

Annual Report
Reverend Julia A. Carlson

January 15, 2010

Dear Friends,

I will say again what a blessing it has been to be the pastor of Buffalo Presbyterian Church. I am leaving you with wonderful memories of good food and good fun, laughter and tears. This is a great community; a community that is not without its pains and differences but one that is, whether in joy or sorrow, seeking new life and watching for the presence of God.

Last spring, I had someone come up to me and share with me that they had very much enjoyed our worship services throughout the year; the person said it has been the best year in recent memory for many reasons but especially because of all the new and wonderful hymns. But, just a few days later, another person remarked to me, "We're singing too many new songs." This speaks to me of the broad range of feelings we have about our worship but even more importantly, it speaks to me of the faithfulness of people in the community. These remarks came from people who worship regularly, in fact, they hardly miss a Sunday. We all want some familiarity in our worship but even more important is the commitment to be here because it's about God. The One who unites us is more important than our individual likes and dislikes.

You have worked hard through this interim to remember your foundation and then to let new life be built upon it. I look forward to seeing the new bell tower come into being. I have great hope for your community garden idea. In the years to come, I expect to see patios and outdoor worship space blossom out from the building. And even then, there would still be room for a ball field or playground. 2009 was a year of seeding; as the PNC did its work to find your next installed pastor, many ideas were falling out among us like seeds. We plant and water; God will make things grow.

I would like to take a moment to thank the staff of this church for their fine work. Don and Ralph are outstanding musicians and a joy to work and worship with; Marcy loves this church and works with care to nurture our worship and life. Kelly takes care of our very young ones and Scott and Holly cherish and develop our youth, including a mission trip the past July. The Elders are stretching themselves to lead the mission of the church, plan and execute Christian education for our children and young people, and to care for this facility. The Deacons are very faithful to their call to give care among congregants. There is a great collective love and wisdom among these staff and leaders; they all lead and contribute with "energy, intelligence, imagination and love" as written in our ordination vows.

This past November, I went to a PCUSA supported retreat and was surrounded in many ways by the abundance of God's love and care for me. In a world that is so focused on scarcity, I decided to turn my face toward the abundance of God, to believe *daily* that God is giving me what I need, not only for my wellness and wholeness but for the goodness of the creation. May we all be so blessed.