

### Call to Worship

As children of the light, we are light to the nations; as bearers of the light, we are light in the darkness, a light that cannot be put out.

**As we worship God this day, we want to know more surely who we are, that we may shine for God more clearly, as individuals and as the church.**

Let our doubt disappear and our faith increase, that the light of Christ may spread abroad such that others will be drawn to you, the Source of life and light.

**Let us praise and worship God for who we are in Jesus Christ, the Light of the World.**

### The Word

Matthew 5:13-16 Common English Bible

*"You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its saltiness, how will it become salty again? It's good for nothing except to be thrown away and trampled under people's feet.*

***You are the light of the world. A city on top of a hill can't be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a basket. Instead, they put it on top of a lampstand, and it shines on all who are in the house.***

*In the same way, let your light shine before people, so they can see the good things you do and praise your Father who is in heaven.*

### Living the Word

"The Ministry of Outreach"

The mission statement of Hayward United Methodist Church says: **"We are a Christian community reaching out to others with Open Hearts, Open Minds and Open Doors."** If you ever need a reminder, it is shortened for you on the highway side of the building in large letters, or given to you each month on the front of your Good News Letter.

I understand that a fair amount of time was spent by church leadership before I came, to put it together with the words that would encompass who this church envisions itself to be today and for the future. I particularly like what it says to others about us. We are a Christian community, that is what makes us different from other social groups. We let it be known that we are followers of Christ, even though we may each define that a little differently.

It ends with an openness in our hearts and minds to all people. John Wesley said "We may not all think alike, but we can all love alike." Truthfully, the doors aren't always open, yet our grounds are and many people come to pray or process in the memorial garden, swing on the swings and go down the slide...

Every time I go to pick up Oliver for some grandma time, he asks me "are we going to grandma's church?" – that would be mostly for the slide, but he also found a little tractor in the lounge toy box and is content there if I only have a short amount of work to do.

The best part of our mission statement is "community, reaching out to others." We are a community reaching out to others, so today we celebrate the Ministry of Outreach in this church. Our ministries of Worship, Nurture & Care, Education, Missions and Outreach all fit into this statement of our belief. We are not just a social club that gets together to make each other feel good. We are called by God, through the live person of Jesus Christ, to reach out to the world.

When the pastor, John Wesley, founder of the Methodist Movement some 300 years ago, was asked where his parish or church was, his response was "The World is my parish." His ministry included helping orphans and widows, visiting the sick, feeding the poor, clothing the hungry and spending time with prisoners in the jail.

The World is also our parish. We have the opportunity to give of ourselves for others. In this church we offer opportunities continually and over-lapping-ly. There is not enough time to tell you all of the multitude of continual and overlapping missions of this church, so I am going to focus on the places we have done some 'Think Greater' work since last year at this time. I invite you to listen for some places you have helped this year or would like to participate next year.

Weekly loose change collections through the year, given to four programs: St Francis Mission \$404 to be used for updated software and to help fund a field trip. We also were able to help them tuning their two pianos out of our Music Scholarship Fund.

Zimbabwe Scholarships for students \$389, Gary and Cathie Erickson are already packing for the next trip over to help in Zimbabwe. Last Fall we raised \$523 for Operation Christmas, which supplies Christmas Dinner for area families. How much will be in the jar by the end of this morning? In addition we brought gifts to go with the tags bearing local children's needs. As I said earlier, fourth quarter loose change will go to the local Hospice Program.

In August, October and December dinner was created and served at First Lutheran's Wednesday night community meal. A day or two of pre-cooking, then the set up crew, kitchen crew, serving crew and cleanup crew all come together to feed about 100 people each month. It has been said that they call ahead to see when the United Methodist Church is coming to serve, because the meal is so good!

June 10<sup>th</sup> was the Salad Luncheon & Silent Auction, proceeds to go the Hayward Food Shelf Weekend Backpack Program. Along with other funds given, the amount to the Food Shelf reported last August was \$1582.

October the women went back to the kitchen and we put together the first Annual Oktoberfest. Through donations of time, food and money, we raised \$1615., half of which went to Salvation Army to help them with screening and giving to community people with need.

The second annual Oktoberfest is well into the planning/working stage. Join the fun as we put together this event to help the community once again working with Salvation Army. Mark your calendar for Friday October 13, 4-7pm, promotional fliers will be available after worship.

We also have a regular commitment to Salvation Army of \$50/month which comes out of the discretionary funds, you mark as such. This fund also helps when someone local comes for a no-interest loan to come one time expenses.

Through UMCOR – The United Methodist Committee on Relief, this church has been able to send several thousand dollars this last year to help rebuild Haiti, Texas and Florida after Hurricane damages. When we place our gifts in the church's offering plates,

As United Methodists we are connected. We are called to **THINK GREATER!** We see that vision come alive right now as people work together to respond to the devastating effects of Hurricane Matthew throughout the Caribbean and the northeastern section of the United States. Even in the midst of such tragedy, UMCOR is there on our behalf sharing the love and hope that is ours in Christ.

As United Methodists, let's *celebrate* the many ways hope is shared through our connectional giving all year 'round. Even more fun is actually getting to buy what is needed yourself and donating, so we collected piles of baby clothes, school supplies and hats and mittens for the community and people far away.

Rev. Barb Certa-Werner came in March to share the story of the homeless shelters that the United Methodist Church supports in Superior WI. You were so gracious to her, that she has asked to come again next February.

And then there was 'Fishin' for Dixie' – Dixieland Jazz sponsored by the church for the community's enjoyment, music to make your toes tap. They helped us give to the food shelf and then came and led worship! When my sister, Cindy Pearson popped in from Hong Kong, not only did you hear the story of the Christian underground movement in China, but you supported her ministry and the work she is called to do there.

We open the doors of the church to a number of community groups, giving them a place to gather. IT is an opportunity for community outreach, as more people find their way in the door they may return to know God's grace in other ways. Just this week we had our Church in the Sawyer County Record for hosting the Sawyer County Medical Reserve Corps project creating Back Packs for recovered victims of Human Trafficking.

We promote Giving Tuesday, just after Thanksgiving and Black Friday. On that day there have been matching funds given nationally for outreach through your chosen projects. Good incentive to give and also a great way to find Christmas presents for that one that is difficult to buy for. The tag says: this year I gave money in your name to feed people in Chicago, or whatever your choice may be.

In June God brought to mind that we have a mobile home court just two blocks away, that might have children at home during the summer that would appreciate a lunch. Invitations were delivered to each home, the church made sandwiches; chips, bottled water and applesauce were donated and we began to set up lunch by the mailboxes at Pinewood court.

Not all good ideas, even well planned, happen as we expect. After the third week as people were not stopping for lunch, we ended the project. Even so, through the invitation we had contact with our neighbors, which was possibly the main thing – not the sandwiches...

When we place our general fund gifts in the church's offering plates, **84.6 cents** of every dollar, on average, will remain in our local church to provide for the ministries of the church.

Through our apportioned giving **12.7 cents** out of every dollar we give will provide signs of hope to children, youth and adults who participate in the ministries of Northcott Neighborhood House, United Methodist Children's Services, Harbor House Crisis Shelters, our United Methodist camps and new ministries in the state.

Additionally, signs of hope are shared through over 1,000 mission personnel supported through the General Board of Global Ministries, in over 150 countries, for just **2.7 cents** out of every dollar given.

For a membership of only 95, we are a very generous church family when it comes to outreach. We give out of our abundance as God calls us to. Yet I have to say that though we see a few new faces coming to join us, we have not had any new members join the church since last January, while three couples have moved away.

Our giving base has shrunk and we do have to be aware of the expenses of keeping up as a church with our general budget needs so we can continue in ministry. Part of being generous could be to give of yourself out of your comfort zone to share with others about your missional churches many ways of being in outreach to the community and the world.

I invited you to share on the white board in the gathering area, the places you serve beyond the church in the community and world. Raise your hand so others can see who is involved with these organizations of good works for others. Here is your list, with some that I know are happening that weren't listed: Hayward Food Shelf, Search & Rescue, Salvation Army Thrift Store, Land Trust River Work, Wisconsin Lakes Association, Ruby's Pantry, S.C.O.P.E. (Sawyer County Outdoor Projects and Education).

Hunt Hill Nature Sanctuary, Hospital Gift Shop, Friends of the Library, Fishing Has No Boundaries, Habitat for Humanity, Public School Volunteers, Shirley just did the Walk for Alzheimer's, Couderay Waters Regional Land Trust, Kiwanis' K-Kids Teacher. Does anyone want to shout out ones that I missed?

Did any of these projects stick out in your mind? There is always room for more people to get involved as we share our talents and gifts for others. The best way to feel God's blessings in your life is to give some of your time to bless others. If you want more information about any of them, or you know of a mission in which you would like the church to participate, please let me know.

All of this list in one year! It sounds pretty impressive when you put it all together. But there is always more to be done. God has called us to mission and outreach. This church offers you many varied opportunities to share yourself with others. We are the salt of the earth, but if we lose our saltiness, what good would we be? We reflect the light of Christ when we don't hide Christ's light under a bushel.

Many people spend their whole life looking for purpose. If you want to find purpose in your life, allow yourself to be blessed by sharing Christ with others through Outreach & Missions. I pray that someday we will be known in the Hayward community area as Hayward United Methodist Church, a missional church...the octagon with a copper spire.

Prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness are the pieces we commit to as the people of this church. We use all of those parts as we reach out into the world.

As we live into our mission statement, we find ways to continue to 'Think Greater' about who we are as the collective 'Body of Christ'. We are reaching out to all who would receive from us, and inviting others in as the Good News Letter and the sign out front say to *"Come Share the Warmth."*