles since its opening. Well Fit has served over 2,500 people who have come through the doors, and The Well Coffee House is home to hundreds of parents who use our playland, as well as many who enjoy the coffee and food! Meadowbrook Christian School, our oldest and largest community ministry reached its second-highest enrollment in its history with 361 students in six counties and 19 school districts. With Meadowbrook, The Well Ministries, and the church, we presently employ 124 part-time and full-time team members.

Loving Our World - “For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

Nationally, we support a missionary with Stand Against Trafficking of North Carolina, the Mosaic (Wesleyan) Church in the impoverished area of Detroit, emergency water relief to Flint Michigan, Hephzibah Children’s Home, and a different Wesleyan college each year.

Internationally, we have supported 14 missionary families in 11 countries. We have provided relief to earthquake victims in Nepal, flood victims in Myanmar, a house to a pastor in Panama, food and shelter to Iraqi refugees, medical care in Guatemala, and support of 58 children in Guatemala, as well as provided clerical, financial, and oversight for 93 children in World Hope’s program in Guatemala. We were blessed to supply clean water to over 15,000 students and many more family members in Sierra Leone.

Our website has given us the ability to reach our arms around our world in a different dimension by reaching all 50 states and 98 countries. Who could have ever imagined that a small town in central Pennsylvania could be touching so many lives around the world?

Love God. Love Each Other. Love Our World.

So...

How will you love God this coming year?

How will you love others?

How will you love your world?

Will you join us in committing to reach our world?

Will you join us in helping us to serve the body of Christ?

Will you join us in supporting with your finances, your time, and your talents to make a difference for eternity?

America’s future can be changed if each one of us is willing to make the investment to be world changers! We like to communicate it in four simple words...each of us needs to:

Worship – Make regular attendance a priority to worship together.

Grow – Become a part of a small group or serving group to grow.

Serve – Find a place to connect and serve using your gifts.

Reach – Invite others to know Jesus by reaching beyond your world.

As Matthew West says in his song, “Well, it’s time for us to do something!”