



The Spire

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

Pastor's Page

December 2009

Greetings in the Season of Advent,

This is the time of year that ushers in the early days of winter, a time for going inward and reflecting as the year 2009 approaches its close. These are the days we prepare in Advent to celebrate the story of Christmas, when God brings comfort to all people through the birth of Jesus Christ, God's own incarnation into the world.



Christmas is the story of God coming into the world to pay for the sins of the people. We remember that God came in to the earth in a most unusual way, in the form of a baby. The story of the birth of the baby Jesus also comes in unexpected ways. First, an angel of the Lord appeared to an unwed teenager named Mary who lived in a small town in Nazareth. The angel told her that she was the one God had chosen to give birth to the child who would save the world from sin. Next, we are told that Mary did deliver that child, our Savior, Jesus Christ, in a stable in the small town of Bethlehem, accompanied only by her husband, Joseph, to whom angels had appeared in dreams, and the stable animals of cows and sheep. Thus far, Bethlehem's only claim to fame was that Israel's great King David had also been born there, in this town of less than one thousand inhabitants.

Thirdly, on the night of Jesus' birth, in the countryside hills of Judea, angels also appeared to a group of shepherds to announce that God's promise to save those who had fallen away had been fulfilled. The angels announced that the Savior of the world had been born in a stable in Bethlehem. Immediately, the shepherds went there to worship the newborn King.

Advent

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Jesus was born in this small town, but his purpose was not limited by that location. Jesus later said, "I am the light of the world". He came into the world so that the light of his gospel might shine in the darkness of a world lost in sin and darkness. Today the work of Jesus continues to shine around the world through his disciples like you and like me. As followers of Jesus, we carry the light of the gospel into our homes, our communities, our cities, and to the ends of the earth!

My friends, God chose ordinary people and ordinary circumstances to proclaim the Good News that we are freed from darkness and filled with hope to spread this light of Christ throughout the world. God entered our world in unexpected places through unexpected people. How will God break through in your hearts in this season of watching and waiting this year? As you go about your daily lives in this holy season, I urge you to watch for God in your own life. Look for God in the hustle and bustle of Christmas shopping as well as in the quiet moments you carve out of your day for prayer and reflection. Be both busy and be still that you might see and hear that God is all around you in the ordinariness of our lives. Praise and thank God at all times.

Blessings and gentle peace be yours in this season of light,



Rev. Dr. Mary Louise Gifford



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Again this year we will help two families through Interfaith Social Services.

The first family consists of a mother, a boy, age 16, and a girl, age 1.

The second family consists of a mother, three girls, ages 6, 14 and 10, and a boy, age 12.

Please check the snowman and snowballs on the social hall bulletin board for name, age and gift suggestions. Kindly take a snowball or two.

The gifts should be wrapped with a gift tag listing the designated recipient. **PLEASE LEAVE THE "FROM" SPACE VACANT, SO THAT THE MOTHER MAY FILL IT IN.**

Please bring your wrapped gifts to church on Sunday, December 13th. I will deliver them to ISS Pantry Shelf on December 15th.

If you are unable to shop, but would like to participate, please contact Peg Sandahl at 781-337-9587.

Thank you for caring!

-Peg Sadahl



Moderator's Minute

2009 is winding down and 2010 shows signs of being a very busy year at Wollaston

Congregational Church. New education and worship opportunities are being planned; new opportunities for community outreach and missions, and the start of our major church restoration project. As all this happens, you, as members of the church and/or part of the neighborhood, will find many ways to participate, learn and volunteer.

As 2009 winds down, the financial team says thank you to those of you who have pledged for 2010. 30% of the pledges returned to date show an increase and 15% of the pledges received are from people who had not pledged before. Thank you. (If you haven't returned your pledge card, it's not too late to allow those working on budgets to count on your support.) New for 2010 is the opportunity for E-giving. Your pledge can be deducted direct from your bank account; contact the church office for the necessary paperwork. December 31st is also the deadline for your financial gifts for this year and now is the time for you to get caught up on your

2009 pledge or your Capital Campaign contributions so you can take advantage of tax deductions.

Also, as 2009 winds down, the Stewards are busy developing ways to involve more of you in service to the church -- as Stewards, Deacons, Church Officers, Matthew Ministry projects, adult education. January 24th, besides being our Annual Meeting will be Volunteer Recognition Sunday. Speaking of Annual Meeting, your Annual Reports are due in the church office December 31.

Thank you to all of the church family who helped make the recent fair one of the most successful WCC fairs in years. The setup of the room allowed lots of space for people to move, meet, talk and buy. 2010 church calendars are still available, and they will make great Christmas gifts for family members.

We welcome all of you to worship in December with special Advent music at Sunday worship and week-night programs. Sunday, December 20th will be the annual Christmas pageant, and there will be a family Christmas Eve service on the 24th. We wish you peace and joy at this special time of year.

Marian Channon, Moderator

Thank You! Thank You! Thank You! Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!

A special thank-you is extended to each and every person from the youngest in the congregation, to the young at heart. The contributions of time and energy, creativity and talent, made this one of the most successful fairs in recent years. In great appreciation, we have made a donation to the Heifer Project Fund in your honor.

-Sue Sweetser and Linda Perry, Co-Chairs of the Faire.



JOY TO THE EARTH



ADVENT SE-

Wednesday, December 9

Wednesday, December 16

SOUP AND BREAD SUP- PERS

6:00 pm Supper

6:45 pm Documentary and Discussion

7:30 pm Worship and Communion

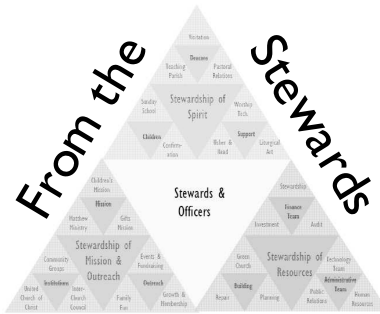
FEATURING: RENEWAL *A DOCUMENTARY SERIES* *STORIES FROM AMERICA'S RELIGIOUS-ENVIRONMENTAL MOVE- MENT*

RENEWAL is a powerful tool for everyone concerned about the current environmental crisis and the fate of life on our planet. The documentary and its website are creating many exciting and effective ways to:

- Engage people of faith in organized and individual environmental action
- Foster interfaith dialogue about environmental stewardship
- Break down barriers between secular environmentalists and people of faith.

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Children in grade school and older are welcome to accompany parents.



Family Fun Night News



It's almost that time of the year again.

The time when we look back at the last 12 months, acknowledge our accomplishments and also think about the “would haves, should haves and could haves”.

And then we make resolutions for the New Year, don't we?

The Stewards, our Church's governing group, want to thank everyone who has participated this past year to help Wollaston Congregational Church grow stronger in spirit, mission, finance as well as our building's physical future.

Our passion for doing more and making a difference remains ever so strong.

We ask that everyone think about how they can participate a little more in 2010 than they did during the last 12 months.

Please make it one of your resolutions to be more of a voice in the future of our Church.

And what a wonderful 2010 it will be!

We wish you a Merry Christmas We wish you a Merry Christmas We wish you a Merry Christmas And a Happy New Year

You were just singing that song, weren't you? So why not join us on Sunday, December 13th at 3:00 PM when the Family Fun group sings throughout our Wollaston neighborhood?

All are welcome - children and adults - but children must be accompanied by adult.

Remember - *“The best way to spread Christmas Cheer, is singing loud for all to hear”*

Hot chocolate and a few treats will be served when we return to the Church.

This will be a Snow or Shine event.

Christian Education



Please join us in Worship Service at 10:00 AM on December 20th when the Sunday School children and confirmation students perform in our 2009 Christmas Pageant.

This performance by the children is a very special way to celebrate the birth of Jesus, and provides a more intimate understanding of the true meaning of Christmas to the youngest members of our congregation.

Pageant rehearsals are scheduled for December 6th and 13th during Sunday School, and a dress rehearsal in the Sanctuary on Saturday, December 19th at 3:00 PM - followed by a pizza party to celebrate all of their hard work.

We hope you can join us for this wonderful event in our Church.

Many thanks to all who contributed their time and talent for the Interchurch Council Ecumenical Service. Special thanks go to Ellie Cleveland, who coordinated the coffee hour, and to Fran Guida for her music and beautiful sanctuary decorations!



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 January newsletter is December 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.

What's going on in Sunday School during December and January?

In addition to preparing for the pageant in December, the children will be learning about the season of Advent by opening the windows of their own Advent calendars. Behind each window, they will read and talk about specific Bible verses and work on projects that help reinforce the anticipation of Jesus' arrival.

Beginning in January 2010, the New Year takes the Sunday School classes to the New Testament where we will celebrate Epiphany and then learn about Jesus' childhood and young adult years. These lessons will give our Sunday School children the opportunity to know Jesus at a time in his life parallel to their own.



POINSETTIA ORDER FORM

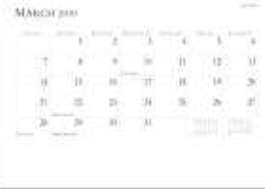
If you would like to purchase poinsettia plants to be placed in the church for the Christmas season, please fill out and return this form, with your check, to the Church Office by December 14. The cost per plant is \$12.00.

Please place _____ poinsettia plants in the chancel for Christmas

- In memory of _____
- In honor of _____
- In memory of _____
- In honor of _____
- In memory of _____
- In honor of _____
- In memory of _____
- In honor of _____

Given by _____

I enclose a check in the amount of \$ _____ to cover the cost.



WollyCong Wall Calendars

Available in time for your Christmas shopping, we present the WollyCong Wall Calendar. These calendars feature people, places and events in the church, and make great gifts for those who like to keep informed.

The cost is \$12 per calendar. Please see Linda Perry, or contact the church office.

Worship and Sunday School—10:00 a.m.
with Advent Candlelighting

Joy to the Earth Advent Series
Wednesdays, December 9 and 16

Soup and Bread Suppers

6:00 p.m. Supper

6:45 p.m. Documentary and Discussion

7:30 p.m. Worship

Neighborhood Christmas Caroling Party

Sunday, December 13 at 3:00 p.m.

Children's Christmas Pageant

Sunday, December 20 at 10:00 a.m.

Christmas Eve Service

Thursday, December 24 at 7:00 p.m.