



Maple Street Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Danvers, Massachusetts, 01923
www.maplestreet church.org
May 2009

The Spire

Dear Friends,

I have recently been re-reading a book by church consultant Kennon L. Callahan called *Giving and Stewardship in an Effective Church*. In the book he discusses seven “giving principles”. The second principle “A Winning Cause” fits well with our Eastertide celebration of the Risen One among us. He says “the mission of God is a winning cause. Your congregation, at its best, is a winning cause.

We are the Christmas people
We are the Easter people
We are the people of the Open Tomb
We are the people of the Risen Lord.”

These hopeful declarations are the roots and backbone of our Maple Street Church “tree of ministries.” Coming out of these are the key values of compassion, faith-sharing, and wisdom in stewarding, out of which grow our ministries in Jesus’ name. Some of our ministries on the tree have a long history, while others have been emerging in recent months. At our Annual Meeting on June 7th we will review our tree of ministries together and look forward to further growth.

We are glad that in recent months people have been expressing interest in taking part in the “life in the tree” of our congregation as members. We had planned to launch a “Faith Formation for Membership” class right after Easter, but the timing was not quite right and we were not fully prepared. However, we will be launching the class on Wednesday, May 20th. There will be a total of three sessions followed by the opportunity to join the church in June. Please contact me if you are interested. My e-mail is stevenalspach@yahoo.com.

Celebrating the Risen One,

Steve

NOTES FROM ELSA MARSHALL

We are in the church season called Eastertide. Our Scripture readings for the Sundays of Eastertide are about the disciples and others encountering the resurrected Christ. The resurrection stories provide the framework that will later help establish for Christians that Easter replaces Passover as the definitive action that God has taken in the world. In place of liberation from slavery and injustice remembered in the Passover, God's action in physically raising Jesus from the dead has delivered all believers. Resembling the Hebrew tradition at the end of the 50 days following the original Passover God bestowed the great gift of the Law, at the end of 50 days following Easter, the great gift is the Holy Spirit bestowed upon believers and the early Christian church is given birth.

In the book of Revelations we are promised, "Behold I make all things new." In this season of new life, let us remember that the Bible stories of God's dealings with humanity concerns new things; it starts with a new garden (Genesis 2) and ends with a new city – the New Jerusalem (Revelations 20). In the very center of our story stands the event this season celebrates – the resurrection of Christ. The crucified Christ, the one who died bearing the sin and suffering of this world, has been raised by God to a new and imperishable life. In our strivings individually and as the body of Christ for new things and new life may we ground our actions and hopes in the irrevocable assurance through Christ's resurrection that our lives no matter what happens are embraced by Christ's new and imperishable life.

This church season called Eastertide then might be a good time to contemplate the words of Parker Palmer, "If we – people like me and perhaps you – really believed in resurrection, believed it not just in theory but in our bones, we would have no choice but to risk all that we have by taking action for justice. Bone-deep knowledge of resurrection would take away the fears that some of us presently use to justify our cautious, self-protective lives. Death-dealing fear would be replaced by life-giving faith, and we would be called to do God-knows-what for God-knows-who."

Easter joy to you!

-Elsa

WARRANT FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING

To the Legal Voters of the Maple Street Congregational Church, UCC:

You are hereby notified that the 165th annual meeting of the Maple Street Congregational Church, UCC, Danvers, Massachusetts, will be held in the social hall on Sunday, June 7, 2009 following the worship service.

This meeting is called to:

1. Receive annual reports, elect officers, boards, and committees, and adopt a budget for the fiscal year 2009-2010.
2. Transact any other business that may legally come before it.

THE CHURCH MOUSE

Congratulations to Jennifer Small and Ryan Hartwig on their recent marriage celebrated in Georgia . . . Our sympathy goes to Karen Nastuk and her family on the death of her father Edwin A. Holmes, to Phil and Glo Evans on the death of their daughter-in-law Julie, and to the family and friends of Russell Larrabee upon his recent death . . . The Deacons are looking for lay readers for the worship service. Please contact Mercy Duffill at myrtle122@aol.com . . . The Church Council continues to seek volunteers to serve on the Church Profile Committee. Serving on this committee does not preclude members from being considered for the new pastor Search Committee to be formed after completion of the Church Profile. If you are interested, please contact Bruce Billingham or any member of the Church Council before May 4th . . . A recording of our worship service from the preceding week is broadcast on local cable DCAT on Sundays at 10:00 AM and 6:00 PM and on Mondays at 7:00 AM and 6 PM . . . So far over \$700 has been turned in from the Read-a-Thon for Heifer. We are so grateful to our participating children and their donors. If you haven't yet paid your pledge, please do so as soon as possible by writing your check to Heifer International with "Maple Street Church" on the memo line. Thank you all!

ANNUAL REPORTS

To all Committee and Board Chairs: a reminder that annual reports are due in the office as soon as possible so that the 2008-2009 Annual Report may be prepared and available the Sunday before the Annual Meeting to be held June 7.

WOMEN'S SOCIETY

After 89 years of loyal service to the Maple Street Congregational Church, the officers and members of the Women's Society regretfully announce this women's group will no longer be an active organization of the church as of May 1, 2009.

DATES OF INTEREST

- 5/3 Annual Parent/Youth dinner with special year-end video presentation.
- 5/13 All Church-Board and Maple Eves Potluck supper.
- 5/18 New Women's Group meeting at 7:00 PM in the reception room.
- 5/19 Called to Care training 7-9 PM in the reception room.
- 5/24 One Room Schoolhouse for Sunday School
- 5/31 Confirmation Sunday – continental breakfast for confirmands and their families and mentors at 9:15 AM in the reception room.
 - Recognition of Seniors during the worship service.
 - Mandatory Mission Possible 2009 meeting 11:30-1PM in the reception room.

WORLD SERVICE NOTES -Sharron Rowland

Spring has arrived and with it the renewal of hope. Please remember to bring non-perishable items for the food pantry and place them in the shopping cart in the social hall or the collection box in the narthex or at the back door. Thanks to Lorne Hersey who delivers the food to the pantry after the 2nd Sunday of each month.

May 3 is Mission Sunday. Rev. Kathy McAdams from Common Cathedral and Common Art will speak. We will take a special offering to support the work of her group, Ecclesia Ministries. There will be special displays in the social hall after worship including art work from artists of Common Art.

Praises to June Baser and her work with the Heifer Read-a-thon. We were so impressed with the children's reading effort we decided to give an additional donation as well as what had been pledged. We can't wait to see what animals will be chosen! And did you see the cute goats that Mercy and Lynne Duffill showed us in church?

A WORD FROM THE MEMBERSHIP AND LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

We have been working hard to identify members who will serve on our church committees. We extend our heartfelt thanks to all who have stepped forward to accept this calling. We only have 5 positions left to fill out of 84: on Deacons, one 3-year term and one 2-year term, on Stewardship two 3-year positions, and one 3-year position on Membership and Leadership.

Please prayerfully consider accepting one of these positions. Contact any member of our committee to let us know which position you would like to fill – we are Peggy Coyne, Dick Crotts, Julie Curtis, Sue Ellen Donahoe, Marj Simpson, and Warren Parr.