



A Letter From Jim

McEachern Memorial United Methodist Church • 4075 Macland Road • Powder Springs, GA 30127 • (770) 943-3008

June 6, 2008

Dear McEachern Members and Friends,

“And the one who was seated on the throne said, ‘See, I am making all things new.’” Rev. 21.5

I want to share with you some of the results of comprehensive and unified plans which our congregation and leadership have been working on for several months in an effort to better use the resources which God entrusts with us .

Our **Finance Committee** informed our congregation last fall that we have been partially depending upon our prior year’s surplus funds to help balance our budget(s) for many years. Those funds, they warned, were in danger of being exhausted if there was not a combination of increased gifts and lower expenses. Under their direction, our indebtedness for the CLC and the land we purchased was restructured, thus decreasing our monthly obligation by \$20,000. The Finance committee also asked all areas of the church to take a look at where they could further reduce costs to help bring our expenditures in line with our income and many have responded favorably.

Our **Board of Trustees** worked to implement our improved security system, which not only will keep our children safer, but also enables us to “zone-off” unused areas so that we have the ability to reduce utility costs by allowing groups that are meeting at the same time to meet in the common areas. Thus, the need to cool or heat several buildings all the time is minimized. The Trustees also discovered that by using a contract cleaning service (which most other large churches do), we would save over \$40,000 per year; that will begin on July 1st.

Our **ministry staff** has taken a long and hard look at their budgets. I encouraged them to look into areas where they could reduce costs without significantly affecting our mission and ministry. Through their thoroughness and creativity, they were able to work with their lay volunteers and their support staff(s) to reduce their 2008/2009 budgets by at least ten percent.

The largest part of our budget, as is the case with all churches, is our staff salaries. **Our Staff-Parish Relations Committee** has spent several months in analysis, conversation and prayer in order to best align our staff positions with our mission. You are already aware that we reduced the staff by two part-time positions a few months ago. Last week, the positions of Church Secretary and Senior Pastor Secretary were restructured into a new Executive Church Secretary position.

But we all recognize that our continued success at McEachern depends upon our **Congregation’s** response to God’s call. I must admit that as your senior pastor, I have been both humbled and thankful as I found out that our Consecration Sunday and subsequent stewardship activities have been successful especially during these difficult economic times. This has been attributable in part to the 96 new pledges from families that had not pledged in the past, 97 families increasing their pledges over last year and an increase in the average pledge of \$460.... Praise God! In addition, our initial figures from May show that for the third month in a row, our income has exceeded our expenses, so it looks like some of our cost saving measures are taking hold. So, by working together in recent months to balance our budgets across the board and through your stewardship commitments, I am now confident that we will present a balanced budget to the church council on June 22nd!

Almighty God, we give you thanks that in the midst of change you make all things new. Help us to embrace the preferred future you have in store for us. Give us strength and courage to enter these new days with a renewed sense of your presence and guidance. This we ask in the name of the Lord we serve, Jesus Christ. Amen.

God Bless,