



Cypress Lake United Methodist Church -- Year in Review 2007

Our mission is to be dedicated follower of Jesus, making a positive difference for Christ in our community and world. With God's help, we at Cypress Lake United Methodist Church (CLUMC) have done well in performing this mission. While there are always areas for improvements toward our goal to serve Christ and our community, the information contained in this review for 2007 shows us to be a caring and growing congregation that continually demonstrates our faith and fellowship to the world around us.

This year brought a major change in the leadership of the church. It was formally announce to the congregation, on April 15, Pastor Jamie Westlake was being appointed to a new church. The effective date was at the end of June. It was a decision consistent with United Methodist Church policy. Separately, it was announced Richard Dickey, the Assistant Minister, was returning to the market place. Richard's decision to leave CLUMC staff was to reacquire a more financially sound base for his family. Pastor Jamie's replacement was announced to be Rev. Denman Jones who became our pastor in July of this year.

Pastor Denman was born "at an early age" in St. Petersburg, Florida. His words, not mine. While still young, he moved to West Virginia and eventually to western Pennsylvania. He lived there until graduation from Geneva College with a BS in Mathematics. It was at college where he learned of God's love and became a Christian through the patient and persistent witness of a friend. He also found another love in college—his wife Doris. Following college Pastor Denman and Doris moved to Kentucky where Pastor Denman attended Asbury Theological seminary.

Pastor Denman has served a variety of settings in Florida; small and rural to large and urban. He's loved every setting and discovered wonderful Christian people at every stop. His last appointment before coming to CLUMC was a 10 year stay at Tavares. Pastor Denman and Doris came with four children whose names all begin with the letter "D": David, a senior analyst with Sony Corp., Deborah, Doctorate of Mathematics and Professor at Bethune Cookman University, Diane, Workforce Planning Analyst at Disney, and Daniel, who finishing his degree at Asbury Seminary in Biblical Studies with emphasis on Biblical languages.

Pastor Denman is a welcomed addition to Cypress Lakes United Methodist Church and its dedicated ministry staff, laity contributors, and our amazing network of volunteers.

Each in their own way contributed to our successes in 2007, and it came as no surprise to Pastor Denman more people have gathered for worship and to offer their prayers to God and their gifts to the church in 2007 than in the previous year.

Speaking to those who contribute; each has special skills like those who humbly make Wonderful Wednesday Night Dinners. Most weeks of the year, members and friends and visitors routinely found a wonderful experience in fellowship, Bible Studies and a chance to taste and enjoy the culinary fixings of some of the church's best cooks.

Those volunteers with gifts of compassion and mercy join the Congregational Care Team. They met the needs of some of those who are lonely and/or who are shut-in. Like most ministries, however, those needing assistance far outweigh the supply of volunteers or the treasures from our congregation.

We have two parish nurses who continue their health programs for our community and church. This past year they provided well received and organized programs for the annual dispersal of flu shots, the periodic blood pressure checks and scheduled blood donor drives. These two nurses also enlightened us with their weekly contribution to the "Chronicle" with sage advice. Each article addressed the means to improve the wellness and wholeness of the body, mind and spirit and often addressed the programs held at the church to meet those needs.

Loving acts of service also are seen in our Mission and Outreach efforts. The Spirit was active and generous this past year allowing the church to give over \$82,400.00 in help. The beneficiaries of this gift were a broad range of efforts affecting children up to the age of 18. The young have a difficult time with coping with life as most know it. It is, therefore, the goal of this ministry to stop them from falling through the cracks. CLUMC talent, time and treasure are given through existing organizations to help different groups remain viable help organizations. As you may imagine, success in some goals of the missions described below are hard to quantify with numbers and value to the community and church. If you talk to the men, women and children involved, no amount of money can replace the feelings seen in the faces of those on the receiving end when car loads of food supplies, hundreds of turkeys and back packs and the pure gifts of caring are delivered by this congregation.

Abuse Counseling and Treatment (ACT) is a private, not-for-profit agency which provides assistance to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault through crisis intervention, shelter and counseling. It provides: emergency protective shelter, a 24-hour crisis hotline, one-on-one counseling, advocacy, support groups, transitional housing, batterer's intervention groups, community education and awareness, and information and referrals.

From the ongoing Angel Tree and October Focus: individual gifts, client transportation and housing needs, an estimated \$4,412.00.

Brightest Horizons is an early childhood development center for low income working families in the Harlem Heights section of Fort Myers. It is a state-licensed, not-for-profit organization, providing a secure and enriching environment for 162 children whose ages range from 4 weeks to 15 years. Bright Horizon also is one of the five programs in the state of Florida that has been chosen to participate in the “Success by Six-Early Reading First Grant”. This Grant is a three year project that has assisted in providing a literacy-rich educational environment for the children involved whereby Bright Horizons partners with the child’s first teacher—the parent. There is a waiting list of over 200 children.

We collected food monthly (First Sunday), delivered three SUV loads of craft supplies and food from March’s focus and provided 163 weeks’ scholarships (state matched), and estimated \$ 10,597.00.

The Heights Foundation is a Christian, not-for-profit organization providing long-term intervention to make available life-changing opportunities for the Harlem Heights community (250 single-family homes, 320 multi-family apartments) for working poor families. Some \$3847.00 was donated for Little League, summer camp scholarships. A July focus also collected five tubs of school supplies and underwear while for Thanksgiving CLUMC packed and delivered groceries and turkeys to our Heights neighbors.

Our Mother’s Home (OMH) is another not-for-profit organization that provides temporary shelter to teenage mothers and their babies who seek a safe, loving community, where they are taught to love and respect themselves, their children and others. OMH facilitates the educational process toward the emotional and spiritual development in hopes these young mothers become self-sufficient and nurturing mothers and moral members of the community.

We delivered five SUV loads of donated teen clothing, deposable diapers, and other consumables, plus cash from February’s focus. We also paid for septic system repairs, emergency diapers, wipes, paper supplies, new cribs and bedding totaling \$5,042.00

Super Kitchen (Community Cooperative Ministries) is also a not-for-profit agency meeting the food and family needs in downtown Fort Myers. The soup kitchen serves a nutritious meal each day at 11am to women with children and at 11:30 am to other individuals. There is a stocked food pantry from which bags of groceries and provided to families unable to find help through other traditional agency relief sources. This CLUMC volunteer service works hand-in-hand with Meals-on-Wheels of Lee County providing hot, nutritionally balanced meals prepared at the Soup Kitchen and delivered to elderly people who are trying to maintain their independence in their own homes.

Ongoing monthly serving and preparation of “Meals on Wheels”, donations of food and dry goods, paper products supplied regularly amounted to \$1287.00.

Additional local activities include:

- Joseph H. Messina Children's Center (\$320.00)
- Providing the CLUMC bus for Dunbar High School team games, drivers, gas, summer basketball camp, uniforms, tournament fees, and athletic calendar advertising (\$3087.00)
- Pastor's discretion individual gifts (\$3488.00)
- Grace Place (a United Methodist Church program in Naples) a volunteer-run Vacation Bible School for 40 migrant children in July (donations and supplies of snacks \$235.00)
- Young Life (\$2,000.00)
- Samaritan's Purse Christmas Shoeboxes (440 boxes collected \$563.00);
- United Methodist Women Projects: \$1977.00; Heifer Project \$20.00; Joseph Messina Children's Center \$320.00.
- United Methodist Men's Projects: 600 turkeys for Nations Association, Dunbar, Our Mother's Home, and Bright Horizons
- Conference Programs: \$600.00 and the Cuban Church \$55.00
- Bright Beginnings also stocked over 400 cans for Bright Horizons

Our Mission's remote highlights for the year follow:

- Florida United Methodist Children's Home; 5th Sunday collection (\$9877.00)
 - Bahamas Methodist Habitat Mission Trip whereby seven CLUMC members spent 320 hours in April building a house, refurbishing the caretaker's cottage, counseled local leaders and made van repairs (\$10,669.00)
 - The Bahamas Methodist VBS Trip had twelve CLUMC members go in July for children in Dundas Town and Cherokee Sound (\$19,764)
 - Belize United Methodist School was funded for school lunches for the year (\$2,000.00)
 - And over 400 Samaritan's Purse Christmas shoeboxes were collected (563.00)
- In total, CLUMC people contributed \$82,461.00 identified giving.

In addition to the bullet items highlighted above, many hours of time, caring and materials were gladly given in meeting CLUMC mission to be dedicated followers of Jesus, in making a positive difference for Christ in our community and our world.

There also is a wonderful Student Ministry. Under the new Director, Stephanie Lain, they have set out goals to make the CLUMC Youth Group a place to go for our youth. Most programs begin and end in the newly renovated Youth Center. Every program provides an opportunity for Christian learning to take place. Whether it is through their "LINC" program (Living in Christ), "Shift" (Serving Him In Fellowship Together), or their "A.R.T.S program (Arts Revealing The Son) our youth now have a wonderful place to kick back and enjoy music, food and games, each other and to see God in a tangible way.

Each month the youth participate in a service projects in the immediate CLUMC area. They also play a much broader role as they did in the most recent Super Bowl of Caring

this past Sunday. In 2007, 11,000 groups throughout the country and beyond donated to a charity selected by the participating organizations. Since the Super Bowl of Caring began as a national grassroots event in 1993, more than \$33 million has gone to help those in need.

The Trustee

From the “meeters” and greeters at the Sunday worship services to the Ministry staff we all should take pride in what our church has accomplished. The Operating Account as of December 31, 2007 was \$829,385.51 budgeted, income was \$783,714.01, and we had \$763,714.01 in expenses. The majority of the operating budget pays for the day-to-day expenses of operating and maintaining our church campus (Trustees’ Report follows), and paying salaries to our church staff. The remainder of our budget pays the ministries expenses within our church. This cannot happen without the generosity and good will of the membership.

Trustee’s Report:

Parsonage Renovation: Our Parsonage is in very good health. Prior to Doris and Pastor Denman moving in, the kitchen area was renovated with new cabinets and counter tops at a cost of \$7,000.00. Outside landscaping was completed around the parsonage costing \$6,300.00. The exterior of the parsonage was repainted. New rain gutters were installed, DSL internet service was added and a new washer and dryer were donated and installed. Two other projects should have been completed at time of this writing; the installation of a new sliding patio door, and the installation of a new solid front entrance door. Total expected improvement costs for the parsonage in 2007 exceeded just over \$22,000.00.

Church Grounds: Trustees Wayne Stockbower and Archie Blackwell monitor our church grounds. Wayne will continue to volunteer his labor in 2008 taking care of our north forty Green Acres from time to time. A special thanks to Gordon McGlashan who has used his Pumpkin Patch tractor to maintain the high, grassy areas. We will continue to grind out the old stumps from previous tree removal work that is expected to ease grass cutting along the north and east property boundaries.

The Church Bus: Better known as the Don Sell Express, bus continues to serve our church community. The bus just received its “fall detailing”. Bus service is scheduled as required. The bus pavilion, a related project, was completed in early spring. The project was completed under the supervision of Trustee Archie Blackwell at a cost of \$16,000.00.

High Tech: This is a continuing effort at CLUMC. We are blessed with a great technical team who continue to make our worship services come to life in our sanctuary and we hope to keep it that way. Dave Dalton heads this team. Trustee Ron Deatherage has been in charge of the installation over the past two years. A number of our technological renovations have come from using interest from Endowment monies. Additional funds approved by our Finance Committee when combined with the Endowment interests

helped the Trustees to move quickly to make the necessary enhancements. By the end of 2007, the Trustees invested over \$55,000.00 to this important endeavor. As an added bonus, two video cameras, having an estimated value of \$100,000.00, were donated truly enhancing the churches technical capabilities.

Other highlights of 2007 identified for our technological enhancements were made primarily to the Sanctuary and connecting buildings. These include: the installation of new lighting, installation of rectangular video screens and three projectors, a large audio computer sound booth, a large video recording booth, new flat screen TVs installed in the infant nursery rooms connecting the Sanctuary, new speakers, wireless microphones for the praise team, other computer upgrades, a new video mixer was installed to allow for the viewing of services in all nursery rooms, a new 32 channel sound board was purchased and installed in the Sanctuary, a new sound equalizer, new speakers, new wireless microphones for the praise team, and a new video mixer installed. For the Fellowship hall there was a large video screen and a new sound-video booth installed along with new speakers placed in the ceiling. Ten new lightweight tables also were part of the purchases for the Fellowship Hall. Lastly, there were some miscellaneous installations and wiring costs, and a new TV monitor in the Narthex areas.

Additional actions taken by our Trustees upgraded stained ceiling tiles and cleaned the air conditioning vents at our nursery to meet Lee Country health inspection standards. They also visited Bright Beginnings to ensure we are in compliance with health/safety requirements.

Finally the Trustees had volunteers expand the library area to allow for more space in the Friendship Room. This was accomplished to allow members and visitors to gather for a quick snack and conversation preceding our Sunday morning services.

The Youth Center renovations were completed this year as previously mentioned. The estimated costs were \$20,000.00. The final cost of the renovations to this 35 year old building came to \$54,000.00. We changed out old or outdated fixtures throughout the building, and corrected unacceptable or hazardous electrical connections. Happily, part of the overrun costs were defrayed by donations from our youth and Bright Beginnings and through a restricted account designated for the youth.