

The Spire

The Newsletter of the Wollaston Congregational Church, United Church of Christ



Pastor's Page

April 2010

Dear friends,

The close of our Lenten journey this year reminds me that I will soon embark on a personal journey of my own. At our Annual Meeting this past January, you agreed that this summer is the time to grant me a time of rest, reflection, and renewal. I am preparing for a three month sabbatical. After seven years of service here in our church as your pastor, I am ready to receive this special gift of time away for my own Sabbath, a time for personal renewal.



You have called Leanne Walt, our *Pastoral Resident for Turnaround Ministry*, to be your worship leader while I am away. She will also serve as your pastor in my absence. Leanne is a licensed pastor by the Essex Association of the United Church of Christ and therefore is able to administer the sacraments in the church. Peter Johnston, our Business Administrator, will continue to meet the administrative needs of the church. Marian Channon, our church's Moderator, will also be here with you. I am confident that I am leaving you in very good hands. It is especially important that you continue to minister to one another in your daily lives and in the life of our community of faith.

After the Children's Sunday service on June 13th, I will take my leave. Please take this early reminder that summer worship will begin at 9:00 am, beginning July 1st. The 10:00 am worship hour will resume on September 5th. I plan to return on Sunday, September 19th well rested, and re-energized for the next steps of our journey together.

During the season of Lent, I have shared my dream with you that we can double our Easter Sunday worship attendance from last year. We have designed a very special postcard to help you invite family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers to come and join us for the Easter activities at our church. Remember that our church is an Easter Church! We have been resurrected and given a new life to share. Surely, the presence of the Lord is in this place!

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Bring others so that they, too, will experience the Good News that Jesus Christ is risen, indeed!

Our Children's Choir will sing during the Easter worship service, letting their voices release the Alleluias into the air.

A new ministry is springing up in our midst, the Underground Café (aka our social hall). We are reaching out with Praise Music, Coffee, and Fellowship to those who might come to a Sunday evening service. Three such events are planned, with the first one beginning on April 11th from 6:00 pm to 8:00pm. Paul Chambers will provide the music and inspiration on that date, we'll provide refreshments, and God will turn those hearts to come and stay for a while. I hope you will think about coming and also who you can bring with you.

As I begin my preparations for sabbatical, I hope that you will remember me in your prayers, and please be assured that I continue to hold you in mine.

Peace to you,



Rev. Dr. Mary Louise Gifford

*Alleluia! Christ
is Risen Indeed!*



APRIL 4, 2010—Easter Day

“Reconciling Love”

Dr. Gifford

APRIL 11, 2010—First Sunday of Easter

“Left Out”

Leanne Walt

APRIL 18, 2010—Second Sunday of Easter

“Shine Language”

Dr. Gifford

APRIL 25, 2010—Third Sunday of Easter

“Jesus on the Beach”

Dr. Gifford

MAY 2, 2010—Fourth Sunday of Easter

Anniversary Sunday

“All We Need is Love”

Dr. Gifford

Meditations on Prayer

Leanne Sterio Walt

“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words.”

~Romans 8:26

There are moments when words of Scripture don't seem so antiquated or outdated, when we do not need to construct a bridge to get from then to now. Prayer is hard and we do not know how to pray as we ought.

Do you know that I graduated seminary without purchasing one book on prayer and not having taking one course on prayer? I remember the very first time that I was called upon to offer a prayer in a roomful of people. We had just finished a committee meeting at one my field education sites. I fumbled over some words and even forgot to say “Amen”!

This uneasiness with prayer came as a surprise to me since, as a child, I had been quite comfortable talking to God. My Granny taught me how to pray. She and I would close our eyes and she would say, “Ok, now, tell God what is on your mind.” And I would. After a few minutes she would say, “Now, listen for God.” And I would. God was as close as my own breath and found in the simple gesture of silence.

As I grew older, I grew more guarded and restrained in my conversations with God.

Suddenly, it was important that I present the movements of my heart to God in a proper formulaic pattern. I began to fold my hands like a pretzel, showing reverence, and I began to begin all of my prayers with “Dear God” and always ended with “Amen.” This, I figured, was at least a start.



While these actions can center us in prayer, they are not indication of greater faith or sincerity than unintentional, off the cuff prayers, let out on the fly. A prayer can be as simple as rolling your eyes up to the heavens in a moment of utter frustration, letting out a groan, and breathing the words, “O God...” In response, with sighs too deep for words, God intercedes and bears our burdens, regardless of their prayer prescription.

Let us free our egos and with all the innocence of the children that we are, let us converse with God.

*O my God—
The darkness of my house forgive
And overtake my soul.
I relax the barriers.
I abandon all that I think I am,
All that I hope to be,
All that I believe I possess.
I withdraw my grasping hand from the future,
And in the great silence of this moment,
I alertly rest my soul.*

~Howard Thurman

Christian Education News

Lisa Hellmuth



Since the New Year began, our Sunday School curriculum has focused on the life of Jesus - from infant to young man and then to become the ultimate teacher.

During March, the children learned about the most significant events that occurred in Jesus' life between his Palm Sunday arrival and his crucifixion.

Now, in April our classes will help the children understand how the disciples felt after witnessing Jesus' death and resurrection. What exactly did they learn from Jesus during all their time together? And, would they be able to go on and teach the same things as Jesus did?

Our April lessons will touch on some real-life feelings: doubt, insecurity, fear courage and belief.

Alleluia!



Easter Egg Hunt

**Begins at 10:00
AM Sharp!
Saturday, April 3rd**

Ideal for children ages 3-10. Children must be accompanied by an adult

After the egg hunt, join us for light refreshments, pictures with the Easter Bunny, and a special performance by the "Velocity Elite Dancers"!

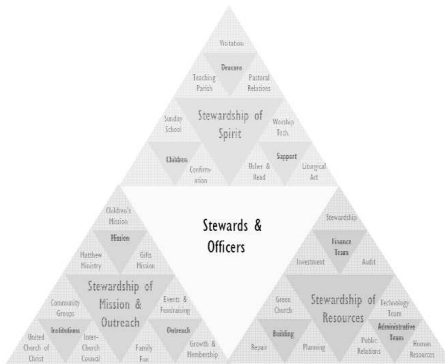


Tanglewood Marionettes

**Present
"Sleeping
Beauty"
10:30 AM on
Friday, April 23rd**

Tickets are \$7.00 each with limited seating available.

E-mail wollycongevents@yahoo.com to reserve your seats, or call the Church Office at 617-773-7432.



News from the Stewards of Spirit

Kim Kroeger and Kate Wylie

Well we have kicked off 2010 with two stewards meetings and one mini steward of spirit meeting and we wanted to share with the congregation our progress to date.

At the 1st stewards meeting we felt it was important to define 3 goals for each steward group to help us focus ourselves and the church for the year.

The Stewards of Spirit will be focusing on Communication, hence this Spire update to you, Hospitality and Intergenerational Spiritual Needs.

You will see very shortly in the social hall an additional bulletin board so there will be three, one for each of your steward groups to keep you updated on what the church is doing and the projects the stewards have undertaken with your assistance.

We are also looking at how we welcome new people to the church, from the look and flow of the narthex to the available worship activities.


Very important to us is making sure all members of the church are being spiritually fed, not just new members but those faithful worshippers as well. Kim and Kate would like to hear your ideas, impressions, and would value your input to make sure we are sustaining the spiritual life of Wollaston Congregational Church.

Each edition of the Spire will have an update from one of your steward groups but please let us know what you need, like and what makes you happy at Wolly Cong.

Respectfully, Your Stewards of Spirit

Kim and Kate

Alleluia!



E-giving at WollyCong

In an effort to help members and friends of the church with their giving, we can now offer you the option of having your pledge dollars deducted directly from your checking account. If you'd like to sign up for this service, please see Marian Channon, Collector.



Our Blessed Building

Peter Johnston

Boy, O Boiler! The church boiler and I are both the same age. 46, going on 47. On a cold morning in February, I came into the church to find about 5 inches of rusty water on the floor of the boiler room, and the boiler, and the building stone cold. We called in the boiler guys, and learned that the boiler had developed a long crack across the top, causing water to pour into the part where the fire is supposed to be. A gizmo called a condensate pump has been leaking all over the boiler room as well. It has been determined that the boiler cannot be repaired again. After calling the ministers in to administer last rites, I met with Marge Schwendenman and Marie Zinkus, stewards of resources, and Marian Channon, moderator, to discuss the options.

One of the goals that the former board of trustees had set was to investigate the possibility of converting our present heating system to gas. I met with the gas company to find out what the possibilities might be, as well as getting a quote from our oil company on replacing the boiler with a high-efficiency oil burner.

In the meantime, we've been limping along with the boiler, heating the building for a few hours a day, mopping up water, manually filling the boiler with water, and praying for good weather.

Let There Be Light! The church also needs to look at the efficiency of our lighting fixtures. Most of the fluorescent fixtures on the main level and in the social hall were installed in the 1960's ('bout the same time as the boiler.) With new energy efficient fixtures, we will drastically cut the cost of lighting the building, make our carbon footprint a little smaller, improve the lighting in these spaces, and we probably won't have to change a light bulb for the next 10 years!

New Resource Room Tucked away behind the church parlor, an old space is getting a new identity. The former kitchenette, which had fallen into disuse, is being transformed into a new resource center for use by the church office and the Christian Education Team.

The Resource Room will hold the high-speed printing, folding and binding equipment which was donated to the church, countertops to collate on, a desk with a computer, cabinets and bookshelves to hold supplies and curriculum and a place for church volunteers to work. Thanks to the following people for their help:

- Tim Messing, *for his volunteer labor & computer networking skills*
- The Sweetsers, *for the center island*
- Marian Channon, *for the all-in-one print/scan/fax machine*
- Mark Gifford, *for installing overhead lighting.*

Be sure and mark your calendars for the spring meeting on Sunday, May 16 After church.



Moderator's Minute

Marian Channon

One of the exciting things about a growing church is the growing commitment to giving back some of what God has provided to us.

One of our members was so moved by the earthquake in Haiti that for five weeks in a row this person put an envelope in the offering plate for Haiti relief, along with her regular pledged offering.

Another family where one member recently got a new job has increased their pledge by 50%.

Another family that has been very generous since coming to WCC, made a sizeable donation for use as the church saw fit - we have put half of that into the Capital Campaign and the other half as if it were in an offering envelope so that the 3-1/2 percent we have ear-marked for missions this year is considered.

One member whose pledge is based on income had extra hours in a paycheck a couple of weeks ago. Their first thought was not which bill should be paid but that the Sunday offering envelope would have more money in it that week.

This church is truly blessed by the generosity and commitment of its members.



Scholarships Available

Wollaston Congregational Church, UCC is pleased to announce availability of scholarships for students in College and University. Deadline for applications is May 1st for courses beginning in the fall.

There are two funds available:

- 1) The Norma and Elden D J Zuern Scholarship for students completing high school and entering the first year of college. Rev. Zuern was minister of this church for many years and is designated as Pastor Emeritus of Wollaston Congregational Church. He and his family before they retired to North Dakota set aside funds maintained at WCC for graduating high school students to help with costs of first year college.
- 2) The Phyllis Winslow Scholarship for continuing students. As many of you know Phyllis Winslow graduated from Andover Newton Theological School and, as the oldest student to graduate with a degree from ANTS, she has a firm commitment to the concept that we are never too old to learn new things and pursue our dreams of higher education.

For further information about these scholarships, and/or application forms and requirements, please contact the church office.



Adult Bible Study

Come and join us for Bible study. A new group is forming for adults who can participate one day a week for about an hour and a half.

The first meeting will be Thursday, April 8th beginning at 10:00 a.m. in the church parlor. Bring your Bible if you have one; if not, church Bibles will be provided. If you have questions, you may contact Linda Huffer at 617-770-2116.

The deacons will be holding a new member orientation class on Sunday, April 25, after church. If you are interested in joining the church, or have questions about it, please speak to Dr. Gifford or one of the deacons.



People who wish to join WollyCong will be received into membership during worship on Anniversary Sunday, May 2, 2010.

Directories Available



Copies of the spring 2010 church directory are available in the church office. Please see Peter Johnston or Marian Channon if you need a copy.



News & Views from the Pews

Periodically we ask members of the congregation to submit articles for inclusion in **The Spire**.

These might include poetry, thoughts on faith, a child's perspective, etc. If you would like to submit a piece for consideration, please e-mail Peter Johnston at wollastonadmin@comcast.net or contact him through the church office.



Spring Building Meeting

As has been our tradition in the last few years, a spring meeting of the members of the church will be duly called for Sunday, May 16, following worship.

This meeting will consist of reports on the status of the building, the work of the Stewards of Resources, and any other business which may . Look for the official call in the Sunday bulletin.



Calendar of Prayer

United Church of Christ



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hat is our calling as the church? The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. put it eloquently: “We who are members of the church are the lighthouse of the world. We are responsible for one task above all others – to keep the light of the gospel burning. All else must be secondary...” In that 1957 sermon, Dr. King described the church as saying to us, “I don’t care who you are, what your background is, what you have. You are a child of God, and as such I welcome you without reservation. I offer you all the privileges and blessings; and I shall belong to you and you to me now and forever.”

Every April, on the anniversary of his death, we remember the price that Dr. King paid for courageously proclaiming the gospel of justice, healing and peace. We also remember the bold witness of many people of faith who marched, spoke, and even died for the cause of racial justice. The same church that offers us a home, a haven, and a sanctuary also provides a prophetic voice in our public life, turning our attention - our hearts and minds - toward the needs of the most vulnerable, the marginalized, and those without a voice in our society.

“To keep the light of the gospel burning...” Our faithful and generous giving to the church keeps the light of the gospel burning brightly, offering a home and a witness to the world in which we live, that world that God loves so well.



Owen Doherty Receives Kiwanis Award

Owen Doherty was awarded a Community Hero Award from the Kiwanis Club of Quincy. This award is presented to those students who “go the extra mile” to help others. Our congregation is very proud of you, Owen!

Owen first came to our church by way of the Healthy Kids Vacation Camp in 2004. And this year, he volunteered as one of our junior counselors. Owen, his two sisters and his parents, Kim Kroeger-Doherty and Bill Doherty, are very active in the life and ministry of our church.

Owen is especially active in the mission outreach of our Sunday school and church. Owen has been helpful to church member, Carolyn Gray, during these past few months. He is also very involved in the Boy Scouts.

Owen’s teacher also had some very nice things to say about him in school. He is a good student and especially enjoys social studies. Owen is known as one of the kindest students in his class and helps other students. Owen also plays the trumpet in the school band. Congratulations, Owen!



A very special thank- you to Jean Gifford, guest director, for leading the children in their special Easter music.

I will be away on Sunday, April 11. Our thanks to Dr. Delvyn Case for playing the organ on that day.



Meet Kim Bersani

Kim became a member of our church several years ago. She currently serves our church on the Board of Deacons. Kim attended a special meeting of Pastoral Care and is excited to be part of this growing church. Kim works for the City of Quincy in the Water Department. Her job as a water meter inspector reader keeps her outdoors all year long.

In previous years, Kim was well known around this community as an Aerobics Instructor and Fitness manager. Based on both her experience in physical fitness and the depth of her spiritual awakening, she has decided to combine the two by offering classes to the community.

Kim's new venture is called **JOI DE VIVRE!** In which she is introducing her newest program called, "Inside-Out-Fitness". Her classes focus on women as they face specific fitness and stress issues.

From Kim's brochure, "Let's stay fit and not worry so much over the lumps, bumps, and scars we've acquired through living our lives. Let's enjoy the knowledge we have as adults and appreciate ourselves for who we are. Let's be who we've become and be proud of ourselves!" At the end of every class, Kim will lead a calming meditation. Classes are held from 5:00pm to 6:30pm Monday thru Friday at the Good Shepherd Church in Quincy. Drop in or call Kim for more information at 617-347-3579. Your first class is half price!



The Spire is a monthly publication of the Wollaston Congregational Church, United Church of Christ. Copies are available in the narthex.

The deadline for the May newsletter is April 20 at noon. Submissions should be e-mailed to wollastonadmin@comcast.net, or delivered to Peter Johnston in the church office. Articles may be edited for content and length.

