

# The Spire

The Newsletter of Maple Street Congregational Church, United Church of Christ  
September, 2009

Dear Friends,

There is an air of excitement blowing through Maple Street Church as we begin the fall season. It is a joy to write this opening page of the Spire with a new format which highlights the ministries that are growing within our midst. We want to extend a special welcome to those who are exploring involvement with the church this fall. We hope that the Spire will "inspire" you on your journey!

During last Sunday's sermon I focused on a passage of Scripture from the early days of the church, Acts 4:32-34. It gives us a picture of how church life can be. The passage talks about those who had responded to story of Jesus' redeeming love as being of "one heart and soul", of "holding everything in common", and as "giving testimony to the resurrection". When I read this passage I think of church life in musical terms. This is a picture of what it is like to be in rhythm, to live in harmony, and to sing "God's song in the midst of our world". (Psalm 42:8)

**Come join us this September in the rhythm of being of "one heart and soul". Here are some ways:**

- Join us on **Rally Sunday, September 13<sup>th</sup>** at 10:00 a.m. as we unite our hearts and minds in the worship of God, our "Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer", and as we launch our 2009-2010 Sunday School ministry.
- Join the **Chancel Choir** as they lead us in worship each Sunday, with Thursday night rehearsals. Contact Music Director, John Skelton, through the Church Office for more information
- Join the **Children's Music Ministry** or the **Intergenerational Choir**, which are directed by Kathy Gross.
- Come and take part in in our first annual "**Leader's Retreat**" which will be grounded in times of worship and Bible Study, as planned by members of Church Growth and Membership/Leadership Committees along with the ministers.

**Come join us in September in the harmony of "holding church life in common". Here are some ways:**

- Another reason to take part in the "**Leader's Retreat**" is to spend time working together with other leaders, so that the church is growing together in a common direction during this interim time.
- Let us know if you would be interested in taking part in a series on the documents of our church tradition which bind us together. We are thinking of beginning with a three part series on our "**Church Covenant**" starting the end of September. Please contact Pastor Steve or Elsa Marshall if your are interested.
- The Committee that has been working on the **Church Profile** has been working throughout the summer, and will be sharing their work at the Leader's retreat, and then with the whole congregation. Please continue to keep the Committee in prayer.

**Come join us in September and take part in singing "God's song in the midst of our world". Examples:**

- The Essex Association of United Church of Christ churches is sponsoring the second annual **CROP Hunger Walk**. Maple Street Church is providing key leadership, and looking for participants and sponsors.
- "The Sisterhood" women's fellowship group is now working with World Service in preparing and serving the monthly meals at the **Salem Mission**. Contact these groups for more information.
- This summer an ecumenical Steering Committee for sponsoring a weekly "**Community Dinner**" at Maple Street Church was formed. Please contact Paul and Donna Pepper for more information.

Contact information for persons mentioned can be obtained from the Church Office by calling 978-774-4510 or e-mailing [info@maplestreetchurch.org](mailto:info@maplestreetchurch.org). Church office hours for September are 9-1 Monday - Friday. We are grateful for the team of volunteers who are staffing the office for the present. We are also grateful to our communications temp. Peter Johnston, who is with us each Wednesday, working on the bulletin and Spire.

Grace and Peace - Pastor Steve

# Christian Education News



## Christian Education News

**Rally Day, Welcome Home Sunday, First Sunday of a new church school year!** It doesn't

matter what you call it, it is a

time for all of us to gather, become community again intentional about our children and youth ministries. It is always a busy time of year, both for families, youth, children as the return to school, schedules and fall routines and for the church family as teaching staff is recruited, prepared and equipped for ministry. Our children and youth are blessed by our commitment to them and making them and their gifts an integral part of the whole church. The congregations dedication to making them feel welcome, valued and important in the life of the church family is a vital part of their spiritual development and offers a strong foundation for their becoming disciples.

***Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.***

—Matthew 11:29



**Welcome back, Welcome home, Welcome!**

I look forward to Rally Day and all the promise of the year before us! Our theme for this year is Faith Stories.

We have many ideas and upcoming events yet to share around this theme.

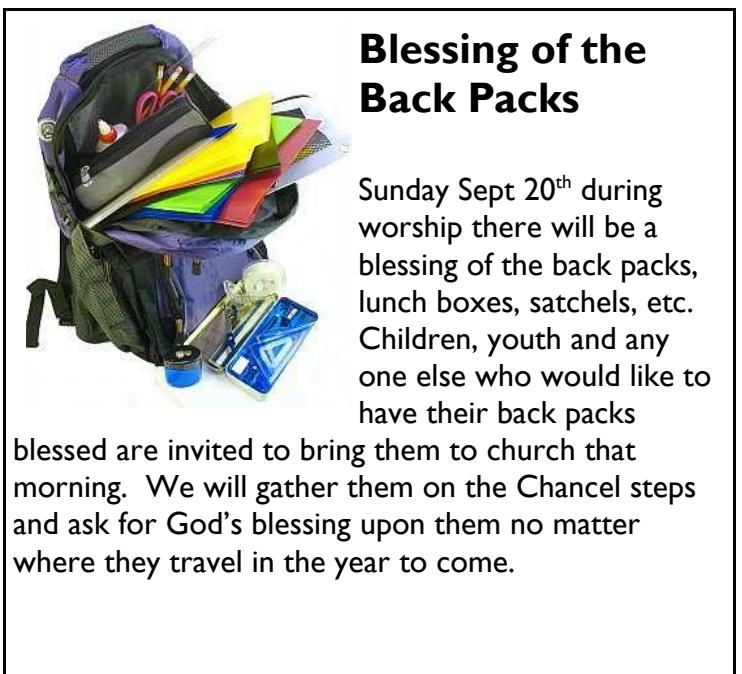
I have missed seeing some of you this summer. Hope summer has been a wonderful one for all. Until we are gathered again like grain into loaf, I offer you this prayer that I have been praying this summer during my personal devotional time. *“Gracious God, when the economy is in disarray, when young people are fighting in faraway wars, when we argue over issues and refuse to listen to the other side, I ask that your grace enfold us. Move us from self-interest to compassion, from the need to be right to the place of doing right. Let the love that is at the foundation of creation spread out like roots, bringing life, healing and wholeness to places cracked and broken. I ask this for the sake of your love. Amen.”*

Shalom,  
Elsa Marshall



**Don't forget!** The tables in both the Narthex and at the side entrance door to the Sanctuary are resource tables for weekly use. Also on those family worship resource tables are “**Sunday**

**Satchels**” which are denim bags filled with activities to intentionally engage children while they are participating in Sunday morning worship before going to church school. Children are still experiencing the wonder and mystery of God during worship while their hands are busy with materials and different mediums.



## Blessing of the Back Packs

Sunday Sept 20<sup>th</sup> during worship there will be a blessing of the back packs, lunch boxes, satchels, etc. Children, youth and any one else who would like to have their back packs

blessed are invited to bring them to church that morning. We will gather them on the Chancel steps and ask for God's blessing upon them no matter where they travel in the year to come.

Thank  
You

## From Elsa Marshall

*On a personal note:*

I wish to thank each of you for your generous support, cards, calls, prayers, acts of kindness and love during the difficult time of my father's illness and death. I am grateful for his sake that he now rests in the eternal arms of God's love and is part of the resurrection dawn. I miss him but carry him and his memory within me as I continue on with my life. I was blessed to have called him Dad. He was a profound part of who I am. Again, thank you all for all that you have given me. Your support undergirded me through it all.

## Office Hours

As for this fall, my hours will be the following:

Sunday 7 to 10PM at MSC

Monday 9 to 6 or later as needed at MSC

Tuesday 9 to 10PM at MSC

Weds 9 to 10:30PM at MSC

Thursday – 9 to 6PM telecommuting from Dover

Friday – day off

Saturday 9 to 12PM or later as needed

Shalom filled with gratitude for your love and care. – Elsa Marshall

Elsa@maplestreetchurch.org

## Our Whole Lives, Sexuality and Our Faith

*is a human sexuality course that connects faith and being created in the divine image. It will be offered this fall to Middle School students in grades seven and eight. Elsa Marshall and Phil Crotts completed and were certified in this curriculum in order to facilitate this unique and important program.*



**Watch for your invitation.** Soon seventh and eighth grade parents will receive letters inviting them to an informational meeting to explore this program and to decide when the program will be offered. To offer sexuality education in our congregation is to acknowledge that human sexuality is simply too important, too beautiful, and too potentially dangerous to be ignored in a religious community.

## OWL (continued)

Our Whole Lives is scripturally-based, is person-centered, is positive, age-appropriate, medically-accurate, and has both immediate relevance and applicability for later life. In addition, the curriculum emphasizes and underscores the values of love, mutuality, self worth, health, responsibility, justice and inclusivity. This curriculum will be offered at an alternative time from Sunday morning church school and parents will need to sign written consent for participation. Sexual education has been offered in the past as part of Maple Street Church's rich history of valuing education and youth ministry



## Youth Ministry

Youth Group will kick off another exciting year of fellowship; worship; snacks; and of course... fun. We have a busy year planned with Lock-Ins, Road Trips, and Service Work.

Please mark your calendars right now for two important upcoming events. Sunday, September 27 is our annual Kick-Off Luncheon. All are welcome to the table to help us celebrate the new year.

The second important date is for the Essex Association's 2<sup>nd</sup> annual CROP HUNGER WALK and it is Friday, October 23 through Saturday Oct 24th. It is a Lock-In and we will be hosting a few other youth groups from around the area where we'll get to know each other and have a blast. You are encouraged to attend the walk on Saturday which Maple Street Church is hosting. We'll need helping hands for this. We had a great time last year.

Watch for information and schedules coming your way.

-The Youth Leadership Team

# Children's Music Ministry

## News from the Christian Education Committee



### Welcome to the 2009-2010 Choir Year!

Information on our graded choir program—and beyond appears below. All are welcome to join the choirs at any time throughout the year. Registration and a weekly schedule will be available on rally day. Please plan to sing with us!



**Cherub Choir** Grades K through 2. Rehearses Sunday mornings from 9-9:45, before worship, in the children's choir room, upstairs. Snack each week! Beginning September 27.



**Good News Choir.** Grades 3-8. Rehearses Sunday mornings from 11:15—12, following worship in the children's choir room, upstairs. Snack each week! Beginning September 27.



**Joyful Noise Choir** Treble choir for grades 3-12 and adult women. Meets Sundays, 11:15-12 during the month of January, and as announced.



**Intergenerational Choir.** Grade 3 through adults of all ages. Meets to prepare anthems for Music Dedication, Thanksgiving, Advent and Palm Sunday, in addition to an intergenerational Sunday, this year, scheduled for April 11. Rehearses on scheduled Sundays 11:15-12, following worship in the adult choir room downstairs.

-Kathy Gross

As summer wanes and we put away the flip flops, the Christian Education Committee invites you to witness our "Flip-Flop!" We have flipped and flopped the Sunday School rooms.

The lower grades of 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th grades have been flipped upstairs to rooms 21, 22, 23, 24, and 25. The 6th, 7th, 8th and High School classrooms will now be in the tunnel.

These changes reflect safety improvements, improvements for multiple styles of learning, and increased learning spaces. Also, a note to parents that the Sunday School dismissal time will also be changing. The new time will be 11:15, to allow our teachers adequate time for their lessons.



*Name That Sunday School*

**We need your help!**

We have a contest to "NAME" learning time Sunday School at Maple Street

Church. This contest is open to all of the church family. There will be a prize for the winning entry chosen by the Christian Education Committee. So put on your thinking caps, get creative and join the fun.



### Story Tellers

This year's theme for Church School is Faith Stories. Taking that as our lead, we have gathered a team of storytellers from our talented

congregation, who will tell scripture stories during our children's moment. They will be trained by professional storyteller Rev. Angela Menke Ballou on September 27th at 4:30 p.m. in the reception room. Anyone interested is welcome to join us. Contact Elsa Marshall. So look for our storytellers beginning in October.



## Church Growth

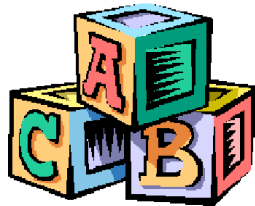
Welcome to a new year at Maple Street Church. We invite everyone to wear their name tags on Rally Day Sunday September 13th, so that our new members and

friends can get to know you. If you do not have one or need another one please see a member of church growth: Marge Hathaway, Priscilla Curda, Grace Phinney, Lynne Hathaway or Norma Gates in the social hall before or after church on rally day to sign up for one.

Did you know that most of us started coming to Maple Street Church because we were personally invited to come by a friend? Stop for a minute and think about someone you know who might like to join you on Sunday who you have been meaning to invite but just haven't taken the time. Great now pick up the phone or send a quick e-mail to that person or family and invite them to join us for Rally Day.

## Nursery School

This year we welcome back our nursery school families with a parent orientation on Sunday September 13th at 7:00PM in the social hall. School begins on Monday September 14th for our Pre-k group and Tuesday September 15th for our Nursery age group. Our programs are currently full for this school year, but we welcome our church families to call the church to place your child's name on our list for next year, we will gladly hold a spot for you.



## Membership and Leadership

We have a wonderful opportunity to begin our new year by attending the Church Leadership Retreat. We encourage all committee members to attend and invite anyone else who would like to learn more about committee work to join us as well. If you are interested in serving on a committee this is your chance to learn and get involved.

Marjory Simpson  
Chair of Membership and Leadership



All church leaders, committee members and anyone else who would like to participate please join us on Friday September 18th at 6:00PM and Saturday September 19th at 9:00AM for a fall leadership retreat at the Danvers Senior Center.

**Date:** Friday September 18th  
Delicious Dinner provided by the church at 6:00PM.  
Program at 7:00PM



Saturday September 19th  
9:00AM – 3:00PM  
Continental breakfast furnished by Maple Street church.

Bring your own bag lunch (beverage and dessert will be provided)

**Place:** Danvers Senior Center  
Stone Street  
Danvers

**RSVP:** To your committee Chair or if not on a committee to the Church office by September 8, 2009.

# STEWARDSHIP



## Stewardship Moment Meeting the Challenge

We are facing a big challenge. We frequently hear about thinking outside of the box to meet great challenges. **We need everyone** to think outside the box about their giving. Over the last several years, we have been having trouble raising enough pledges to meet our budget needs. We face a shortfall of somewhere north of \$25,000.

From now until the end of the year, the Stewardship Committee will offer some different thoughts about giving. We urge you to read them and think and rethink how big a share of the work of the church you think you can carry. We hope that you will have a better understanding of what our members do to make this our church in Danvers, and that you will have some tools to help you put your support in perspective with regards to both MSC's needs and your personal financial ability to help meet these needs. Help us finish the year on a solid financial footing.

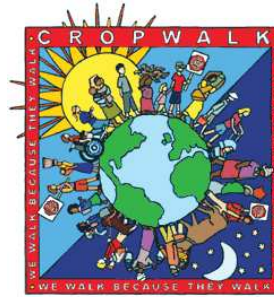


**The Spire** is a regular publication of Maple Street Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, 90 Maple Street, Danvers, MA 01923.

**The due date for contributions to the October issue of The Spire is September 15 at noon. Note this change.**

Items can be e-mailed to [info@maplestreetchurch.org](mailto:info@maplestreetchurch.org). or delivered to the church office.

Items may be edited for length and grammar.



## Crop Walk

It's that time of year again! The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual CROP Hunger Walk Sponsored by The Essex Association Mission Committee of the Massachusetts Conference United Church of Christ and

Maple Street Church is going to take place on Saturday October 24, 2009 at Maple Street Church.

A CROP Hunger Walk is an ecumenical community walk designed to raise awareness of hunger and poverty and raise funds for both international and local relief. Last year we raised over \$5,200.00 and \$1527.75 came back to support 3 local food pantries in Essex County! This year we hope to raise at least \$6,000.00! Please help us raise money for those in need! Details of the event are as follows:

**Location:** Maple Street  
Congregational Church  
90 Maple St. Danvers, MA

**Registration:** 9:30 - 10:30 am  
**Walk Begins:** 10:30 am - 12:30 pm  
**Lunch:** 12:30 - 2:00 pm

We definitely need people to walk and to volunteer again this year as crossing guards, water servers along the route, set-up, clean up, etc. If you are interested in finding out how you can be a part of this year's CROP Hunger Walk, to donate, volunteer or coordinate a group of walkers, please contact the coordinators Mercy Duffill or Linda Reilly in church or by email at [cropwalk@maplestreetchurch.org](mailto:cropwalk@maplestreetchurch.org) As we get closer to the walk date we will have tables set up at coffee hour where you can come and donate!

You can also register for the walk or donate online at [www.cropwalkonline.org](http://www.cropwalkonline.org). Once in the site just click on "Massachusetts", then "Essex Association CROP Hunger Walk", and follow the appropriate prompts to either register or donate! Thanks for your support and looking forward to seeing many Maple Street faces on the 24th!!

# News from the United Church of Christ

"Take hold of the life that is really life."  
- 1 Timothy 6



## "Generosity as a Way of Life" The 210th Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference

Oct. 16 - 17, 2009, Worcester, MA  
In a turbulent economic time what

unique witness does the church have to offer in these days?

Your Annual Meeting Planning Committee is creating a gathering whose purpose is "to consider how we may spur one another toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another." (Hebrews 10:24-25)

We will be led in this purpose by our keynote speaker Rev. Dr. Gregory Jones, Dean of Duke Divinity School in Durham, North Carolina. Dynamite worship is being planned for Friday evening featuring preacher Rev. Susan Smith, Pastor of Advent United Church of Christ in Columbus, Ohio. Seminars will be offered to resource delegates around numerous facets of generosity and the business of the Conference will be engaged.



## Welcome (back) Rev. Don Remick

The Board of Directors of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the search committee tasked to call a new Associate Conference Minister for the Northeast Area. by Rev. Donald Remick, began his duties on August 1, 2009.

As a half-time ACM, Don will serve the local churches and the Committees on Ministry and the Executive Committees in the Essex and Andover Associations.

Don has also accepted a call to serve as part-time pastor of Second Congregational Church in Winchester, UCC. Don will begin his duties as half-time ACM in the Northeast on August 1, 2009.

Don has served as the senior pastor at First Congregational Church UCC in Hanover since 1994. Prior to that, Don served as Associate Pastor of our neighbor, Second Congregational Church, UCC in Beverly.

## UCC History Lesson

United Church of Christ history is intertwined with American history. This month, we can look back as the UCC and celebrate the following historic "firsts" in the history of our country and our church:



A young member of Boston's Old South congregation, Phillis Wheatley, becomes the first published African American author in 1773. "Poems on Various Subjects" is a sensation, and Wheatley gains her freedom from slavery soon after.

Antoinette Brown is the first woman since New Testament times ordained as a Christian minister, and perhaps the first woman in history elected to serve a Christian congregation as pastor. At her ordination a friend, Methodist minister Luther Lee, defends "a woman's right to preach the Gospel." He quotes the New Testament: "There is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (First Congregational Church, Butler, NY, 1853)



On September 3, 1846, the American Missionary Association is incorporated: the first *integrated* anti-slavery society in America.