

THE STATE OF THE CHURCH:

2013

Today, as we move ever closer to the close of yet another year of ministry with God, here in the Ely U.M.C. we can do so with a spirit of celebration and a spirit of thanksgiving in our hearts!

We can move toward the close of 2013 with a spirit of celebration and a spirit of thanksgiving in our hearts, because of God's amazing love for us as God's children!

Further, we can move toward the close of 2013 with a spirit of celebration and a spirit of thanksgiving in our hearts because of the many ways God has blessed us as we share in God's Ministry here in the Ely U.M.C.!

Indeed, as we move ever closer to the close of 2013 we can do so with a spirit of celebration and a spirit of thanksgiving because of the many opportunities God has provided unto to us as God's children. We have had many opportunities to worship God, to learn and to grow in our relationships with God and with one another as the Family of God, to participate in service unto God, and to share the love of God with others.

*Yes, as we move ever closer to the close of 2013 may we do so with a spirit of celebration for **GOD'S** amazing **PRESENCE** with us as we seek to be in ministry with **GOD!** May we as God's children also be a people who celebrate with an ever joyful spirit of thanksgiving for **GOD'S** amazing **PRESENCE** with us as we seek to be in ministry with **GOD!***

*Yes, as we move ever closer to the close of 2013 may we do so with a spirit of celebration for the many ways **GOD** has richly **BLESSED** us as children in the Family of God! May we as God's children also be a people who celebrate with an ever joyful spirit of thanksgiving for the many **BLESSINGS** our gracious and loving **GOD** has provided unto as the Family of God!*

*Presence, blessings, from our gracious and loving **GOD** who enriches our worship, our learning and growing of relationships, our service, and our sharing of the love of God with others! As we here in the Ely U.M.C., move ever closer to the close of 2013 may our **PRAISE** be unto **GOD!!!***

***PRAISE** be unto **GOD**, for God's presence and blessings as we celebrate with thanksgiving in our hearts the many enriched opportunities we have been given to worship our gracious and loving God!!!*

We can celebrate with thanksgiving our worship experiences because of the many wonderful and talented people who have helped enrich our worship experiences through music. We have been blessed by an awesome organist and some awesome pianists during

this past year who have helped provide a depth of spirit and joy to our worship experiences!!!

We can celebrate with thanksgiving our worship experiences because of the wonderful ways the laity have continued to participate in providing leadership in worship. First, we seem to have developed a willingness of spirit to the idea of truly sharing from the heart our joys, concerns, and thanksgivings as we continue to grow as a people of prayer. Second, we have a willing group of people who joyfully participate in leading worship and assisting in Holy Communion, Advent Readings, and the Christmas Eve Service. Third, we have a small group of people who are willing to provide children's sermons from time to time which adds a depth of variety for our young people as they participate in worship!!!

We can celebrate with thanksgiving our worship experiences because of our awesome young people who joyfully participate in blessing our worship experiences by sharing their own thoughts and ideas during the Children's Time. Yes, seeing our young people becoming comfortable in worship is something which is truly heartwarming, and is something we need to continue taking the time to encourage!!!

We can celebrate with thanksgiving our worship experiences during this past year because of the willingness of at least one of our Church Family who has been joyfully open to providing solos with guitar accompaniment on many Sundays when the choir is not singing!!!

We can celebrate with thanksgiving our worship experiences during this past year because of the many people who have provided refreshments for a time of fellowship following worship. We as God's Children are called by God to worship together, while partnering our worship experiences with extended fellowship, we nurture the bond of love which holds us together as the Family of God!!!

Finally, but not least of all, we can celebrate with thanksgiving our worship experiences because of our phenomenally gifted and phenomenally dedicated Choir Director and Ely U.M.C. Choir!!! What a blessing our Choir Director and Ely U.M.C. Choir are to us as they have continued to provide a spiritually moving and uplifted addition to our worship services, year by precious year. They are a group of people who work diligently at enhancing our worship experiences throughout the year which provides our summer residents and summer Church Family members the opportunity to join in with them. As a matter of fact, it seems as though our choir during the summers tends to swell providing a swelling of voices filled with joy which further enhances our worship experiences!!!

***PRAISE** be unto **GOD**, for God's presence and blessings as we celebrate with thanksgiving in our hearts the many precious opportunities we have been given to learn and grow as we seek to develop our relationships with God and with one another as the Family of God!!!*

We can celebrate with thanksgiving opportunities for learning, growing, and developing our relationships with God, such as our awesome Youth Group. We have a wonderful group of young people who have been journeying together as part of God's Family by weekly meeting and sharing together on Wednesday nights during the school year. They have made a strong commitment to being God's family together with the wonderful help of Sheri Rue!!!

We can celebrate with thanksgiving opportunities for learning, growing, and developing our relationships with God, such as our dedicated Bible Study Group. This group meets and welcomes all comers on Thursday afternoons during the school year. What a wonderful opportunity to dive into God's Holy Word and share our ideas with our brothers and sisters as we study together!!!

We can celebrate with thanksgiving opportunities for learning, growing, and developing our relationships with God, such as our women's group the "Guild". The "Guild" meets monthly for a time, of study, fellowship, and refreshments as provided by group members. Our "Guild" Group is an awesome asset to our Church Family which continues to nurture encouragement for walking with God among the women who take the time to participate!!!

We can celebrate with thanksgiving opportunities for learning, growing, and developing our relationships with God, such as our Sunday School Class for our young people. Although, the number of youth within our community and within our Church Family has decreased, we continue to provide learning opportunities for our children through our during worship service Sunday School classes thanks to the amazing efforts of people like Chris Urbas who has shown an awesome level of dedication and commitment to this important area of ministry with and for God!!!

We can celebrate with thanksgiving opportunities for learning, growing, and developing our relationships with God, such as our before worship Sunday School Class. This is a new adventure in study for us, as a small group of people meet for a time of discussion focusing on the morning worship scripture reading for the day. We are excited about seeing adults set an example for young people; we are never too old to learn and to grow in our relationships with God and each other, as brothers and sisters in the Family of God!!!

We can celebrate with thanksgiving opportunities for learning, growing, and developing our relationships with God, such as the Advent Study we are trying this year. This is a short term study which has had an awesome response with regards to participation!!!

We can celebrate with thanksgiving opportunities for learning, growing, and developing our relationships with God, as we prepare to run the "Alpha Course" this coming year. We ran the "Alpha Course" 8 years ago and have decided to try it again!!!

PRAISE be unto **GOD**, for God's presence and blessings as we celebrate with thanksgiving in our hearts the many wonderful opportunities we have been given to participate in serving God and one another as the Family of God!!!

We can celebrate with thanksgiving the service of God's people in God's Ministries, such as our Pasty Making Ministry. What an awesome project our Pasty Making Program is because it provides us financial support which enables to sustain our efforts to be the people of God at work in the community of Ely and beyond. Further, our Pasty making Program also benefits us as a wonderful opportunity to fellowship with one another as we work hand in hand with one another. Finally, our Pasty making Program has provided us an enduring example over many years, an example of just what we can accomplish when we work together!!!

We can celebrate with thanksgiving the service of God's people in God's Ministries, such as all those who have served on committees during this past year. Indeed, year by

year we have many of our Church Family who are willing to give of their time to serve on committees which enables us to continue participating in God's Ministries here in the Ely U.M.C.. Indeed, committee work is generally not a glorious activity, but it is the backbone which holds the system together through planning, guidance, decision making, and providing for implementation of our various ministries with God!!!

We can celebrate with thanksgiving the service of God's people in God's Ministries, such as related earlier through our worship experiences, our organists, our pianists, our choir, our lay leader who coordinates things, and all of those who volunteer as lay leaders at different times!!!

We can celebrate with thanksgiving the service of God's people in God's Ministries, such as the Ely U.M.C. Bazaar this past year. Wow, what a wonderful effort was put forth by all of those who participated in this ministry, sharing of their gifts, time, and talents. Again, serving in the Church in this way has enhanced our potential for doing other ministries with God!!!

*We can celebrate with thanksgiving the service of God's people in God's Ministries, such as the numerous, caring projects and also outreach projects, we have participated in as God's Family during this past year. Again **WOW**, for all those awesome ongoing ministries like, the "Prayer Shawl Ministry", our "Hearts 2 Hands" Quilters, the Parish Health Ministry Team, the new "Pocket Cross Ministry", "Stanley the Scare Crow" and our Food Shelf efforts, the "Christmas Giving Tree" which is for children in the Ely community, participating in the Lenten Suppers, providing worship services at "Ely Care Free Living" also the "Boundary waters Care Center", and the continued maintenance of our Ely U.M.C. Website, just to name a few. During this past year we also participated in ministry by joining together yet again as the "M & M" Cancer Walk Team to raise funds and awareness concerning cancer. During this last year we also participated in the "Change for Chicagami Project". Yes indeed, there are many ways we have been in service as the people of God during this past year!!!*

We can celebrate with thanksgiving the service of God's people in God's Ministries, such as our "Visioning Committee". We mention this committee specifically because "Visioning" about our future and about our call to be the people of God here in the Ely U.M.C. serving in God's Ministries as guided by God is critical to our having a future. "Visioning" over stagnation, directly relates to our worship experiences, to attendance worship, our spiritual well being, to our financial well being, and how we allow God to direct and guide us into the future!!!

We can celebrate with thanksgiving the service of God's people in God's Ministries, such as those we might call "Quiet Workers". Indeed, there are many of our Church Family we do many acts of service behind the scenes!!!

***PRAISE** be unto **GOD**, for God's presence and blessings as we celebrate with thanksgiving in our hearts for the many opportunities God has provided us to be a people who share the love of God with others out of our blessings which we have received from God!!!*

We can celebrate with thanksgiving the wonderful ways the people of God here in the Ely U.M.C. have participated in the sharing of God's love with God and with one another.

We can celebrate with thanksgiving the awesome ways so many people of our Church Family have shared of their gifts, their talents, their time, and their service as the people of God!!!

We can celebrate with thanksgiving the wonderful ways the Ely U.M.C. Family has given back unto God to meet the financial needs of the church. Our giving has been down a little, but thanks to the Bazaar this year and beginning the year with a little surplus it looks like we will yet again close the year having met all of our financial responsibilities in relation to being in ministry with God!!!

*Indeed, **PRAISE** be unto **GOD**, as we prepare to close the year 2013!!! We give thanks to God who has been **PRESENT** with us in the year 2013!!! We give thanks unto God who has provided many **BLESSINGS** unto us during the year 2013!!! We give thanks unto to God who continues to touch our lives as children in the Family of God here in the Ely U.M.C. with the wonder of **LOVE**!!!*

Love in Christ,

Dana

**WORSHIP, SERVE, & FELLOWSHIP
IN HEART, MIND, & SPIRIT,
AS WE "REJOICE WITH THANKSGIVING IN OUR HEARTS"
FOR WHAT GOD HAS DONE, IS DOING, AND WILL DO,
AMONG US!!!**