

Year-End “Rememberies” New Year “Possibileries”
“What is impossible from a human perspective is possible with God.” Luke 18:27 (NLT)

“Rememberies” appeared in the December 28 “The Family Circus” and I thought we might borrow that word to celebrate this past year at Riverside along with the “possibileries” (I made this one up) for the coming year. God has been good to us and that will continue in 2009 with new plans and surprises as we live out the *Five Practices for Fruitful Congregations* (Bishop Schnase). Let’s begin

Radical Hospitality Rememberies– We extended invitations to people through water bottles at the fair, around the neighborhood for Worship in the Park, and to the Christmas Eve service. We updated name tags and encouraged wearing them, trained greeters ushers and minglers; moved snacks and beverages to the lobby, painted the sanctuary and coat room, hung artwork, provided new coloring pages and books for children, and hired a Child Care Coordinator. Six people made a covenant to be members of this body of Christ and have participated in the ministry of the church. **2009 Possibileries** are making invitation and inclusion a priority for every Sunday with everyone learning to share their faith and having invitation cards. Our hospitality will be making sure our pews are well stocked, examining our signage, and continuing to train people. Everyone will help ensure the lights are on Sunday mornings (including downstairs) and the doors open, identify who they are during prayer time and bring a welcoming spirit. We will commit ourselves to reaching out into our community and beyond we will train people in the ministry of presence to care for our homebound, those in the hospital and nursing homes. **Passionate**

Worship Rememberies– We continued to make changes in our music, added new colorful banners, had beautiful altars that reflected the liturgical colors and fill empty spaces in the sanctuary. We also enjoyed special worship times with Gethsemane. **2009 Possibileries**. We will emphasize preparation for worship as we come to connect with God. New banners are being prepared for various seasons. Our worship team will evaluate and study new ways to bring us into God’s presence as we continue to share worship experiences with Gethsemane and possibly with other churches who will be in our new cluster.

Intentional Faith Development – Our Prayer Team has been faithful to prepare the prayer room each week, offered retreats and intentional 40 days of prayer to help us grow in our connection to God. Prayer Walkers have prayed for our church, neighbors, city, shopping malls, schools and other locations. Bible and book studies have helped us grow in our faith. Our Sunday school classes met in new groups for 5 weeks in the fall during our stewardship program. **2009 Possibileries**. Our faith development will be focused on Alpha for the first part of the year for prayer and study. A Lenten prayer vigil is being planned and a prayer partner breakfast with our cluster. The Walk to Emmaus walk will be promoted as will a reading program in our library. We will learn about spiritual disciplines.

Risk-taking Mission and Service – We partnered with Covenant Partners and Gethsemane for Community Day Supplies and serving together for the day. Our Kid’s Hope program with Mitchell School continues to grow and to touch many children and their families including a Christmas Party. Thanks to firemen in the community were extended with donuts and coffee. Hands on support was given to Habitat for Humanity and through Helping Hands. A dinner/swing dance was held as a fund raiser for missions. Meetings have been held to discern community needs and shared ministry with the Salvation Army is being explored, beginning with the bell ringing. **2009 Possibileries**. Our Alpha program will reach out to people who are searching for meaning and purpose in life. We will be encouraging every member and group at Riverside to participate in an outreach into the community. Extra mile giving will be introduced to the church and we will provide at least one risk-taking mission trip.

Extravagant Generosity – We have been faithful in commitments to our pledges and have kept our expenses and resources in balance. A highlight has been paying back a large portion of our Endowment as a part of our Lenten giving. Our stewardship program focused on the five practices and Tom Foote of High Street was our guest speaker. **2009 Possibileries**. Newsletter articles will keep us updated about our finances and the ministry we are supporting. We will continue to teach about tithing and encourage people to be in prayer for generous giving. Repayment of our debt will be encouraged. The endowment from the Hoover estate will be invested and decisions about our house and facility will be made. The focus of Extravagant

generosity will be on our vision of being a church who reaches out to share the gift of Jesus Christ with others in our community and beyond.

Riverside has been blessed in abundance with people who have hearts filled with caring and compassion for people. Pray that through devotion to these five practices that God will help us connect with and provide the love of Jesus Christ to those whose lives will be changed and transformed by his goodness, grace and love. In all

things, to God be the glory. In all circumstances give thanks for God's presence with us through his Son, Jesus Christ.

The *possibilities* are endless in God's eyes!!! All will be blessed—God is good!

In Christ's Service,

Pastor Karen