

State of the Church Report
The Brandermill Church
2009

The Brandermill Church, strengthened by our association as a union church with both the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the United Methodist Church, continues to grow in faith and in membership. We are blessed by the abundance of God's grace as we continue to fulfill our mission of providing opportunities to discover, nurture and share God's gifts.

Over the past two months, we have been able to focus each week on one our 7 Covenants of Discipleship from the 3 & 4 year old class to families attending worship, we have joined together as a congregation dedicated to teaching and learning to *pray daily, study regularly, worship weekly, give generously, serve creatively, live faithfully* and *witness boldly*.

Over the past year, our church has been rich in new opportunities for ministries and fellowship. The year began in January with our very first Angel Food distribution which has since grown in *giving generously* to our community. The women of TBC began the year with their first Ladies Tea where we *served creatively* for an afternoon of intergenerational fellowship. Our Congregational Care Ministry Team (CCMT) serves with a focus on providing support to members of the congregation who are no longer able to attend services.

Following the success of one service last year - Super Senior Sunday, we have had the opportunity to grow a new ministry known as the OWLS (Older, Wiser, Livelier Seniors) with members who have set an example for all of us of *living faithfully*. During Lent, Val White, our Director of Adult and Children's Ministries, gave us the opportunity to *pray daily* as our sanctuary hosted our first experience with a 17 foot labyrinth as well as prayer and meditation activities in a spiritual alcove.

A basket full of sewing supplies serves as a daily reminder of our efforts to *witness boldly* with our new sewing ministry which provides Dignity Robes to women in our community. Over the summer, our family of faith had a new opportunity to *worship weekly* together with one 10:00 service each Sunday. The fall began with the opportunity to once again meet to *study regularly* with Disciple classes offered from I through IV.

The generosity and nurturing nature of both the staff and the members of The Brandermill Church is evident year-round. With the addition of our new Youth Minister, Rich Catlett, spring brought us a fully staffed church which will be joyfully added to again with one more staff position in the Nursery to begin in November.

As we join together in food and fellowship to lift up His name and encourage one another, we do so in many ways. Our Men's Breakfast has both fine food and fine talk. Our Wednesday night dinners have guest chefs. Our Mother's Day Brunch as served by our men and our Chili cook-off and Senior graduation luncheon as served by our youth. Our Feast and Fellowship/Dine with Nine gathers small groups together periodically who are welcomed by a different host home each time. All were welcomed in August at a church picnic at the Pavilion in Sunday Park, and again in September for the 2nd annual campout at Bear Creek Lake!

We also like to come together to study the word of God in the morning, in the evenings, during the day and on Sundays. We see individuals and families begin their journey in the New Members class. We also have a men's class, a woman's class "You Go Girl", the Disciple classes I-IV, a class taught by each Pastor and several by our Christian educator. Our youth have small groups that meet weekly in the homes of members and our Sunday school classes engage adults and children alike. Following Caritas, the adults participated in the class "A Christian Response to Homelessness." Downstairs, our children learn their way through the Bible with multi-sensory activities and more traditionally with a 3rd grade class in the winter called Preparation for Worship. During the spring, the children made a "God jar" to keep their tithes in as we sponsor 2 children in Haiti. Meanwhile, the 4th & 5th grade Sunday School class of one teacher diligently collected shoes which were delivered to children in Afghanistan by her husband who was serving there in the military.

Our adults are inspirational as they donate their time and talents as well.... as dinner is served at Freedom House, as prayer shawls are knitted and blessed, as we walk for the Crop Walk, as we tend to the beauty of our grounds, as we Pack the Pod for Embrace Richmond, as we as we write notes and prepare meal after meal for those in need, as we write our names on hearts and donate to the Blanket Drive, as we give blood to the Red Cross, as we participate in Caring for Creation activities, as we thoughtfully choose a gift for the Christmas Mother. Our biannual

Consignment Saturday sales are staffed by volunteers from both our church and our community with outreach opportunities provided to area families as well as local and international ministries. Mission trips to Haiti, Honduras, Guatemala, Gulfport, Pittsburg, West Virginia, Winchester and those in Richmond bring home youth and adults who have been touched by God's presence in the people that they have served.

Several of the ministries in particular seem to traditionally generate an overwhelming response. Over 300 people volunteered for Caritas in a variety of capacities from hosting dinner, to doing laundry, to staying overnight. Habitat for Humanity fundraisers generated more than enough funds to be surely followed by more than enough manpower to build. We also all "got on the bus" on a trip to the Annual Conference to join in the celebration of Sandra's ordination.

Financially, new opportunities have been recognized with the inception of our Endowment Fund. However, at mid-year, when looking at our overall budget, Council struggled with numbers that projected a possible loss of up to \$93,000 which was understandable during difficult economic times. Council made dedicated efforts to re-analyze the budget of each committee which was followed by a congregational response of giving; both of which demonstrated witness to the power and glory of God.

Over the past year, our project team, project manager and architect have worked tirelessly on assembling a bid package and moving through the bid process to complete a Kitchen/Multipurpose room project. In August, Council learned that the bids for our kitchen expansion far exceeded our budget, giving us a moment to ponder the virtue of patience and that all will be done in God's time. We are looking forward to seeing a completed Kitchen/Multipurpose room project!

A special mention goes to our Elders, particularly those currently serving on Council who kindly, generously and with heartfelt graciousness serve the congregation as a whole in their commitment to uphold the mission and vision of TBC. Members of Council met this year for prayer, for fellowship, for governing, for study, and for training, We participated in the worship service. We served communion together during worship and in the community for those members who are homebound. We came together at the ordination ceremonies of new Elders with awe and reverence for the call that brought each of us to the alter.

Over the winter, Council members, committed to updating the church Covenants, reviewed recommended Covenant revisions, revised the Covenants, gave information to the congregation, answered questions and actively participated with each other and the congregation resulting in a vote which ultimately passed the Covenant revisions. The process was well thought out, well planned and all went well. In the Spring, Council members found renewal at the Confirmand dinner as we were reminded by our youth, as they recited their faith statements, of the vastness of God's grace and the strength of our community of faith.

Throughout the year, with each opportunity to share in the ministries of The Brandermill Church we know that God is good.