

THE STATE OF THE CHURCH:

2016

*So, it is that time again; time to send out a “State of the Church” report for 2016. This particular report will be my 30th as pastor of the Ely U.M.C.; and the first thought that comes to mind, is that we here as the Family of God in the Ely U.M.C. have been richly **BLESSED** by our very gracious and loving **GOD!!!***

*Yes indeed, we are **BLESSED** by our gracious and loving **GOD** who has provided us with a wealth of opportunities for participating in the **MINISTRIES** of **GOD** with our Church Family, within our community, and beyond!!!*

*Yes indeed, we are **BLESSED** by our gracious and loving **GOD** who has provided us with a number of brothers and sisters within the Family of God who have **JOYFULLY** responded to the call to **SERVE** and **PARTICIPATE!!!***

*As I recall our Centennial catch phrase was “The Little Church with the Big Heart” way back in 1992!!! Doing the math we established that catch phrase 24 years ago and it still holds strong today because of our gracious and loving **GOD** who has **BLESSED** us over and over again!!! Let us be ever **THANKFUL** for our gracious and loving **GOD** who has **BLESSED** us for these o’ so many years!!! **PRAISE** the **LORD!!!***

“Praise the Lord” for our Ely U.M.C. “Visioning Committee”! This committee has been doing a tremendous job of seeking to discover ways that we as the Family of God here in the Ely U.M.C. can maximize our potential as we seek to walk with God and work with God day by day! Our “Visioning Committee” is a very critical part of our remaining an active, vital, vibrant, and relevant part of God’s Ministry within the Ely community and beyond. We need to continue striving, reaching, expanding, the ways we will be involved in ministry with God and with each other! We give thanks that our “Visioning Committee” has truly accepted the challenge to keep looking for new ways to continue becoming the “Little Church with the Big Heart”!

Indeed, this committee has displayed the courage needed to encourage new avenues of ministry and take it the next step to trying new things.

We give thanks for our “Visioning Committee”! “Praise the Lord”!!!

*“Praise the Lord” for all the many ways **GOD** has **BLESSED** our worship experiences here in the Ely U.M.C.!*

First, we have three wonderful musicians who joyfully and richly add to our worship experiences. Yes, we give thanks for our awesome organist Susan Germek, and our two awesome pianist Sharon Luthens, and in the summer Mary Taylor.

Second, we have an awesome Ely U.M.C. Choir, they may possibly be small in numbers but true to the Ely U.M.C. they are very “Big in Heart”, while displaying a heartfelt spirit of loyal dedication to enriching our worship services twice a month, 11 out of 12 months a year, they are truly awesome!

Third, in Marshall Monthei we have a guitarist/soloist who is ready willing and able to provide special music on many of those Sundays when the choir is not singing!

Fourth, we have a wonderful Lay Leader in Patty Rusco who continues to seek out ways to include more and more of our laity in worship leadership. Patty also sets a great example to others, encouraging them to participate through worship leadership.

Fifth, thanks to the "Visioning Committee" we have established a program using a variety of Scripture Readers enhancing our opportunities to actively participate in leadership during our worship experiences.

Yes, we have been continuing to seek out ways of growing our potential as the Family of God, worshipping God! We give thanks for the many ways God has blessed our worship experiences! "Praise the Lord"!!!

*"Praise the Lord" for all the many ways **GOD** has **BLESSED** us with a vast variety of opportunities to experience growth as the Family of God here in the Ely U.M.C.!*

First, we give thanks for our K-6 Sunday School and the awesome leadership and loving care provided by our Sunday School Superintendent Chris Urbas and all the other various volunteers who have embraced the importance of the children in our Church Family and the need to provide them the opportunity to grow their relationships with God!

Second, we give thanks for those who have sought to encourage us as the Family of God to give some extra special attention to the younger children with our Church Family. Our younger children are just as important as our older children and also need some special attention with regards to growing their relationships with God. We give thanks to Jan Rue and Devon Luthens who have provided wonderful leadership with regards to finding ways of helping our younger children grow their relationships with God.

Third, we rejoice that during this year we have had two of our awesome youth complete their Confirmation Classes and assignments. We rejoice with Luke Olson and Lauren Porthan who Confirmed their Baptismal Vows and also joined the Ely U.M.C., they are each a rich addition to our Full Membership.

Fourth, we continue to hold a before worship Sunday School Class for anyone interested. We have kept this Sunday School Class focused on the Scripture Reading to be used in the morning worship service. We continue to have a committed group of people gathering together for this time of study.

Fifth, we continue to have an awesome group of youth who are meeting together weekly under the leadership of our able leaders Sheri and Keith Rue. Many of these youth enhanced their faith journey by going to a variety of non-denominational camps, in part with some sponsorship from their Ely U.M.C. Family.

Sixth, we continue to have a loyal group of Church Family members gathering together for a weekly Bible Study using a variety of themes.

Seventh, we have a committed group of women called the "Guild" who actively participate in a monthly study and fellowship time.

Eighth, encouraged by the "Visioning Committee" we have hosted two movie nights during the year which were open to the community. The first movie we showed was "The War Room" and the second movie we showed was "Miracles from Heaven". We also sponsored a wonderful study based on "The War Room". This study was very valuable to providing opportunity for spiritual growth.

Ninth, we also held an "Advent Study" titled "Because of Bethlehem" seeking to encourage our Church Family to focus anew on the true reason for celebrating Christmas.

Yes, we give thanks for the many ways God has blessed us with a variety of opportunities to experience growth as the Family of God! "Praise the Lord"!!!

*“Praise the Lord” for all the many ways **GOD** has **BLESSED** us with a vast variety of rich opportunities to participate in service unto God and with God, as the Family of God, here in the Ely U.M.C.!*

First, we quickly mention once again the many people who have been involved in service unto God and with God through leadership with regards to enhancing our worship services.

Second, we give thanks for all those who provide leadership and service with our Parish Health Ministry Team. They have provided some wonderful ministry during this past year with the Monthly Blood Pressure Program and the Medical Alert Booklet Program, also known as “The File of Life”.

Third, we give thanks for the “Hearts Two Hands” Ministry and their “labors of love” making quilts for children and a once a year pillow case drive. The “Hearts Two Hands” group has been providing wonderful Ministry for a great many years now (over 13 years).

Fourth, we give thanks for our “Prayer Shawl Ministry” which continues to reach out and touch hearts near and far by giving out prayer shawls just to let people know someone is thinking about them.

Fifth, we give thanks for our awesome “Prayer Chain” Team which continues to actively lift up people near and far in prayer.

Sixth, we give thanks for the awesome service provided by our awesome Trustees and their amazing commitment to keeping our facilities in good shape so that we as the Family of God here in the Ely U.M.C. can continue to participate in ministry with God.

Seventh, we give thanks for all the awesome people who continue to participate in and provide service unto God through our “Pasty Making Ministry”. There are three big benefits to our “Pasty Making Ministry”. The first benefit we gain out of making pasties grows out of the fellowship of the experience because we are working together. The second benefit we gain grows out of the fellowship and our working together, it is found in the awareness that even though we are “The Little Church with the Big Heart” we can do big things when we commit to working together in the name of God as the Family of God. The third benefit of our “Pasty Making Ministry” is the most obvious and comes from the financial benefit of helping to stabilize our finances so we can continue to be in ministry with God.

We give thanks for the many ways God has blessed us with a vast variety of rich opportunities to participate in service unto God and with God, as the Family of God! “Praise the Lord”!!!

*“Praise the Lord” for all the many ways **GOD** has **BLESSED** us with a vast variety of rich opportunities to participate in outreach in the name of God and with God, as the Family of God, here in the Ely U.M.C.!*

Among the many rich ways we have been involved in outreach during this last year includes things we have previously mentioned like four of our amazing groups that participate in ministry both near and far, “Hearts Two Hands”, “Prayer Shawl Ministry”, “Parish Health Team” and our “Prayer Chain”! Yet, another previously mentioned aspect of outreach would be our two movie nights advertised and open to the public.

We are also involved in various outreaches into our community. Among our various efforts into outreach within the community of Ely are the fact that we continued during the past year to help provide worship services at our two community senior centers, the “Boundary Waters Care Center” and the “Care Free Living”

facility. We also continued two other annual outreach projects “Stanley the Scare Crow” who helps us raise funds and promote the local food shelf and our “Giving Tree” Project which is an effort to provide Christmas gifts to children and youth within our community who may not be as fortunate as others.

We are also involved in various outreaches beyond our community. Among these we would include our sponsorship of a child whose name is Evelin Sarai Jiatz Cotzal from Guatemala through Children’s International. Another of these efforts at outreach beyond our community would be our continued support of the Minnesota Annual Conference Project called “Reach, Renew, Rejoice”. We pledged and gave \$2,020.00 to this project in 2015. This year we set a goal of giving \$1,000.00 to this project and reached it making our two year giving to “Reach, Renew, Rejoice” \$3,020.00. What an awesome effort by the “Little Church with the Big Heart”!

We give thanks for the many ways God has blessed us with a vast variety of rich opportunities to participate in outreach in the name of God and with God, as the Family of God! “Praise the Lord”!!!

“Praise the Lord” for all the many ways **GOD** has **BLESSED** us with the finances to continue participating God’s Ministry with God, as the Family of God, here in the Ely U.M.C.!

We have had yet another great year in relation to meeting our “Financial Responsibilities” with regards to participating in ministry with God here in the Ely U.M.C. Family!

First, we continue to have a gracious and giving family of brothers and sisters who willingly give unto God through our Sunday Worship Service Offerings. God has truly blessed us with people who have gracious hearts for giving so that the Ely U.M.C. might continue to be at work with God both in our community and also beyond.

Second, as mentioned before many of our Family here in the Ely U.M.C. give of their time in our “Pasty Making Ministry”. The financial benefit of this “Ministry” helps keep our financial situation stable here in the Ely U.M.C.!

Third, not only will we meet all our financial responsibilities locally but yet again we anticipate giving all of our “Apportionments” for the “Ministry” of the Minnesota Annual Conference. We have been giving all of our annual “Apportionments” since 1968 when we became the United Methodist Church joining the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church into one “United” body!

Fourth, as mentioned before we have met our goal of giving for the Minnesota Annual Conference Program called “Reach, Renew, Rejoice”.

Fifth, a part of our financial stability arises out of the great many and awesome servants of God within our Church Family who donate of their special skill sets, special skill sets which include their knowledge, equipment, and talents, that generally need to be paid for in other settings. What a rich blessing these people are to our Church Family they will go unnamed for fear of missing some because there are so many of them! These people are a continuing shining example of how the “Little Church with the Big Heart” can remain the “Big Heart” grounded first in the wonder of God’s gracious love which blesses us over and over again!

Yes indeed, we give thanks for the many ways God has blessed us with the finances to continue participating God’s Ministry with God, as the Family of God! “Praise the Lord”!!!

Clearly, we here in the Ely U.M.C. can celebrate the past year 2016, because of our gracious and loving **GOD** who has richly **BLESSED** us over and over again as we have sought to be in **MINISTRY** with **GOD**!

*Clearly, the Ely U.M.C. Family has been active and alive during 2016 while participating in a number of vital and vibrant ministries within our community and beyond. Truly, **GOD** has richly **BLESSED** us during 2016 and we have much to **THANK GOD** for as we pause to quietly and reflectively focus on the past year of 2016!*

*Closing 2016 will lead us into a new year 2017, in which we will continue to seek to be the “Little Church with the Big Heart” prayerfully focusing on **GOD** and **GOD’S MINISTRIES!***

*So, as we seek to be the people of **GOD** here in the Ely U.M.C. Family may we prayerfully seek to **WALK** and **WORK** in the light of **GOD’S WORD** and **GOD’S WILL** for us as the Family of God here in the Ely U.M.C. and as individual brothers and sisters in the Family of God!*

Love in Christ,

Pastor Dana

**SERVE IN MINISTRY
GROW IN LOVE FOR GOD & ONE ANOTHER
WORSHIP AS THE FAMILY OF GOD
SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER**

**LET US WELCOME 2017 AS WE SEEK TO WALK
WITH GOD**

**LET US WELCOME 2017 AS WE SEEK TO WORK
WITH GOD**

WITH PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING!!!