

FROM THE PASTOR'S

DESK



Community Baptist Church of Greater Milwaukee *2249 North Sherman Boulevard* *(January 2014)*

Dear CBCGM members, the months have passed so swiftly taking us from the summer's warmth to the winter's chill. As I write this first installment of 2014 we are experiencing record lows with many institutions closed for the day. There is some good to this. It has afforded me some time to spend with family, think, reflect and work! Most of all, however, to thank God for the privilege of having warmth and comfort when the windchill temperature outside is -40 degrees below zero! Let's remember to thank God for all things and to take for granted nothing! This is one way to start off the New Year on the right track.

Another way is to learn from our mistakes of the past year. In this regard, I made the mistake of breaking the channels of communication when I ceased writing this newsletter from June to December. This certainly was not intentional and I will not allow it to happen this year, God willing! I believe I've made it over to the other side of pain and loss, knowing that by God's grace I'm stronger now than I was last year. I thank you all for your patience and prayers during this period of emotional healing for me and my family. I've learned anew, like Paul, that "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13). I know that 2014 will have its challenges too, as did the past year, but I have a renewed vigor and passion "to add to my faith" all those qualities that 2 Peter 1:5-7 urges. This is in keeping with our 2014 all-church theme: "Getting God's House in Order: Making Our Faith MORE Effective" (2 Peter 1:5-9).

Thus I seek to make my faith "more effective" in the coming year as your pastor by developing greater skills as an administrator and also by engaging more effectively in the practice of pastoral care. CBCGM leaders will notice this administrative endeavor in my effort to keep all leaders accountable and responsible to their ministry tasks; and church members will hopefully notice my pastoral care efforts in more frequent calls, cards and visitations. How might you seek to "make your faith" and service to Christ and your church community "more effective" in the coming year? I urge and encourage each of us to give this question due consideration as we engage a new year that offers new possibilities and opportunities for improvement and greater service.

Deacon's Council

At the monthly meeting of the Deacons' Council held on *Saturday, January 4, 2014* at 9 AM, there were two outcomes:

1) **Deacon's Training**: In an effort to extend the effect of my pastoral care initiative, the deacons (and ministers) and I will be studying the text, *Essential Servants: Reflections on the Caring Ministry Deacons*, by

Fred Swartz. This study and the following application of its principles will help to fulfill strategic pillar #3 – **Church Unity**, by extending care and concern through regular and intentional contact with the membership through calls, cards, visits and encouragement, so that the bonds of unity and fellowship might be strengthened.

2) **Diaconate Categories of Service**: An essential aspect of the overall strategic plan is to clarify duties and expectations of leaders. The diaconate of the Baptist church is an essential ministry that requires clear and unambiguous expectations for the cooperative work and advancement of the church's mission. For this reason, in my pastoral reflections I clarified the categories of service for our deacons.

I) **Active Service**: *full deacon duties and responsibilities*: attend worship regularly and participate in worship responsibilities; ministry oversight responsibilities; attend monthly Diaconate/Leadership Council meetings; prepare and offer communion in worship and take to sick and shut in; call and visit the sick and shut in; assist the church/pastor to the best of one's ability.

II) **Reduced Activity** – for various reasons a deacon may request or be placed on *reduced activity*: for example; health problems or work related responsibilities.

III) **Inactive** – for various reasons a deacon may request or be placed on *inactive duty or responsibilities*; this could be as a result of disciplinary action, health issues or work related responsibilities.

IV) **Emeritus** – the pastor and/or diaconate ministry may grant a deacon *Emeritus* status for length of and exemplary quality of service in the diaconate. This means that s/he is retired or honorably discharged from active duty but retain the title of the office.

V) **Discharged** – for reasons of a serious breach of office or failure to carry out duties and responsibilities, a deacon could be discharged or removed from the diaconate.

A Celebration for Faithful Service: Sunday, February 5, 2014

Several deacons will be emeritized (retired with honor) during our February UNITY Sunday worship for their faithful service to CBCGM. Please join with me in congratulating and thanking for their faithful service: **Deacons Joseph and Lavern Barber, Deacons George and Melva McBeth, Deacon James Gore, Deacon Kenneth Martin and Deacon Raymond Twitty**. We will also at this service of recognition, emeritize one of our Associate Clergy, **Evangelist Eve Thompson**.

Deacons in Training (“Walking Deacons”):

Please help me welcome our new Deacons In Training (the old language and designation was “walking deacon”): brothers **Willie Jude, Jr.** and **Sherman Zolicoffer**, two long-time members of CBCGM; and **Deacon Lonnie Davis** who joined us last year as a new member along with his wife **Suzette**. Deacon Davis already has diaconate experience, having served as a deacon and diaconate chair at his last church of membership. Keep them all in your prayers as they undergo this training process.

Leadership Council

At the Leadership Council held on *Saturday, January 4, 2014* at 10:30 AM the leaders were divided into three groups and discussed various elements of the strategic pillars and initiatives. In short (well, summarizing the over 200 page document), there are three strategic pillars: **#1) Leadership Development** (which is printed below in brief with the supporting aims); **#2) Spiritual Growth**; and **#3) Church Unity**. Each of the pillars is supported by various strategic aims (for convenience, this is summarized in a 12 page document that you may have at your request or download from the church web site). As I visited each table and overheard the discussion, I was pleased and appreciated the serious and sober manner in which the groups addressed their assigned pillar and aims. The groups each proposed

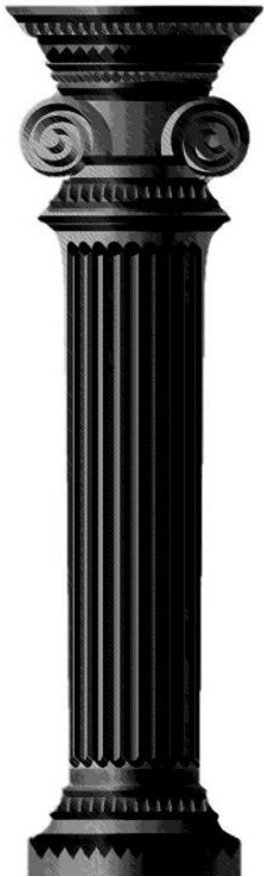
several great ideas about how we can make each pillar and aim a reality in our church. I will certainly keep you informed on these insightful and exciting developments. To be sure, I will do a better job of informing the congregation and explaining the various element of the strategic plan, which is essential for our cooperative labor together.

Ten-Year Strategic Plan: “Prospering the Vision”

Explaining and informing the congregation on the various elements of the strategic plan begins now! In the strategic plan developed by your strategic core team members you will notice that leadership development is at the top of the list:

Strategic Pillar 1 & Leadership Goals 1 & 2:

Strategic Pillar 1: Leadership Development



Purpose: To train, equip and prepare individuals to be Christ-centered leaders for the church and thereby e/affecting/empowering the community.

Leadership Strategic Goal 1: Establish a leadership development curriculum for church leaders that adequately trains, equips and prepares current and next generation of Christ-centered leaders for their roles and responsibilities.

Leadership Strategic Goal 2: Institutionalize a robust new leader orientation, succession plan and skills assessment for all leadership positions, current and potential.

Strategic Initiative 1: Leadership handbook

Strategic Initiative 9: Ministry handbook and training...

Strategic Initiative 13: Leadership training and continuous education

In fulfillment of the Strategic Pillar #1 and Strategic Goal 2, Initiative 1: a leadership handbook will be completed by the end of the month. The leadership council reviewed the first of several pages at this month’s meeting. In fulfillment of the Strategic Pillar #1 and Strategic Goal 1, Initiative 13 we will begin in our February Leadership Council our leadership development training. We will be studying the book by Myron Rush, *Management: A Biblical Approach* (2002). The success of the strategic plan depends on the willing cooperation of all leaders and all church members. If you recall from our Sunday morning message, if the leadership is strong, generally the followership will be equally as strong.

Bible Study

Bible Study (noon and evening) will resume this Wednesday, January 15! We have been reading the second book by Joseph Daniels, *The Power of Real: Changing Lives, Changing Churches, Changing Communities* (2011). This study has been a great blessing for me and I hope for the Bible class as well. It is a book about how to engage the congregation in the process of transformation, not only of the church itself, but also of the community. It is written in narrative form depicting how a young pastor and his pastor-mentor go about saving the “Church of the Last Chance” and making it relevant for its members and the community. This makes it part “inspiring story” and part “how to.” We want to encourage all of our members to get the book and attend Bible Study so that you might “make your faith more effective” by growing in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! (2 Peter 1:3-15) Come and be blessed!

UNITY SUNDAY Worship

I offer gracious thanks to God for the first UNITY SUNDAY of the New Year! I felt inspired and enthused by the spirit-filled worship and congregational reception of the morning message: "Making our Faith MORE Effective Through: *THE POWER OF COOPERATION*" (Genesis 11:1-9). We discovered that the Genesis narrative of the building of the Tower of Babel has much to teach us about; 1) A Common Purpose, Goals and Vision (vv. 3-4); Unity (v. 6); and Effective Communication (vv. 1, 6). The Tower of Babel society provided good leadership and organizational principles but had misguided motives because they engaged in *hubris* (selfish, defiant arrogance – they built a city and tower to "make a name for themselves" [v. 4]), and also they were rebellious of fulfilling God's will to "fill and populate the earth". They instead sought to build a city, "lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth..." (v. 4) Hence they were "building without a permit!" To be sure, the last and most important element for a successful organization is that it must operate **according to God's will and plan**. The Tower of Babel society missed the last and most important element. So God had to bring their building project to an end, by disrupting their communication system. We, however, as the Church of Christ have a permit to build (Matthew 16:18 – "...on this rock I will build my church..."; and Matthew 28:19-20 – "Go, therefore and make disciples..."). Therefore, "Come, Let Us" use the successful organizational principles above to work cooperatively together in building the kingdom of God, knowing that our efforts are not in vain, we are **"Building With A Permit!"**

New Members' Fellowship

Immediately following the UNITY Sunday worship, the ministry leaders of CBCGM had the opportunity to talk with, encourage and engage with our newest members at our New Members Fellowship Luncheon. There were several new members in attendance who were given a card with a "ice-breaker" statement written on it; such as, for example, "What are the most important qualities of a friend?" or "If someone were new to the city and money were no object, where would you take them to eat and why?" The leaders were given the same kinds of questions and had to find the new member with the same question. This was a wonderful way to start our gathering and foster fellowship and discussion. The last question for the new members was, "How might you make your faith and service to the church more effective in the coming year?" I am grateful that many of them expressed a desire to attend Sunday School and Bible Class, to join the Male Chorus and Choir, and also the Culinary Ministry the Usher Board. **"Come, Let Us"** join together in making them feel welcomed and appreciated as they join with us to serve in our various ministry groups.

In Memoriam

Finally, let us remember the beloved souls that have passed from our congregation and/or also the family members of our CBCGM sisters and brothers. We offer our prayers and condolences to all.

Let us lovingly remember those who have passed since the last newsletter:



Freddie L. Jude
Bertha Rodgers
Willie Lucas
Ernest O'Neil Pryor
Glendora Nabors
John Grimm
Frances Herron
Irene Tate-Malone