

# The Monroe Doctrine



September 2011

## Thriving or Surviving?

As we continue to move into the 21st Century, it is becoming readily apparent that there are distinct characteristics of thriving and surviving congregations. To those participants who represent the declining mentality this may be painful and threatening news. However, to the thriving faith community this contrast may be empowering and exciting. Just what are those differences between a surviving and thriving church?

| Surviving                 | Thriving                     |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Committed to the church   | Committed to Christ          |
| Managing committees       | Deploying missions           |
| Holding offices           | Doing hands-on ministries    |
| Making decisions          | Making disciples             |
| Trained for membership    | Lifelong quest for quality   |
| Serving at the church     | Serving in the world         |
| Raising money             | Rescuing people              |
| Doing church work         | Finding personal fulfillment |
| Retiring from church work | Pursuing personal growth     |
| Surveying internal needs  | Seeing community needs       |
| Eager to know everyone    | Eager for all to know God    |
| Loyal to one another      | Drawn to the un-churched     |
| Building faith on info    | Building faith on Jesus      |
| Perpetuating a heritage   | Visioning a future           |

According to Bill Easum and Tom Bandy in their book, *Growing Spiritual Redwoods*, declining

churches often want to do everything on the right side, without letting go of anything on the left. On the other hand, thriving congregations want wholeheartedly to do everything on the right-hand side and are prepared to let go of everything on the left.

I am excited that Monroe is striving to be thriving. See you at our thriving Bee Hive Sunday.

--Pastor Tim

## Worship Highlights

September 4 Life Lessons Series Continues and we will have guest missionaries from Cuba at the 9:30 service.

September 11 September 11th services. Phil Lacefield, former fire fighter sharing; flag field, music, and refreshments.

September 18 Life Lessons Series Continues and we end the summer with a church picnic.

September 25 TBA

## Cuban missionaries here

Husband and wife Pastors José Santiago and Yamile Cruz of the La Senda Antigua ministry in Jovellanos, Matanzas, Cuba will be at the 9:30 service on Sunday, September 4. They have dedicated themselves to pursuing the path of the primitive Christian Church, the Church against which the gates of Hell cannot stand, as reflected in the biblical account of Acts. Launched with six friends in January, 2011, within five months,

carried along by the power of the Holy Spirit, the group had grown to nearly 100 strong. There will be a question and answer session after the service followed by refreshments.

## **First responders honored**

On Sunday, September 11, retired Middletown Firefighter **Phil Lacefield** will present the message as we honor the fallen heroes of 9/11. The service will include special music and be followed by refreshments.

## **Church family picnic**

On September 18 we will gather together after church for a potluck picnic. We are planning to make this as informal as possible. We want our church family to get acquainted with each other while playing together as well as praying together.

Activities will include sports such as softball, corn hole, and volleyball. We'll have simple old fashion games like water balloon toss and ring around the rosie. Maybe someone would like to organize a touch football game for the kids. Mark the date on your calendar and plan to be there. The Bengals are playing out of town that week. Volunteers are needed. Watch for sign-up boards.

## **Opportunities to Serve**

Our Mission Committee gets requests for help almost daily. We try to help if we can, but let's face it, we just can't help everyone we would like to help. We decided to post on a bulletin board in the Narthex local requests, national requests, and worldwide requests. If you feel called to serve in some way, check out the board and see if there is a group or organization that interests you. If you have new ideas for missions and outreach and would like to join the Mission Committee, speak to a committee member or just come to one of our meetings on the first Monday of each month (unless there is a holiday on that Monday, then we move it to the second Monday) at 7:00 PM.

Upcoming mission projects include the September Food Pantry Drive; the October Operation Christmas Child, a Shoebox Ministry; November Thanksgiving Baskets for the Hungry; and December Angel Tree Ministry.

We give thanks to God for blessing this congregation with the compassion to share their gifts with others.

## **Thank you**

To the congregation and especially those who gave donations and participated in the Summer Sack Lunch Program in July and August. Thanks to you, we fed nutritious lunches to 115 children at Rochester Hills Mobile Home Park.

From **Marty Hatcher** for the calls, cards and many prayers during my recent injury and subsequent complications.

## **Good Fellowship resumes**

After a summer off, the Good Fellowship group resumes its monthly dinner meetings on Tuesday, September 6, at 6:00 PM in Atchley Hall. Members of our Red Bird Mission team are scheduled to discuss their experience. Please bring a covered dish to share and your own table service. Beverages and rolls will be provided.

## **Singers wanted**

Do you like to sing? Enjoy praise and worship music? Join us! We are currently gauging interest for an ensemble of voices from the 9:30 service to form a Praise and Worship Choir. Through listening CDs, sheet music, and rehearsals a few times per month, this group would share in the 9:30 worship service once a quarter or so. This ministry could also grow to include Easter Sunday and other special occasions. Sign up on the bulletin board in Atchley Hall or contact **Brittany Henson** for more information.

## **Homework Helpers and Reading Buddies**

We are recruiting both adults and older youth to serve in this ministry for the coming school year. We plan to start the program on Wednesday, September 28, with new start and end times of 5:30 and 6:30 PM. We hope this later start time will allow more participants from the community and adult volunteers from our congregation to get involved. Please email or speak to **Brittany Henson** to volunteer or to register your student.

## New small groups ministry

Small groups complement Sunday services and are vital to our church. Current, ongoing groups generally meet once a month and are open at any time. Examples are Mustard Seed, SAIL, Prayer Shawl Ministry, Methodist Men, Methodist Women, The Book Study, and Good Fellowship. These groups aid in connecting folks as well as supporting internal and external church projects. They are all essential to the life of the church, have a great history and a very bright future.

**Life Connections**, a new small group ministry, will be launched soon after Labor Day. These small groups are short term in nature and aim to provide a catalyst for relationship development, community building, and spiritual growth. They are topic specific, bringing together folks with a common felt need. Generally, they meet in homes a minimum of 8 times during the term and enrollment is closed after the beginning of the term. The Groups include:

- The Truth Project
- Coping with Grief
- The Life and Ministry of John
- Financial Planning 101
- Mid 30-40 Somethings
- Mid 20-30 Somethings
- The Alpha Course
- Parenting: Communication Skills with Children and Teens

The Life Connections small groups are filling fast. For more information or if you weren't able to register on August 21 or 28, contact Connie Wesner, 513-360-0318 or [bcwesner@yahoo.com](mailto:bcwesner@yahoo.com).

## Men's Group outing

Instead of our monthly breakfast, the Men's Group will meet at the church at 11:30 AM on Saturday, September 10, and drive to Germantown where we'll visit the Veterans Museum and have lunch afterward.

## Election Day Luncheon

The United Methodist Women will be serving their 36th annual Election Day Luncheon on November 7. Co-chairs are **Jane Majors** and **Shirley Hall**. They will need your help.

## Nut and candy sale

The annual Monroe United Methodist Women nut and candy sale is underway. To place your order please complete the order form found in this issue of the Church newsletter. All orders will be filled by completing the order forms. We will be selling nuts and candy *only* by pre-ordering. If you have any questions contact **Jane Majors**, **Helen Ihle**, **Pat Garrett**, **Pam Kilburn**, or **Terri McGuire**. Your completed order forms and payment are due by September 25 and can be given to any committee member. Make check payable to Monroe U.M.W. Shipment is expected by November 1. Profit from the sale allows the ladies to support many projects for the church, the most recent being 20 new round tables for Atchley Hall. Your support is appreciated.

## Football dinner

Our church will once again be serving the Hornet Football team a pre-game meal this fall. If you can contribute to the cost of food or help, please see **Jane Majors** or **Ellen Osterman**.

## New photo directory coming

September is the last chance to have your photo included in the new church photo directory coming in October. You can call **Jerry Michael**, 513-933-9049, to take a digital photo of you before or after any church service, you can email your own digital photo to [grm@go-concepts.com](mailto:grm@go-concepts.com), or bring a photo to the church office to be scanned and returned to you. We've added several new members and don't want to leave anybody out.

## "Christmas Carol" parts left

There are still four small parts left for the Drama Ministry's December 10 and 11 presentation of Charles Dickens "A Christmas Carol." We can also use help with costumes and props. Contact **Judy Weber**, 934-1709, [judycweber@gmail.com](mailto:judycweber@gmail.com).