

# From Pastor Karen's Desk

September 2008

We spent time this summer "Imagining Our Future." In some cases, our imaginations were a little grim – we talked about the decline of mainline Protestant Churches in terms of membership, leadership, financial stability and influence. But in other cases, our imaginings were startlingly beautiful – we envisioned Church as that group of intentional, committed God-centered people who care more about relationships than buildings. And, in some instances, our imaginations failed us – when we tried to think what we had to do to reach this dream-future, we had difficulty thinking beyond baby steps and slight modifications of what we already do.

The staff spent some time "Imagining Our Future" at our August Planning Retreat. We were especially drawn to the image of the Church as a place of intentional commitment. I have been reading a book called *A Second Resurrection: Leading Your Congregation to New Life*. The author, Bill Easum, says that the place to start finding new life in your congregation is to tend to the spiritual life of its leaders. With these two things in mind, we are beginning to design a course of study, practice, and support which we hope will take our leaders deeper in their relationship with God, and from there, more intentionally into living out their faith in the world.

This is just in the beginning phases of planning, but we hope that we will be able to invite twelve (yes, that Biblical number twelve) of our congregation's leaders to be the first group to undertake this intentional spiritual growth beginning in January. Together, we hope to steep ourselves in the story of God's People, the practices of God's People, and the company of God's People so that we will be – surprise – God's People in a better way. After our leaders have, appropriately enough, led the way, we hope to invite more and more of our church family to take part as we all grow together toward God.

Pray for The Church. Pray for our congregation. Pray for God's realm to come, in whatever form that takes.