

Annual Report 2009
Central Deanery, Presbytery of Northern New York

In 2008, the first year of our new Deanery structure, I spent the year learning about our Presbytery, our thirteen Central churches, and what people thought we should be doing to help our churches survive and thrive. I visited many churches and attended many meetings including Sessions, Presbytery, and MINC and took Healthy Congregation Training. I got to know hundreds of new people in our Presbytery. Gradually, I determined what I believed a Dean should be doing and what kind of structure, both physically, and conceptually, would be necessary.

In 2009, I continued visiting our thirteen Central churches through Sessions, Sunday Services, and individual meetings with Pastors. I was invited to many Central churches for special occasions, such as anniversary celebrations and special music only Sunday Services. I talked to many other workers in the Presbytery including Committee members, and elected officers such as the Treasurer. I attended many meetings that I might fulfill the function of representing the presbytery to individuals and churches. At Presbytery meetings, my goal was to further define what people thought would help the churches flourish. I hoped to help the churches connect and understand each other better by sharing good ideas and practices. In December '08, having determined what I thought would work best, I had purchased a new computer with better capabilities and thus could do certain tasks better, with e-lists of Pastors, Clerks, and others, which made bookkeeping and keeping in touch much easier. I began receiving more frequent questions, requests, and other communications from other Central Deanery and Presbytery members. In early October, I held the first group meeting of Pastors only, that I might present, and discuss with them, the two steps I plan to pursue in 2010 to help our Presbytery progress: 1. Being the best, the most Christ-like and encouraging to others, in our Churches, that is, to speak the truth in love. 2. Being the best, reaching out, in our communities, that is, to develop programs which bring in community members. The Pastors also had the opportunity to speak of their concerns with each other.

At the last Presbytery meeting, I asked attendees at the Deanery Breakout meeting their opinion on three initiatives I had determined would help the Churches thrive, and hopefully help membership numbers grow. The consensus was that Arts for Kids and Arts Programs in the churches were the best choices, so they will be part of my focus in 2010. I feel that we, as a presbytery, are on the right road. There seem to be more committed people doing good work and a better sense of the Presbytery as a whole working toward the common goal of surviving and thriving.

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