



# The Spire

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

January 2010

## Pastor's Page

Dear Friends,

As I write this, it is Christmas week. Taking a cue from our singing of Silent Night on Christmas Eve, it is a week of basking in "love's pure light" that has come into the world in the birth of Jesus the Christ. As we begin the new year of 2010, we approach it with confidence in the presence of that love in our lives, a love that the writer of the first letter of John proclaims "casts out all fear" (1 John 4:18).

Our Maple Street Church covenant, which we will affirm once again on Communion Sunday, January 4<sup>th</sup>, lays out the pattern of how we respond to "love's pure light" as a congregation:

*Responding to the love of God  
as revealed in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior;  
accepting the Holy Scriptures  
as our guide for faith and practice;  
and recognizing both the privileges and duties  
of uniting ourselves in Christian fellowship for public  
worship of God  
and the advancement of God's kingdom in the world.*

*We ... solemnly covenant and agree...  
to associate ourselves as a church of the Lord Jesus  
Christ.*

*We agree to...uphold its By-laws  
to support it financially  
with our presence at worship  
with our talents, our prayers;  
and to live together in brotherly love.*

Several of the themes of this pattern of covenant living will become relevant to our church life in January, as you will read about more fully in this Spire. The theme that "we agree... to

live together in brotherly love", or to use the more recent language from our mission statement "to treat all human beings as brothers and sisters", will come into play as we enter into the process of reviewing the final version of the church profile and voting on it at the congregational meeting at the end of January. We are extremely grateful to the Profile Committee for their dedicated efforts in working through the Profile completion process, including developing and processing the church survey. The results were presented at the congregational meeting in December. See the Profile Committee article in this Spire.

Part of our covenant to "live together as brothers and sisters" is expressed through our covenant relationships with the Essex Association and with the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ. During this interim period we are grateful for the assistance of our new Associate Conference Minister, who is working with the churches of the Essex and Andover Associations, Rev. Don Remick. We are also looking forward to Rev. Dr. Jim Antal, our Massachusetts Conference Minister and President, being with us in worship on January 24<sup>th</sup>. He is with us at the invitation of the Stewardship Committee. In his message he will reflect on the theme from our Maple Street Covenant that "we agree...to support it financially". See the Stewardship Committee article.

As part of our mission to "treat all human beings as brothers and sisters", we will provide the first Welcome Table Community Dinner on January 28 at Maple Street Church. The Dinners are sponsored by the churches and community organizations of Danvers. For more information, see the Welcome Table article on page 5.

Finally, we welcome with joy Paula Stephens as our new Administrative Assistant.

Grace and Peace in the New Year,  
-Steve

From the

# Trustees

During December, the Trustees finalized arrangements for plowing and shoveling services in an effort to ensure we have safe access to the building during the winter months. As the cold weather and snow sets in, please remember to try to leave the parking lot behind the Church for those that need it the most. Other Trustee activities for December included pulling together the Financial Section of the Church Profile and beginning to implement the new Building Use Policy and Scheduling Process. Also, we continue to get more and more comfortable with the transition of the Church's accounting system to the electronic Quickbooks system. I want to thank Lew Hathaway (current Trustee and former Treasurer), Rich Hathaway (current Treasurer), Cheryl Ward (Trustee), and LeeAnn Donovan (Assistant Treasurer) for their continued efforts on this front. This has been a significant transition, and required a good deal of rework to capture all of the accounting information for the past calendar year. As a result of their hard work, we are planning to provide all with end of calendar year statements this year. As we move into January, the Trustees will be focusing on options for addressing what looks to be a fairly sizeable budget deficit. As you may recall, the Congregation approved a budget for this Church year that required an increase in pledge income in order to be balanced. Unfortunately, it does not appear that an increase in pledge income has been realized. As directed by the Congregation at our June Congregational Meeting, we have secured, at no cost, a \$300,000 line of credit, collateralized against the Church's endowment. Now that our staffing situation and our accounting system have been stabilized, we need to further analyze our income and expenses and develop options to meet this year's expected deficit (e.g., cutting program/committee budgets; a directed pledge drive; using the endowment; borrowing against

the line-of-credit; or some combination of options). We have many challenges ahead, but we look forward to the New Year and wish all a happy and healthy 2010.

Art Johnson, Chairman

## WARRANT FOR A SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

To the Legal voters for Maple Street Congregational Church, UCC

You are hereby notified that a Special Meeting of Maple Street Congregational Church, UCC Danvers, Massachusetts, will be held on Sunday January 31, 2010 following the worship service in the Sanctuary

Agenda:

- 1) To vote on the Church Profile
- 2) Adjournment

## EDITING HELP NEEDED

Maple Street church is looking for someone to take over editing duties for our Sunday service DVD's. We have a crew to videograph the service, but we need someone spend a couple of hours editing the service down to a one-hour time slot and also

to put the credits on the finished product. If you are interested, please send an e-mail to Tom Manuel at [Tom@GFMSRealty.com](mailto:Tom@GFMSRealty.com) or call him at 978-337-7052.





## Stewardship Moment

*Stewardship Values Continued taken from the book Ask, Thank, Tell by Charles R. Lane Published by Augsburg Fortress*

### VALUE #5 Proportional

The Bible always calls us to percentage giving. Nowhere in the Bible will you find something like, "Give fifty dollars." The language is always, "Give in proportion to the blessings you have received." Those who have much wealth are expected to give proportionately. Those who have little wealth are also expected to give proportionately. The tithe, or ten percent, is obviously the best example of the Bible's teaching of proportional giving. Percentage giving is a two-edged sword. For those who don't have large financial resources, percentage giving is a word of great comfort. Such people can know that in God's eyes their "small" gift is not small at all, but incredibly generous. For those who have greater financial resources, percentage giving calls them to account if their gift is larger in dollars but still quite small in percentage

### VALUE #6 Cheerful

The final stewardship value is cheerful giving. Perhaps the best-known stewardship verse in the Bible comes from 2 Corinthians 9:7 "God loves a cheerful giver." As you read these words, you may be saying, "Oh sure! You have just laid five other values on me, I'm feeling guilty about my own giving and that of the other members of my congregation, and now you tell me to be a cheerful giver. The clue to being a cheerful giver is found in the words that surround Paul's statement that God loves a cheerful giver. Those verses are: The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. (2 Corinthians 9:6-8)

## REV. DR. JIM ANTAL TO PREACH



The Stewardship Committee is pleased to announce that the Rev. Dr. Jim Antal, Minister and President, Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ will deliver the sermon during our worship service on January 24, 2010. Dr. Antal has led the Massachusetts Conference since

the summer of 2006.

Paul Eovacious and I met Dr. Antal this fall at an event called "Stewardship University 2009," a series of workshops designed to bring together area churches for a dialog about stewardship, discipleship, and the joy of giving. One of the highlights of the day was the keynote address delivered by the Rev. Dr. Antal, a message entitled, "Changing the Culture Around Money." Paul and I were so impressed, we invited Dr. Antal to speak at our congregation, and we are very excited that he has graciously accepted this invitation. Please join us in welcoming Dr. Antal to Maple Street Church on January 24, 2010.

- Jeff Crum

## CHURCH GROWTH COMMITTEE

Got those winter blues? Want to chase them away? MARK JANUARY 27 ON YOUR CALENDAR. Fellowship, friendship, a good meal and a great hymn sing are in the works!

Join your fellow *Maple Streeters* and start "2010" off at OUR CHURCH POT LUCK SUPPER on JANUARY 27 at 6:30 p.m. in the SOCIAL HALL. There will be brief reports from the Church Communication and Profile Committees, but this will be mostly an evening to just relax, catch up with friends and share holiday memories. A sign up sheet will be posted in the Social Hall.

CHILD CARE WILL BE PROVIDED.

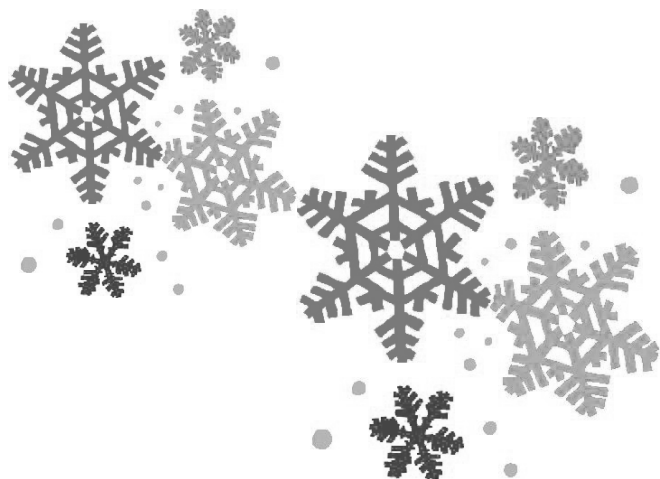
## THE ROAD TO EMMAEUS IN STORY AND SONG



On February 21<sup>st</sup> the Intergenerational Choir will begin rehearsals for our special music Sunday, this year scheduled for the Sunday after Easter, April 11<sup>th</sup>. The anthems for this worship event have been chosen to support the retelling of the wonderful story of Christ's appearance to two travelers on the road to Emmaus. We invite you to sing with us for this special presentation. Because the music must be ordered ahead of time, I ask that you let me know if you plan to participate so that I may order the appropriate number of copies. Please e-mail me or sign up on the list provided on the bulletin board in the Social Hall.

This special music Sunday is funded largely by gifts from members of our church family. If you wish to give an anthem or to support this event with a contribution, please contact me. We are most grateful for your caring and support.

Kathy Gross (candk144@gis.net)



## Membership & Leadership

Now that we have begun the New Year, it is time to think about the Committees and Boards in our church. If you are going off a committee in May, you may want to start thinking of how you can best share your talents and passions with others here. The M&L Committee will be making calls to everyone and asking if you are willing to serve on a Committee. If you have a particular interest, remember that our Committee meetings are open meetings and by attending one, you may learn a lot more about them and what they do. We want to find people who are a good match, not just fill slots with names. It takes whole committees to fulfill the necessary tasks to run this church - not just people who sign up and then don't show up.

Making a commitment to serve on a committee is an honor and our responsibility as members of Maple Street Church. The recent survey tells us that we are looking for more communication among our membership, and your involvement is one way that that will improve. We need your help to make this an exciting new beginning for the 2010 to 2011 fiscal year.

Marjory Simpson, Chair

## DEACON'S BENCH

Being a Deacon requires no special training, only a love for God and a desire to serve. Minnie Louise Haskins put it this way: "I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year: Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown! and, he replied: Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way."

As we care for our homes, we also care of our church . . . Come be a Deacon in the house of God, and enjoy welcoming others into this house of God.

Kay Anderson



## World Service

One very rewarding mission project of the World Service Committee is our participation in the Child Sponsorship Program of

Global Ministries, an international organization that has long worked with and supported the UCC. In its Mission Statement Global Ministries describes its goal of ecumenical global sharing of resources, and prophetic vision of a just and peaceful world order, joining with God's concern for the poor and oppressed.

Our committee, led by J.J. Zambouras, sponsors three children: Maribel and Christian from the Philippines, and Sajeda who lives in Jerusalem. We have sponsored Maribel for several years. She is a thirteen year old seventh grader who enjoys art and would like to be a nurse. Our committee began sponsoring Christian and Sajeda last year. Christian is a nine year old third grader who enjoys Cub Scouts and would like to be a scientist. Sajeda is five years old, in Kindergarten. She loves sports, reading and music. Their photos and letters may be seen on the bulletin board in the Social Hall.

The Global Ministries Child Sponsorship Program works with partners and agencies to provide food, basic health care, clothing and in some cases housing, school fees, uniforms, books and training. The program has been providing assistance for over forty years "one child at a time".

## THE WELCOME TABLE



Dinners will be held from 5-7 p.m. every Thursday night at Maple Street. We will need set-up, server, cooking, and clean-up help. The meals will be made in the kitchen or purchased from a restaurant.

If this sounds interesting to you, there is a sign-up sheet in the Social Hall. If you can help or if you or any other business you are connected with would like to donate to the welcome table, please see Paul Pepper.

## Profile Committee

If you were unable to attend the congregational meeting in December, there are extra copies of the pie-chart results of



the surveys near the church office on the ledge (or ask in the office).

As this committee finishes up their task of completing the Profile, we will be providing copies of the finished document to each of you to review. They will be available at the church. The Council will vote to accept the Profile at their meeting on January 5<sup>th</sup>. There will be times for you to ask questions before we bring this to you for your final vote at the end of the month. So mark your calendars with the following dates.

### Save the Dates:

January 10<sup>th</sup> and January 24<sup>th</sup> - Forums will be held in the Reception room before and after church for discussion times

January 31<sup>st</sup> - Congregational Meeting to vote to accept the finished Profile

Serving on this committee are Don Thomas, Heather Spearing, Joe Barnes, Karen Nastuk, Lew Hathaway, Linda Leonard, Mercy Duffill, Norma Gates, Sally Shannon, Sheila Rizzoti and myself. Also assisting us were Deb Sauer and Ron Baser. I would like to thank them for all their hard work and commitment during these past few months.

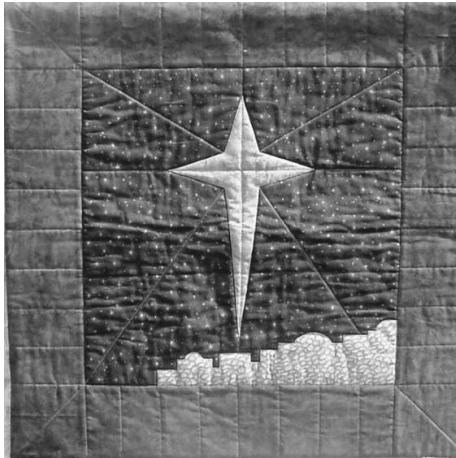
Marjory Simpson  
Chairman of the Profile Committee

## REMEMBERING IN LOVE

Sadly, we ended the year with a funeral service "remembering with thanksgiving" the life of Doug Clark. Doug is particularly remembered for his singing and his joy in music. Our thoughts and prayers will continue to be with Sue, Amy, Brian, and Cathryn.

## From Elsa Marshall

“Then the star appeared again, the same star they had seen in the eastern skies. It led them on until it hovered over the place of the child. They could hardly contain themselves: They were in the right place! They had arrived at the right time! They entered the house and saw the child in the arms of Mary, his mother. Overcome, they knelt and worshiped him.”  
(Matthew 2:9-11)



Epiphany is a great feast and season of the church. It is often lost to the after Christmas season instead of being its own special time and celebration. This Christian festival is celebrated on January 6 and continues as a church season. As one of the oldest Christian holy days along with Christmas and Easter, Epiphany commemorates the first manifestation of Jesus to the Gentiles, as represented by the Magi. The eve of Epiphany, called Twelfth Night, is thought to mark the arrival of the Wise Men in Bethlehem. The season of Epiphany also celebrates the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist and Jesus' first miracle, performed at Cana. Epiphany ends with the beginning of Lent on Ash Wednesday. In popular celebration the Epiphany feast is far more ancient than Christmas. Technically it is more important than Christmas, ranking after Easter and Pentecost. It is a day of gifts in many countries. The word *epiphany* means a manifestation, usually of divine power. Thus the actual appearance of God (as in the burning bush or the Christ child in the manger) or a moment of divine revelation may be called an epiphany. This Epiphany let us each ponder these questions, “What is the star that I am following now? And where is that star in its present radiance in my life leading me?”

The Magi followed the light of a star that shown in the darkness. In following the light they were led from the darkness into the presence of the Christ child, into the light. This light is not simply an event of physical law; it is the inner light that makes possible understanding

and knowledge of God and it is the radiance of God's glory made manifest in all of God's creation. Jesus is the light of the world, who reveals that the true nature of God's glory is love, and we are not simply witnesses to the light, we are the lamps that, ignited, make it possible for others to see God's glory in our own acts of loving kindness.

Recently, Pastor Steve said that perhaps churches are laboratories of peace. I like that idea, it has caught my fancy. The Archbishop Desmond Tutu once said, “We can be human only in fellowship, in community, in *koinonia*, in peace.” The Body of Christ is made up of humans in fellowship called into this unique and special community we call the church, whose members try to live following the Prince of Peace.

“Marco Polo describes a bridge, stone by stone. 'But which is the stone that supports the bridge?' Kublai Khan asks. 'The bridge is not supported by one stone or another,' Marco answers, 'but by the line of the arch that they form.'” This is a wise fable about community. The arch we form is created by how we speak, listen and care for one another. They can affect and even determine whether or not we are incubators of peace. Our words and actions can have life giving power. Being mindful matters. We might ask ourselves some pointed questions before acting and/or speaking: Are my thoughts kind? Are my stories true? Will my words enhance the silence or the discussion? Will this spread goodwill, peace and love? Speaking the truth in love requires being mindful and kindly. Remembering Scripture,” My dear friends, we must love each other. Love comes from God, and when we love each other, it shows that we have been given new life. We are now God's children, and we know God. God is love,” (1 John 4:7-8a)

The Magi traveled far to find Christ in their world. We do not need to travel far, just deep. May the journey be filled with light of Christ and not end until the radiance of God's glory be made manifest through each of us bearing gifts of love. ‘Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of God has risen upon you.’ (Isaiah 60:1)

..... Shalom - Elsa Marshall

## MORE FROM ELSA!

Covering my upstairs banister and down the hall, it speaks to me every day with words of caring, words of hope, words of love. THANK YOU for the wonderful and GIGANTIC get well banner! It continues to lighten my life and warm my heart. I cannot imagine taking it down. It is with gratitude that I say thank you to my Maple Street Church family for all their cards, calls, emails, flowers, and prayers during my recent medical emergency. Thanks for the inspiration, cheer, laughter, lunches and care. I cannot imagine life without all of you. I am so blessed to serve this church where over and over and over again the world's need and God's unstoppable love intersect. It is an honor. Thank you! Shalom with love - Elsa

This year's **Confirmands** will receive their life long Bibles in worship on **Sunday Jan. 10<sup>th</sup>**. Please be sure to join us in celebration that morning.

Our second **One Room Schoolhouse** will be offered on **Sunday January 17<sup>th</sup>**. The children will begin in worship as usual and then go to the social hall on the second hymn for special learning activities. It is a great way to experience learning with different ages and allows the teaching ministry staff to also have a vacation weekend!

**Teacher Dedication** for the second term will be on **Sunday Jan 24<sup>th</sup>** during worship. There will be a **Teacher Appreciation Breakfast** that morning for both the fall teaching ministry staff and the spring ministry teaching staff and their families so **SAVE THE DATE**.

There are resources for children, youth and adults on the family worship tables in both the Narthex and at the side door entrance to the Sanctuary. Please feel free to take them home to enrich the Sunday – Monday connections.



## Please visit our Web Page

at [www.maplestreetchurch.org](http://www.maplestreetchurch.org) click the youth button on the right and on the youth cover page click youth again. There you will see tabs with all of our different information. The pictures are updated quickly after meetings, so visit often! IF there is a cancellation due to weather it will be posted on our website!!!!

## Maple Eves

Maple Eves Women's Group will hold it's January meeting on Wednesday January 13, 2010. at 7:00 PM in the Reception Room. Dessert will be served. The meeting will be a Material Aids Night. We will be making stress reliever neck warmer wraps for residents of Hospice of the North Shore in Danvers. Sewing ability is not necessary, there are many other steps in the process of making the neck warmers and all are welcome to join us. The hostesses for the meeting will be Lynne Duffill and Judy Manuel. Devotions will be led by Lynne Duffill. If you are not on the Maple Eves call list and would like to attend, please call Marge Hathaway at 978-774-5848.

## THANK YOU, THANK YOU!

Thanks so much for the many vases of flowers I received while I recovered. Don and Eileen's visit was very nice and came at just the right time.

God Bless,  
Judy Drouin

**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 February issue of The Spire is January 18 at noon.**

**Note this change.**

Fully composed 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.



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