

The Spire

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

Pastor's Page

Dear Friends,

Much of our focus for this month centers on one Sunday, which is **May 16th Pentecost Sunday**. This is the Sunday when we celebrate the “energizing” of the fledgling movement of the followers of the risen Jesus. And it is the Sunday when we seek the re-energizing of our church life as followers of the Risen One. The energizing of the early church came partly through the breaking open of the message about Jesus' resurrection to people beyond those who had traveled with Jesus during his years of his ministry in the Galilean countryside. Under the inspiration of the Spirit, Peter spoke about Jesus' life, death, and resurrection to crowds of people who had made the pilgrimage to come to Jerusalem from throughout the Mediterranean. Many responded and the number of followers increased dramatically, bringing all kinds of new energy to the movement.

This is part of what we dream about as we think of our church on Pentecost, we dream that many people will be drawn into our fellowship, bringing all kinds of new energy into the life of our church. I don't think that this is an unrealistic dream, it happened on the first day of Pentecost, but it requires that we recognize that our cultural context is very different. Peter's way of communicating the message was effective for his cultural context. As mainline Protestants in New England, we have struggled for many years to find ways to communicate effectively in a 21st century context.

For the last ten years, the Massachusetts Conference of the UCC has been dedicated to help churches discover “our voice” as local churches. The mission of the Conference is to “nurture local church vitality and the covenant between the churches”. Church growth workshops as well as stewardship and relational evangelism workshops are offered continually throughout the year. Church members from our congregation and from many others take part in monthly Communities of Practice in these areas. Pastors are also attending these

workshops and are also taking part in clergy Communities of Practice.

The result of this is that churches are gaining wisdom and understanding as to how to communicate effectively in ways that enable churches to grow. There are principles that are emerging which each local church can incorporate into their church life. For the last month, I have been experimenting with a “spiral of growth” chart for Maple Street Church, which I will be presenting to our congregation in different ways. It is based on a variety of sources, and is rooted in our first-hand experience of working together during the last year and a half as Interim Pastor and congregation.

Even as we learn the ways of church growth, we still also need the fresh inspiration and energizing of Pentecost that comes from the opening to the Holy Spirit through prayer. Without this “fresh fire” of inspiration, Peter would not have been able to share the message to the crowds gathered. We are told that they were gathered in one place on that day, most likely for their daily practice of morning prayer. On Pentecost, we will also be gathering for our Sunday morning group prayer time. It will be a special Sunday during which we will be inspired to open our lives to the fresh inspiration of the Spirit by the example of our **Confirmation Class** affirming their baptismal covenant, which was made on their behalf by their parents when they were infants, and they now are claiming as their own.

Our opportunity for personal response will come through being invited to come forward to receive Holy Communion through the means of intinction. While most Sundays when we celebrate Communion we emphasize our group covenant, sharing the bread and the cup at the same time, there are certain Sundays, Pentecost and the first Sunday of the new year, when we emphasize our personal covenant in our hearts through prayer. Then, with our hearts in tune with God's vision for growth and with the help of God's inspiring Spirit, we will be ready for the renewal of our church covenant through our church's **Annual Meeting** which takes place after church.

Peace - Steve

From Elsa Marshall

Did you know that if you do a web search for coonskin caps you get 198,000 results? You get 619,000 results for "bobble head dolls", and you get a staggering 1,460,000 for kids' eyeglasses. Now maybe there are a wide variety of kids' eyeglasses and dealers and I suppose you can put a bobble head on just about any figure as a matter of fact you can even purchase custom bobble heads, but a coonskin cap is made of only one thing...a raccoon. You won't find coonskin caps with sequins fringes or mud flaps (but then I haven't checked all 198,000 results); you'll just get a cap that, in an earlier iteration, probably spent its life mugging and bullying those lower on the food chain, or tipping over trashcans.

Such is the nature of the information age we live in today. We have easy access to lots of information, knowledge and resources. It's flat-out overwhelming, even if all you want is one, medium size, coonskin cap. The question becomes, "How do we sort through all this digital stuff and find what we need?" To quote Proverbs, "this requires wisdom". Wisdom serves as a lens, or filter, to sort through and evaluate what is helpful and what is not.

Here at Maple Street Church we hope we can help provide some wisdom when it comes to sorting through resources that are used in effective faith formation practices. And we think this wisdom is helpful. For example, a web search of "Christian Resources" generates 44,200,000 results! I doubt whether anyone has time to evaluate all this information. But what you might have is time to use some of the resources with your family that have been developed for that purpose. They are available on the two family worship tables – one in the narthex and the other at the side entrance to the sanctuary. They change seasonally and if you have specific things you would like offered, please let me know.

This summer we will be offering families that are on the go, away or travelling, summer church school lessons all prepared and ready for pick up. A take out if you will. We are calling our program Good News To Go! Not only will they be good to go but they will be this year's summer church school lessons in a bag. No need to call ahead. Parking is free. Please grab a brown bag filled with Good News To Go and while away share the lesson with your

children and family. Help your children remember and experience that God is with them anywhere they go and everywhere they go.

Confirmation is Sunday May 16th. This year's class is comprised of young men. These tenth graders have been a joy to work with and to share experiences with all winter and spring. A special thank you to their mentors, Alden Duffill, Larry Goss, Robert McBride, David Phinney and Glen Thompson. They have accompanied our youth on this journey offering them insight, wisdom and themselves. A mentor is not expected to be some kind of "super Christian" who has "all the answers" or who can cite vast numbers of Scriptures. Rather a mentor is one who has a genuine faith and who is involved in trying to grow in that faith from day to day. A mentor is someone who is willing to share his or her journey of faith with another person. The most important qualities of a mentor are the willingness to be involved with another searcher, and a willingness to be a very real person in that relationship. The manner in which most of us "became" Christian was by looking over someone else's shoulder, emulating some admired Christian, taking up a way of life that was made real and accessible through the witness of someone else. This approach says that no one of us becomes a Christian alone, or on our own. We need the whole community, each member witnessing to us, to grow up into Christ and to live as a Shalom person. One of the great resources that the church has is its ability to bring the many generations of disciples together. One affirming gift that the church can offer confirmands is the practice of our belief that "You are one of us already. God has plans for your life. We, the church family, want to take time with you to give you the skills, insights, and experiences you need to help you be faithful and a person of Shalom." Our confirmands not only deserve to have intentional Christian guides, but are blessed by the "mentors" who invite them to look over their shoulders as they - mentor and confirmand - both attempt to be followers of Jesus, "the way, the truth and the life". I extend a deep and personal Thank You filled with gratitude for the ministry of our mentors that has been offered by them to the confirmation class of 2010.

Continued on next page

From Elsa Marshall

Continued from page 2

We will offer a One Room Schoolhouse on Sunday May 30th.

Senior Recognition Sunday will be on May 23rd during worship. We will be introducing each of the church family's graduating seniors and the school they will be attending.

Deadline date for the Gross Scholarship applications is May 15th. Be sure to get them in for consideration.

Mission Possible 2010 to ReMember SD has two meetings in May. The first is an adult leader meeting only on Sunday May 2nd at 7PM in the Reception Room and the second is an **ALL WHO ARE GOING** meeting on Sunday 23rd at 11:30 in the Reception Room.

Watch for your invitations to the special parent appreciation evening on Sunday May 23rd at 4PM in the Social Hall. There will be healthy snacks and a photographic art exhibit expressing Healthy Congregations, Healthy Body, Healthy Mind, Healthy Living.

..... Shalom - Elsa Marshall

DEACONS BENCH

Dear Deacons:

1. "Thank you for the lovely cyclamen ... It must have been selected by someone who knew that shades of purple are my favorite.."
2. "Thank you for the cookies and Valentines. It was nice of you to think of me. God Bless."
3. "To all who contributed on Valentine's Day ... The cookies were delicious."
4. "There is so much for which I need to thank my caring friends at Maple Street Church; The delicious homemade cookies and M&Ms, the handmade Valentines from the children at the nursery school. May you all be blessed during this special Easter Season."
5. "Hello members of the Diaconate, Thank you for your Easter plant. It was nice to be remembered."



FIVE good reasons to be a Deacon. Consider serving on the Board of Deacons

Warrant for the Annual Meeting

To the legal voters of Maple Street Congregational Church, UCC

You are hereby notified that the 166th annual meeting of Maple Street Congregational Church, UCC Danvers Massachusetts, will be held in the social hall on Sunday May 16, 2010 at 11:30.

This meeting is called to:

1. Receive annual reports, elect officers, boards, and committees, and adopt a budget for the fiscal year 2010- 2011.
2. Transact any other business that may legally come before it.

ALL CHURCH LOBSTER PICNIC

Sunday, September 5, 2010

Endicott Park, Danvers MA

Make your reservations ASAP

Our own Lobsterman Robert Donovan will provide the Lobsters

Lobsters.....\$8.00 each

Hamburgers/Hotdogs.....\$5.00 each

All other food (salads, chips, drinks etc.) will be provided by the
Church Growth Committee

Family Name _____

Number of Lobsters _____

Number of Hamburgers _____

Number of Hotdogs _____

Please send your check to the church office made out to Maple Street Church
with summer picnic written on the memo line.

Tear out the above and include it with your check.

We have reserved area I at Endicott Park. There will be games and fun for all.



Our prayers continue to be with families whose have suffered the loss of a loved one in recent months.

A funeral service for **John Horn**, husband of Lynne, and father of Steven, Robert, Christian, and

Karen was held at Maple Street Church on Friday, April 23rd.

A Memorial Service for **Ellen Merriam**, a long-time choir member, was led by Rev. Alspach and John Skelton at Brooksby Village Chapel on Saturday, April 24th.

On Sunday, April 18, **Jason Samuel Giacalone** was baptized during the worship service. Jason is the son of Lawrence and Diana Giacalone.

On Saturday, May 22nd, we will celebrate the wedding of **Melissa Owens and Brian Berg**. Melissa grew up in the church. Her parents are Betty Jo and Tom Owens.

Stewardship Committee

The early results are in on our 2010 stewardship pledge campaign, and we'd like to share them with the congregation. As of Sunday, April 18, we have received 115 pledge commitments for a total of \$149,606. That's an average pledge of \$1,301. Although the total number of pledges is down, the Stewardship Committee is very pleased to report that the average pledge is up more than \$200 from last year. This represents a significant increase for those that did pledge: nearly 19%!

We'd like to thank each and every one of you for your generous support of Maple Street Church. Pledge envelopes are available and can be picked up at the church office during the week or during coffee hour on Sundays.

If you have not yet made your pledge, we still have pledge cards available. Please contact the church office at 978-774-4510.

– Jeff Crum

A MESSAGE FROM THE MEMBERSHIP AND LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

The Membership & Leadership Committee has been challenged to fill all the vacant committee seats for the upcoming church year. Although we've had much success in filling these seats, we still have vacancies. The most concerning of these vacancies are (4) vacant Deacon seats. We have discussed this problem at our recent committee meeting and decided that because Deacons are such a vital component of our church organization, we are open to the idea of "switching" recently filled committee positions in an effort to more evenly distribute talent and balance responsibilities.

Many thanks to those who have already volunteered. Again, if you have an interest in serving and have not been asked, or are willing to switch from another committee, please consider serving as a Deacon. Additionally, the following seats are still open: (2) Board of Trustees, (1) Stewardship, (1) Flower Committee. If you are interested or have questions, please contact a member of the Membership and Leadership Committee.

Committee Chair Marge Simpson, ph: 978-774-0434, Peggy Coyne, ph: 978-750-4230, Warren Parr, ph: 978-774-3021, Bob McBride, ph: 978-531-6349, or Sharon Goss, ph: 978-356-0035

There is no better way to get to know others in our church family than to get involved!

Respectfully submitted by Warren Parr

LEADERSHIP RETREAT — SEPTEMBER 17-18 — SAVE THE DATES!

This year's Leadership Retreat will be held again at the Danvers Senior Center on September 17-18, 2010. This retreat is for all committee members and any other interested persons.

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**

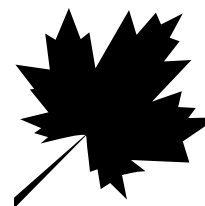
Theme: Church Vitality

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**



Maple Eves

The May meeting of Maple Eves will be a Catered Dinner held on Wednesday, May 12th at 6:00 PM in the Social Hall. This year the dinner will be catered by the members of The Sisterhood of Maple St. Church. Karen and Frank Kilty will be our Chefs for the evening. Entertainment will be provided by a choral group from Danvers High School. The hostesses for evening are the Executive Board members of Maple Eves. Devotions will be led by Judy Drouin. The cost for what should be a wonderful evening will be \$8.00. If you are not on the Maple Eves call list and would like to attend, please call Marge Hathaway at 978-774-5848. All will be welcome to attend.

YOUTH MINISTRY

Youth Group

We started our “Healthy Congregation - *Healthy Minds, Healthy Bodies, Healthy Living*” program in April with a grant from DanversCares. We started out by visiting computer sites looking up information on the Food Pyramid, the food groups and daily amounts in it, and how to eat a balanced diet. We looked at what a nutritional guide was and how to read it. We had a guest, Sallie Bowling, come in to speak with our youth about making smart choices while not depriving themselves of foods that they like. It was amazing to hear the comments of our youth and we look forward to continuing our project.

Sunday, May 2 4 – 6 pm We will be visiting a martial arts studio to learn about being one with our body and what that means, as well as learning about exercise. After that we will visit Goodies to check out their menu and how to make smart snack choices. We will also be taking pictures as we go as part of the project.

Sunday, May 9 4 – 6 pm We will matt our pictures and put together a presentation for our parents and guests of DanversCares. We will offer Healthy Snacks at that time.

Sunday, May 23 Our Grand Finale, the presentation of our “Healthy Congregation - *Healthy Minds, Healthy Bodies, Healthy Living*” project. Formal invitations will be sent, but save the date!!!

And there's more ...

Relay for Life Adventure If your youth is interested in staying overnight and participating in the Relay for Life event held Friday evening, June 11 through Saturday, June 12 please contact Mercy Duffill for a registration packet and more information.

Saturday, May 15 from 6:30 – 10:00 There will be a Trivia Night fundraiser supporting Relay for Life.

MP2010 Re-Member Leaders only will be meeting at 7pm at MSC along with the leaders from other churches going on the trip.

S.M.Y.L. We had a great year in S.M.Y.L. There was a lot of faith building; fellowship; mission opportunities and learning. We will resume in the fall. Thank you to all who participated and made the program a success. Parents, thank you for your continued support.

World Service Notes



We have so much to be thankful for this month. The World Service Committee would like to thank everyone who participated in the Red Cross Blood Drive. This selfless gift is truly the “gift of life”. The proceeds from our Lenten folders went to

HAWC. We were able to give them a little over \$500.00. Your generosity is greatly appreciated. Our committee would like to extend a special thanks to Karen and Frank Kilty for running the Mission Dinners. They have done an outstanding job on a shoestring budget. We are blessed to have them. We are also thankful for your participation in our monthly food collections which benefit our neighbors at the Danvers Food Pantry. You don't have to wait until the second Sunday of the month to donate. Non-perishable food items can be left at any time either in the shopping cart in the social hall or in the narthex. We are blessed to have a congregation which is so generous in spirit and deed. Blessings and thanks to all! Happy Spring!

I want to say a special thanks to you all for making the Yard Sale on Saturday a success.

The Bake table made over \$50.00. The Books were over \$50.00 also. We managed to get rid of some items on the stage, and Lew took an old monitor to the dump. We also cleared out some old stuff in the cabinets where the books were. The Sauers bought the sofa. I rented one table space out for \$25. Some leftovers went to the Lyons upcoming sale. The two ads in the Salem News cost \$53.98. With your generous contributions, our total proceeds were \$334.00.

Thank you to all who baked also.

Participants:

- Lori Dupont & her 2 grandchildren
- Donna & Paul Eovacious
- Judy Manuel
- Lynne Hathaway and daughter Amanda
- Lew & Marge Hathaway
- Deb & Jeff Sauer
- Marj Simpson
- Jeff & Pam Crum

God Bless you all.
Marj S.

WELCOME TABLE UPDATE



Calvary Episcopal, the Unitarian Church, St. Mary's Church, Cranney Companies, and the Rotary Club have all done a week. Attendance is continuing to grow each week, with

some families attending.

Maple Street will be doing another dinner on April 15. We do have quite a few already committed, and signup is still in the Social Hall for others for future dinners.

Thanks to all who have helped and continue to support this Welcome Table ministry.

P.S. Arrangements have been made for transportation for families at Route 1 motels to attend these dinners if they choose to.

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: _____

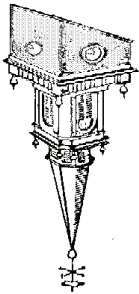
(signed) _____



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 June issue of **The Spire** is May 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.