

The Spire

The Newsletter of Maple Street Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
April 2010

Pastor's Page

Dear Friends,

Its been a long winter. We've had snow, windstorms, and more water than we can deal with. About this time of year our spirits are in need of re-charging. Last week we had a touch of spring that lifted us for a time, and planted the hope of full-out springtime in the future. During this time we can do little to rush the spring along, but we can clean house and get rid of the unnecessary "stuff" that clogs up the flow of energy - **the yard sale** committee hopes you will then bring that "stuff" to the church for the **April 24th yard/bake sale (see pg. 5)**.

During the **season of Lent** we have also been seeking to clean house within our spirits so there is room for the fresh wind of the Spirit of resurrection to blow into our lives. We have done this through entering into Lenten disciplines of embodiment prayer and morning and evening prayer, hearing the story of the gospel of Mark shared by a Biblical storyteller, renewing our covenant ties through the stewardship growth process, and the prayerful launching of the pastoral search committee.

Whenever we attempt to be disciplined in life, we are often confronted with our human weakness. Its surprising how easily we are defeated sometimes. In the story of Holy Week the disciples were defeated by sleepiness as they attempted to be in vigil with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. Other times, despite extraordinary effort, we are defeated. Peter was determined to never abandon Jesus in his public testimony, but when faced with the crush of group persecution of Jesus and the threat to his own life, he succumbed to betraying Jesus three times.

This is why we rejoice that at the core of the message of Jesus is the cross of forgiveness, "Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). We trust that the "love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord" (our MSC covenant) is so great that it encompasses all our weakness and failure. When we celebrate Holy Communion at the Tenebrae Service at 7:30 on **Maundy Thursday, April 1**, we will receive afresh the grace of God given to us in the life and death of Jesus our Christ.

This is also why we rejoice that at the core of the message of Jesus is the redeeming power of resurrection. Once we have experienced being defeated in spirit it is very hard for us to "just get over it", even after receiving forgiveness. After Jesus' death on the cross it looked like the disciple's lives were ruined. No one would have thought they would ever be seen or heard from again. They basically went into hiding in fear for their lives, except for the brave women who went to the grave.

As it turned out, that act of bravery by these women made all the difference. It was by going to the grave, that they received the message of redemption by an extraordinarily creative act of God. They were transformed by it, and it encouraged the others to come out of hiding to be impacted by it also. Peter was so energized that he literally ran to the grave. This was followed by a deep healing of their spirits through an encounter with the loving presence of the resurrected Jesus.

This is what we celebrate at 9 and 11 a.m. on Easter Sunday, April 4, - Forgiveness, Redemption, Healing of our spirits. Don't miss it!

Peace,
Steve

From Elsa Marshall

In Lent we walked through forty days like Jesus forty days in the wilderness. It has been a time to receive ever deeper, God's grace and an expanded opening of ourselves to God's presence. We have practiced prayer daily planting seeds of stillness and waiting, opening ourselves to the miracle of the resurrection. We have planted ourselves in the mystery of God waiting in simplicity and humility. We have waited because as Christians, our seed packet says, "germination time: forty days." Eastertide is the season for us to sprout and grow into the light and love of the promises of hope and new life found in the resurrection. Some of the ways for us to do that together will be through participating in the Kerygma Gospel of Mark bible study which will be offered on Thursdays in the morning and on Thursday evenings, ending before choir practice. Another way will be by attending the mid-week worship service about to begin.

Bible Study dates are:

April 22, 29

May 6, 13, 20, 27

June 3, 10

Parents, I am reading an interesting book, [Growing a Soul, A Practical Guide to Raising Your Child with Spiritual Intelligence](#), by Bob Flannagan. Theory holds that there are four intelligences, mental intelligence (IQ), physical intelligence (PQ), emotional intelligence (EQ), and spiritual intelligence (SQ). These are all dynamic measures of intelligence. PQ, EQ, IQ, SQ all work in tandem with each other. When all four are fully developed, people fully realize their potential – they become their fullest selves. Flannagan writes that developing rituals within the family creates habits that help form our children's spiritual intelligence. He names three Christian "habits"; reading the bible, prayer and attending church. Reading the Bible affirms in children their innate feeling and belief that God is a natural part of human life experience. Prayer in its most basic form is the act of speaking with God. Prayers tendered as grace before meals, at bedtime, before starting something or leaving for school, teach our children that checking in with God is vital. It can help free them from worry, guilt, despair, offering instead strength, courage, comfort and hope. Henry Nouwen wrote, "We cannot live a spiritual life alone." Church teaches us about God and fortifies us to live the Christian life in our increasingly secular world. Church offers us moral strengthening and reminds us that there is a greater force in the universe than ourselves. It gives us hope grounded in God who calls us together. SQ development that leads to spiritual maturity is a gift parents can give their

children. It can help children and youth develop a deep spiritual well filled with the living water of God's love, mercy and grace as they grow into adults who make good decisions, care about others, and find meaning in all facets of their lives.

"On the cross, God is not setting up the terms of a contract that humanity needs to fulfill. Instead God is giving God's own self so that humanity may have life and life abundantly. God is not a negotiator. God is a giver." Miraslov Volf – Yale Divinity School

..... Shalom - Elsa Marshall

More From Elsa

I will be away the last week of April. I will be attending Princeton Theological Seminary's Institute for Youth Ministry. PYI is an international center offering specialized training in youth ministry for church leaders. The Institute for Youth Ministry's program emphasizes theological education for people in ministry with youth.

Committed to integrating theory and practice, The Institute for Youth Ministry collaborates with seminaries, church leaders, congregations, communities, and adolescents to promote the strategic importance and practice of ministry with young people from early adolescence through college age. Although the work of the Institute is international and ecumenical in its scope, it maintains a particular interest in youth ministry in mainline denominations.

Princeton Theological Seminary carries out the mission of the Institute for Youth Ministry by initiating and integrating research related to the church's mission with young people, offering doctoral and master's degree programs, and offering an extensive program of leadership development. This year's theme is Hope. Some of the classes I will be attending are: The Habitus of Hope: Cultivating Patterns of Hopefulness in Your Church, Ministry, and Life, From Voices to Vision: Full-Sensory Reflections on Vocational Discernment, Loving Youth to Christ: The tough job of building relationships in everyday Youth Ministry, Eating Our Young: Societal Regression Meets the Millennial Generation and Christian Daily Life in a Daily Show World.

Sounds interesting doesn't it? I will let you know when I return. I will definitely be sharing my learnings and gleanings with the youth ministry leadership team. - Elsa Marshall

Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundred-fold.

—Mark 4:8

Easter tide is the season where the seeds of intentional prayer planted in our Lenten soil can continue to grow and yield. Our **Search Committee** has been commissioned into the ministry of calling our next pastor. Please be sure to pray for them, for God's love and spirit to move amongst them and be with them during their deliberations, ponderings, discussions and discernment. Not all can serve on the Search Committee, but the entire church can be part of the process through prayer. The gift of prayer is one of the five points from the simple 5-point rule of life available to every member of the congregation.

These simple five points are worship weekly, pray daily, learn constantly, serve joyfully, live generously. I hope to see you at weekly worship and at our Gospel of Mark weekly bible study on Thursday mornings or evenings. I am sure that Karen Kilty would love some of you to join her at the Salem Mission on the second Saturday of the month. Prayer and living generously are personal habits and can be individual faith practices. How blessed we are to have them as part of our lives. These five are good soil, sun and water for the growth of the Holy Spirit. Blessings this Eastertide. Enjoy the yield!

Elsa Marshall

Our Whole Lives, a sexual education curriculum being offered to our seventh and eighth graders on Wednesday afternoons continues through May 12th. This curricula was created to help participants make informed and responsible decisions about their sexual health and behavior. It equips our youth with accurate, age-appropriate information in six subject areas: human development, relationships, personal skills, sexual behavior, sexual health, and society and culture. Grounded in a holistic view of sexuality, *Our Whole Lives* not only provides facts about anatomy and human development, but also helps participants clarify their values, build interpersonal skills, and understand the spiritual, emotional, and social aspects of sexuality. Next year this educational program will continue in the fall and spring for grades eight and nine. The following year the plan is to begin this two year program again offering it to seventh and eighth graders.

Senior High students, the Gross Scholarship will be awarded this year for the first time. Be sure to submit your application to be considered.

Senior Recognition Sunday will be celebrated during worship on **Sunday May 23rd**. Seniors in high school, please save this day to come and have the congregation rejoice with you the next step of your journey. If possible, contact the church office at 978-774-4510 or info@maplestreetchurch.org before May 23rd and tell us where you are going to college or what your plans for next year are so we can announce it that morning.

There will be a One Room Schoolhouse in the Social Hall on Sunday April 18th – the beginning of school vacation. One Room Schoolhouse Sunday's are tendered in place of church school classes.

THANK YOU!!!

A large THANK YOU to Ted Kazan for his ministry with Kathy Gross this fall and winter. He helped with our youngest children's choir, the Cherubs. And a large THANK YOU to Lilly Cuzner who is now working with Mrs. Gross and the Cherubs. We are blessed to have these young person's gifts and talents being shared as ministry at Maple Street Church.



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

A good children's bible makes a wonderful gift to add to an Easter Basket!

A favorite of Bible storybooks is the Children's Illustrated Bible from DK Publishing. This is a great basic story bible for kids which will last them for several years. Another good one is the Children's Everyday Bible which helps kids read through most of the major stories of the bible in a year.

For older children, a real translation of the bible is a great gift. There are many translations and formats for children's bibles. Our standard translation at Maple Street Church is the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) or the Revised Standard Version (RSV). However, written at almost an 11th grade reading level, these translations can be difficult for younger readers. Choosing a bible at a more appropriate reading level can be a big plus for engaging children in bible reading.

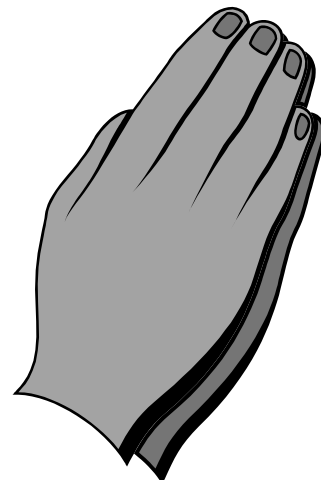
Some good bibles for elementary age children are **New International Readers Version (NIRV)** - Very easy to read and understand; uses simple, short words and sentences. At just below a third grade reading level, this is the simplest translation that is still scholarly in its approach. **Good News Translation (GNT)** - Very simple, readable version without jargon. Uses a limited vocabulary, and is about a 6th grade reading level. Also contains simple line drawings on almost every page. **Contemporary English Version (CEV)** - The text is easily read by grade schoolers, second language readers, and those who prefer the more contemporized form. The CEV is not a paraphrase. It is an accurate and faithful translation of the original manuscripts. **The Message** - A paraphrase written by Eugene H. Peterson and translated from Greek manuscripts. The Message was translated using the rhythms and idioms of contemporary English to communicate to the modern reader. Written at a 5th grade reading level, this works well with older children and youth. Abingdon Press has published a NRSV edition for children, which includes age-appropriate study notes.

There are lots of different bible storybooks to choose from and all are very different. You might consider the following as your choose which Bible you wish to purchase.

- What image of God comes across to the reader? Will young children know that God loves them?
- Is God an old man with a white beard? Or a more inclusive divine being?
- In the pictures, is there diversity of skin & hair color?
- How many words are there on a page? For beginning readers, an entire page of text can be very daunting.
- Will this book be read aloud to them or will they read it themselves?

Confirmation Class

The confirmation class has focused on prayer during this Lenten season. As part of one class they re-wrote the Lord's prayer in their own words and then as a class created one prayer using the Lord's prayer as a model for prayer just as Jesus taught. This is what they wrote: " Our brother who art in Your Kingdom, honored is your name. Thy Word come, Thy will be attained, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us our life time and daily love and lead us not into sin but deliver us from bad stuff, for Thine is the mission, and the holy warrior/protector and the faith and the Love forever. Amen.



Theologians in Our Midst!

The third grade class has been committing to memory Psalm 23. They had a special curriculum lesson on this Psalm a couple of weeks ago and wrote as a community this wonderful paraphrase:

The Lord is the world, a shepherd, a sheep, joy, hope, peace and love.

I shall not do bad things or dishonor God.

God makes me be a good person.

God leads me to right choices, right ways, love, doing good at home.

God restores my heart, the forest, everything, and our souls.

Even if I walk through danger, the unknown, and death

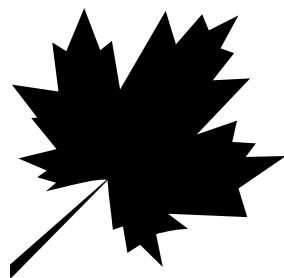
God is with me.

God comforts me by being at my side, with love, and through prayer.

God protects me from harm and I feel safe.

Good not evil is all around me.

I am forever safe in the hands of the Lord. Amen



Maple Eves

The April meeting of Maple Eves will be held on Wednesday, April 14th at 6:00 PM in the Social Hall.

It will be a Spring Picnic Pot

Luck Dinner followed by a Silent Auction. Bring some delicious picnic food and some exciting items to be auctioned off. The hostesses for the evening will be Pat Newman and Marge Hathaway. Devotions will be led by Deb Sauer. If you are not on the Maple Eves call list and would like to attend, please call Marge Hathaway at 978-774-5848. All are welcome to join the fun.

Save the Date: YARD SALE/BAKE SALE

Last year we had our first “Modern” Yard Sale fund-raiser. It was successful and we decided to do it again. On Saturday, April 24th we will hold a Yard Sale / Bake Sale from 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM. This is a good time to do that spring cleanout. If you can help, please give me a call at 978-774-0434. The way it goes is this: You bring your items to sell and price them; you set up, run your own table and then take away your leftovers at the end. You make a donation to the church out of your proceeds. Outsiders and non-members will rent a space for \$25.00. Friday night beforehand, you can bring your things and set up from 6:00 – 8:00PM. I will place an AD in the newspaper. For the bake sale, we will need bakers and people to help sell and serve. Our goal is to raise some money for some projects in the building. Currently we are working on the Kitchenette in the Reception Room. When that is done, we’ll move on to other projects. There is no money in the budget for these items. We had a lot of fun last year and I hope you will join us in April.

Marj Simpson

FROM THE SEARCH COMMITTEE

I have just a little to report this month on the settled minister selection process. The good news is that the search has begun and is being conducted by a great group who are already hard at work. Our call has gone out and was published by the UCC on March 10. In this short time we have already received over 30 profiles which consist of more than 600 pages of information for our committee to sort through and consider. And this is only the beginning of this most significant undertaking. Let us keep our committee in our prayers as they faithfully carry out what is arguably the most important task before this church in over two generations.

Peace and grace

Bruce Billingham, Moderator

Relay for Life Event June 11-12, 2010

For the past 2 years, Mercy Duffill has walked with her friend Karen in the Rochester NH Relay for Life event to raise money that goes towards fighting cancer. The FCMSC Youth Group members have been strong supporters of Mercy and the NH Relay and have participated in two "Mini-Relay for Life" events held at John George Park in Danvers to raise money that has gone towards Mercy and Karen's Team "Babushka's Bunch". This year the Youth and their leaders have the opportunity to participate in a "real" Relay in Peabody, MA! We are looking to form a team of youth and adults that will take part in the Relay through the Kids Care program of the Relay. "The American Cancer Society Relay for Life is a life-changing event that gives everyone in communities across the globe a chance to celebrate the lives of people who have battled cancer, remember loved ones lost, and fight back against the disease. At Relay, teams of people camp out at a local high school, park, or fairground and take turns walking or running around a track or path. Each team is asked to have a representative on the track at all times during the event. Because cancer never sleeps, Relays are overnight events up to 24 hours in length." (from the Relay for Life website)

We are in the process of forming a team to go to Relay and stay overnight. Those that are interested in finding out more information or how to donate, please see Mercy or email her at myrtleurtle1122@aol.com

We will also be hosting a Trivia Night on May 15th at the church to raise money for our team. All are invited to attend the event which will include trivia and music provided by Sean Doherty and hopefully a silent auction if we are able to get donations of items/gift cards, etc. You are encouraged to form a team – 8 at a table is what we are figuring or come on your own and we will find you a team! Tickets are planned at \$15.00 each for adults, \$5.00 for children in grades 4 and up. Tickets will be on sale beginning March 28. Hope to see you there!

HEIFER PROJECT

The Sunday School children, kindergarten through 8th grade, will be raising money for an animal to be sent to a family through Heifer International. Each class will be learning about a country in need and the animals that are needed to sustain them. A quilt will be made with each patch designed by a different grade. The congregation will be able to purchase an opportunity in the form of a ticket, to win the quilt, to keep, or donate back to the church. The lucky person's name will be drawn at the annual meeting.

The Sisterhood



The Sisterhood is celebrating our first year together and we would love to have you join us. We will be meeting on Monday April 19th at 7:00 in the reception room. If you would like more information please feel free to call or email Karen Kilty at 978-777-7785 k.kilty@verizon.net or Pam Spearing at Spearing-family@comcast.com.



World Service

On Sunday, April 25th the World Service Committee will host our Mission Sunday both during the worship service and afterwards in the social hall. During the service Kathie Connelly, from Mercy Ships will speak to us about their very important and timely mission service. After the service there will be several groups setup in the social hall with displays and valuable information to offer you. Some of those groups in attendance will be Operation Troop Support, Danvers People to People Food Pantry, Habitat for Humanity, Heifer Project, Global Ministries Child Sponsorships. Mercy Ships will also have a display. Please visit these important groups and learn more about them while you enjoy your coffee and fellowship.

The World Service Committee would also like to thank everyone who attended the Blood Drive on March 25th. This is another important and valuable community outreach and we thank you for your support.

WHAT WE HAVE ALREADY DONE:

When I get overwhelmed with the amount of things that I need to do, I try to look back to see what I have done. Maple Street Church has begun a new chapter in the past year or so, and although we need to do much more, I was amazed at how much we have accomplished so far. I think we can be very proud of ourselves. As I compiled the responses to the Survey done in the fall, I realized that many of the items you asked for have already been accomplished. Keep up the good work! (As promised, all of your comments on the surveys received are now being distributed to the appropriate committees for their consideration.)

1. Held our first 2-day Church Leaders Retreat
2. Developed and conducted a Congregational Survey
3. Completed the Profile of our church
4. Selected a "Search" Committee
5. Conducted two Congregational Meetings
6. Replaced the furniture in the Reception Room
7. Hired a new Administrative Assistant
8. Reorganized our classroom spaces
9. Provided a recycling pickup container
10. Implemented the new "QuickBooks" technology
11. Begun a "Welcome Table" to provide needed meals to those who need them.
12. Provided support for an unemployed group at the local library
13. Continued support of the Food Pantry
14. We have reformatted The Spire and the weekly Bulletin
15. We have added an 11:00 PM Christmas Service by popular request
16. Added a new drop box for envelopes at the office door
17. Increased communication through our Bulletin, Spire, Website and meetings
18. Committee Minutes are now posted in the Social Hall
19. Made an effort at understanding more about the UCC and their role with us by having Jim Antal as a speaker
20. Hired a janitorial company
21. Continued our community outreach through the Food Pantry, Danvers Cares and a Program with the Danvers Police regarding students and drugs.

22. Outfitting our staff with new computers
23. Repairing/replacing the front walkway
24. Completing comprehensive review of Church Insurance
25. Negotiating with cell phone companies to get some supplemental income and repair work and painting of the steeple
26. Development and implementation of our first building use policy and scheduling process
27. Repairing the organ
28. Reconstituting the Finance Subcommittee
29. Securing a \$300K line-of-credit

Marjory Simpson
March 2010

DEACON DOORKEEPERS

"I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God . . . " so says the NIV translation of the psalms in psalm 84 verse 10. Doorkeeping is just one of the fun things deacons get to do! We welcome you into the sanctuary every Sabbath morning . . . And, you in turn, brighten our day. For Christians, every day is a world day of prayer . . .

Yes . . . We still need deacons, young or old . . . We need your help. The church is our strength in hard times, but it is only as strong as those who serve her . . . Come be a servant too. Call the church, and give your name, and your heart to serve as deacon . . .

"I longed to hear the voice of God,
and climbed the highest steeple,
But, God declared,
Come down again,
I dwell among the people."

Kay Anderson, Deacon

Hearthsider Dinners are back!

This past year, many people have suggested bringing back the Hearthsider Dinners. Happily, it's time to revive this fun way of getting to better know your fellow church members.

Hearthsider Dinners consist of 7-8 adults gathering in a member's home to share a meal and a night of fellowship. Each guest brings a different part of the meal and at subsequent dinners, groups will rotate so everyone gets to know each other better. Back in the mid/late 90's they were great fun and we're sure they will be again!

If interested in being a part of the Springtime Hearthsiders, please see the sign up sheet in the social hall or contact Pam Spearing spearingfamily@comcast.net (978)921-6624 or Karen Kilty k.kilty@comcast.net (978)777-7785. RSVP date is April 18th.

Please mention if you would like to be a host/hostess.

CHURCH GROWTH

ALL CHURCH LOBSTER FEST SAVE THE DATE – SEPTEMBER 5

The Church Growth Committee is bringing back the tradition of an all church picnic. More details to come.

SAVE THE DATE – SEPTEMBER 17-18 FALL LEADERSHIP RETREAT

The annual fall LEADERSHIP RETREAT will be September 17-18, 2010. This is a great opportunity for new and returning committee members to Renew, Refresh and Reconnect at the beginning of our church year.

Maple Street Church Nursery School

The Nursery school committee is looking for a church member to serve as treasurer for the upcoming school year. If you are interested in this position or are considering and need more information please speak to our committee chair Sue Shannon, or our current treasurer Jonell Glass.

The Maple Street Church Nursery School is currently enrolling for our programs for the upcoming school year 2010-2011. We offer both a three day and a five day pre-k program from 9:00-12:00 and a nursery program on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00-11:30. Our programs give children the opportunity to socialize and provide all of the needed skills to prepare children for a lifelong love of learning in a safe nurturing environment.

Join us for our upcoming ice cream social/silent auction on Friday April 30th at 6:00PM. All church members, family, and friends are invited to join us for a fun filled family night out. If you cannot attend our ice cream social, but would like to contribute an item for our auction, donations are greatly appreciated. Come show your support for the church's nursery school in its 41st year.

For more information regarding our school programs or the ice cream social please call Lynne Hathaway at 978-774-4510 or e-mail lynne.hathaway@verizon.net

Save the Date!!!

Essex Association Spring Meeting!
Saturday, May 8th
8:00 am – 12:30 pm



**Where: Georgetown, First Congregational
Church, 7 Andover Street
Georgetown, MA**

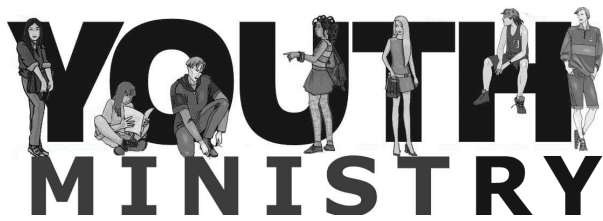
Theme: Church Vitality

Agenda

- 8:00 Registration & Gathering
- 9:00 Worship
- 9:30 Business Meeting
- 10:15 Overview of Church Vitality Resources
- 10:30 Break
- 10:45 Panel Discussion on Unbinding the Gospel
- 11:30 Faith Experience Sessions
- 12:30 Evaluations/Adjourn

**Our mission: To nurture local church vitality
and the covenant among our churches**

Essex Association
Massachusetts Conference
The United Church of Christ



YOUTH MINISTRY

Youth Group

April into May is going to be quite a fun, learning experience for us. We have been approached by DanversCares and offered a grant so that our youth can put together a presentation of a subject that either already does, or in the future may, affect them.

The subject that was chosen is what we will call the *Healthy Mind, Healthy Body, Healthy Living Campaign*. We already know through surveys taken that self image among the High School students, both male and female, could be a lot better. We would like to equip our youth now in learning how to take care of themselves in body, mind and spirit introducing to them a great foundation for maturing into adulthood. In turn, they will offer their insights to others in their project.

This will take some time to complete so we will meet on:

Sun., April 11 4 – 6 Will be an introduction and education

Sun., April 25 4 – 6 We will be out & about either to grocery stores, restaurants and/or health clubs. (Permission slips will be needed).

Sun., May 2 4 – 6 A continuation of what doesn't get finished on the 25th.

Sun., May 9 4 – 6 We will put together our photos and a presentation for DanversCares

Sun., May 23 4 – 6 Parent Appreciation Evening. We will serve healthy snacks and present our finished product to you before we pass it into DanversCares.

A Family Event

Sunday, April 18 7pm John Skelton will present a special Organ Recital for us. Don't miss this great opportunity to see John at his finest.

FNF

Friday, April 16 6 – 8 UP!

Grades 4 and up. Friends always welcome. Dues \$1.

S.M.Y.L.

Sun., April 11 6 - 7:30

Baked Potato & Salad

MP2010, S.M.Y.L. & Confirmation Class:

Sun., April 25 Common Cathedral

We will meet in the kitchen @10:20 and put together lunch for our guests. We will then travel into Boston. We should return home @3ish. Permission slip needed for this event.

MP2010: Re-Member

The next payment installment of \$150.00 is due April 15.

Please check out our youth specific web site where you will find info, schedules, pictures and permission forms. Visit us at www.maplestreetchurch.org/youth ministry/youth specific web site.

A message from the Massachusetts Conference United Church of Christ Disaster Resource Team regarding recent flooding

Pastors and churches of the Massachusetts Conference are encouraged to keep our neighbors in many areas of the state in prayer as recovery continues from the recent flooding. Over 400 homes in the state suffered major damage and many more suffered lesser amounts of damage.

While the number of homes with water in the basement is too high to count, homes that were inundated with flood water pose a more daunting problem. If there are people in your congregation or community in need of removing mud and debris from flooding, help is available.

The Massachusetts 211 line can provide information and referral for those in need of help recovering from the flooding. Further information about 211 can be found here: www.mass211.org

Those offering pastoral support to people affected by the flooding are reminded to be sure that they care for themselves. This can be exhausting and draining work, at a time in the church year when our calendars are already full!

Rev. Don Remick
Rev. Jim Tilbe
Disaster Resource Team
Massachusetts Conference, UCC

Salem Mission

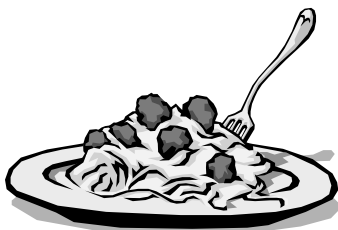
We are in need of volunteers for the upcoming months to serve meals at the Salem Mission. It is a wonderful opportunity to serve, and a great way to get to know really special people of our church family. We serve anywhere from 60-90 grateful people, it is a true blessing to serve but there is so much that we receive in return. You can plan to gather at the mission around 5:00 and dinner is served at 6:30.



We have committed to the second Saturday of the month, April 10 and May 8. Please check your calendars.

Thank you to Pam and Scott Spearing, Sherie and Warren Parr, Lee Ann and Jim Donovan, Peggy Coyne, Marge Hardwick, and Sheila and Dick Crofts for serving in past months. It has been a joy to serve along side of all of you.

Contact Karen Kilty k.kilty@verizon.net or 978-777-7785 or sign up in the social hall.



Our lighted steeple is an important symbol of our presence in the community. Your contributions in memory of loved ones and friends or to commemorate a special event help keep the steeple lighted. If you would like to have the steeple lighted for one or more weeks, please fill out the form below and send it with \$15 per week to the church office.

I would like the steeple lighted in memory of: _____

I would like the steeple lighted in honor of: _____

(signed) _____

WELCOME TABLE UPDATE



We have had four Thursday Night Dinners to date. Things have gone well. We are seeing an increase each week of those attending. Maple Street, Polish Club, St. Mary's, Holy Trinity, United Methodist, and the Northshore Unitarian Universalist Church have all hosted a dinner (more to follow).

Thanks to you all for your support and to all those who have helped and assisted so far.

Questions and thoughts are always welcome. Please contact Paul Pepper at 978-774-4611 or at papapepper@juno.com.

Maple Street Church is making a difference, one dinner at a time!



Maple Street Church Mystery Tour

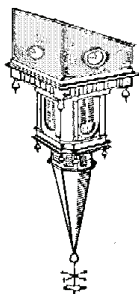
We are planning a Maple Street Church Mystery Tour on April 10th at 10am. Coffee will be provided. Wear dungarees and hard sole shoes or sneakers. We will be climbing ladders to get into organ lofts, crawl spaces and a couple of tight fitting-areas! Everyone in the congregation is invited. You might want to bring a flashlight along also! For more information, contact Tom Manuel at tom@tfmrealty.com.



The Spire

Maple Street Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
90 Maple Street
Danvers, MA 01923

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The due date for contributions to the March issue of **The Spire** is April 18 at noon.
Fully composed items can be e-mailed to info@maplestreetchurch.org, or delivered to the church office. Items may be edited for length and grammar.