

The Spire

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



Pastor's Page

Rev. Dr. Mary Louise Gifford

May 2010



Dear friends,

Effective communication is key to the success of any organization. The United Church of Christ, with its main setting in Cleveland, Ohio, is dependent on all of our state offices to communicate, in turn, with each regional minister, and then to each local church. Each local church, as a member of our denomination, is asked to contribute to five mission funds each year, with the upcoming one being the "Strengthen the Church" fund.

As a nationally recognized turnaround church, also known as a "new and renewing congregation", we are recipients of a significant grant from the "Strengthen the Church" fund, which our state conference has matched. Spread out over the twelve months, the other four national mission fundraisers are "One Great Hour of Sharing"; "Neighbors in Need"; "Our Church's Wider Mission"; and the "Christmas Fund".

You will be happy to know that for this year's "Strengthen the Church" offering, our own church and our turnaround story is being highlighted as one of only three churches around the country as a renewing congregations. Ours is such a hopeful story that is an inspiration for congregations in need of renewal. Enclosed you will find a flyer, produced by our national staff, announcing this offering along with a story about us! Many of you will recall the photographer who came to capture our Sunday school children preparing for the Christmas pageant last December. It was a good thing she came to the dress rehearsal, because you will also remember that we got snowed in on Christmas Sunday and didn't actually hold the pageant until the first Sunday in January!

Many photos were taken of the children. The one you see on the flyer was selected by one of our national staff, Ms. Doris Powell, who felt that this photo captured the essence our who we are as a congregation today.

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

As your pastor, I am pleased to share this honor with you. What better day to take up this offering than Pentecost, the day on which we celebrate the Holy Spirit! We will take up our offering for the "Strengthen the Church" fund on Sunday, May 23rd during our 10:00am worship service.

Over a period of four years, our church has received \$120,000.00 from the combined UCC's "Strengthen the Church" national fund, and the matching grant from our conference's Evangelism and Church Vitality's Turnaround Church fund. All of this money has been used to *strengthen our church* as we build a new financial foundation for the future of our church.

Do you remember the story when Jesus healed the ten lepers, and only one came back to Jesus to say thank you and to praise God? Let us be the one who gives back in the "Strengthen the Church" offering to say thank you to Jesus and to praise God, too! The slogan for this year's offering is "Share the Love!" Let us always be ready to share ours!

Marylouise

Peace in all things,

May Sermon Titles

Sunday, May 2

134th, Anniversary Sunday
"A New Commandment"
Dr. Mary Louise Gifford, Preaching

Sunday, May 9

Celebration of the Christian Home
New Member's Joining
"God's home in Our Hearts"
Rev. Dr. Mary Louise Gifford, Preaching

Sunday, May 16

Seventh Sunday of Easter
"Tracing the Story of the Spirit"
Scripture through Storytelling

Sunday, May 23

Pentecost
"Go and Set the World on Fire!"
Rev. Dr. Mary Louise Gifford, Preaching

Sunday, May 30

Trinity Sunday
"Sorrow Turns to Joy"
Rev. Dr. Mary Louise Gifford, Preaching



Jane, Ya Done Good!

Wollycong's first Field Education Student, **Jane MacIntyre**, will be presented as the search committee's candidate and to be called as **Pastor and Teacher to the South Parish Congregational Church in Augusta ME**. If accepted, she will begin her ministry on the last Sunday in June and her ordination will be on Sunday, June 12, at 3:00 p.m. at Christ Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, in Brockton, MA.



Pastoral Resident for Turnaround Ministry

Leanne Sterio Walt

Each Sunday, in churches throughout the world, Christians hear the holy words printed in the Bible read aloud from the lectern. Yet, in the ancient and prevailing illiterate world, the Word was experienced orally, through stories passed down from generation to generation and from village to village, city to city and for these ancient followers of Jesus, hearing God was a communal experience.

Jesus emerged from within this oral tradition and he shared his message through telling stories. Jesus told the story of the father who embraces his son despite his profound transgressions. He told the story of the good Samaritan who helps an injured Jewish man along the road and of the shepherd who goes in search of that one lost sheep. He told these stories orally to his disciples, to the Pharisees and Scribes, and to strangers he met throughout his life. The words and deeds of Jesus and his early followers that we find in the New Testament were not translated into written form until at least two decades after Jesus' death.

Learning Biblical stories by heart and sharing them with our community is a spiritual practice that connects us with our ancestral oral tradition and with the *living* Word of God. To truly engage in this discipline entails *finding life in the text, internalizing it, and sharing the promise of the text with others.*

During our worship on May 16th, your fellow disciples within our congregation will be sharing the Word of God in worship through storytelling. As we look toward Pentecost, we will be *Tracing the Story of the Spirit: from the creation of earth to the formation of the Church.* I hope you will join us for this special worship to experience new life in God's Word.



Ecclesiastical Council for Leanne Sterio Walt

May 16, 2010 at 3:00 p.m.

Second Congregational Church of Boxford, UCC

Please join us in this important moment in the life of our Pastoral Resident for Turnaround Ministry.

At the request of the Second Congregational Church of Boxford, UCC and with the approval of the Church and Ministry Committee, the Essex Association is called to meet as an Ecclesiastical Council on Sunday, May 16, 2010 at 3:00 p.m. at the Second Congregational Church of Boxford, UCC for the purpose of examining Leanne Walt as to her fitness in character and training for Ordination in the United Church of Christ.

Christian Education News

Lisa Hellmuth



So much has changed for the original disciples since Jesus physically left them. They have become teachers themselves and are helping many people become Christians by learning more about Jesus.

Everything is changing as people are trying to live as Jesus taught. This isn't always easy, but it is worth it.

This school year's curriculum will end in May with lessons focusing on how so many wonderful people helped the new church to grow. How they all learned to work together ... and how we, as their descendents, are still able to spread the messages of Jesus.



Dean's List

**Congratulations to
Allen Barrett**

Who made the
Dean's List
At Suffolk
University!

Family Fun at WollyCong



**It's "Planet 51" on
Friday, May 14th
Movie starts at 6:00 PM**

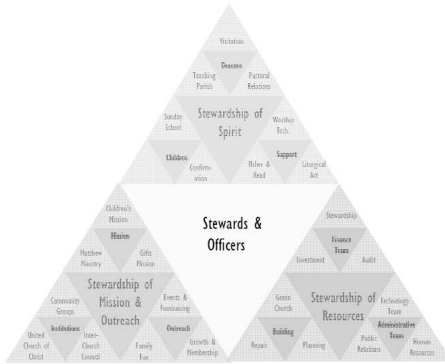
Please join us for the last Family Fun Night of the season for a fast-paced movie adventure.

American astronaut Captain Charles "Chuck" Baker lands on Planet 51 thinking he's the first person to step foot on it. To his surprise, he finds that this planet is inhabited by little green people who are happily living in a white picket fence world, and whose only fear is that it will be overrun by alien invaders...like Chuck!

This is a free event but children must be accompanied by an adult.

Bring a lawn chair or blanket if you'd like.

Light refreshments will be served.



News from the Stewards of Mission and Outreach

Linda Perry and Susan Sweetser

*And Jesus said, "Feed my lambs, tend my sheep, feed my sheep...By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."
~John 21:16-18 and 13:35*

As your Stewards of Mission and Outreach, we have been working over the past few months to solidify our goals and mission. It is our hope that Wollaston Congregational Church can become a hub for Christian service and discipleship.

Our mission is to *establish* the goals, procedures, and relationships for the church's mission and outreach and to continue *envision* opportunities to reach into the church and out into the world.

We have set the following goals for 2010:

- To reach out to our local neighbors (and families of all ages)
- To nurture the Earth
- To seek and establish more international mission and outreach involvement

One of our larger goals for 2010 is to participate in a mission trip. This trip will be local and will take place in the fall.

Please contact Leanne Walt if you would like to learn more and join in this outreach opportunity: lswalt49@gmail.com.

If you are interested in getting involved and using your gifts to serve others, please contact

Sue Sweetser: sweetserSusan@yahoo.com.



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.



**Saturday, June 5th
9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.**

Please drop off items on Sundays, or call the church office at 617-773-7432 to arrange a drop-off time.

Contact Kim Bersani with any questions:
(617) 347-3579.



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 June/July newsletter is May 20 at noon.

Submissions should be e-mailed to:
wollastonaadmin@comcast.net, or delivered to Peter Johnston in the church office. Articles may be edited for content and length.



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.



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.



Tech Team

We're looking for people who could help out running the Power Point during worship. It's a great way to serve the church, and it's as easy as operating your T.V. remote. Please see Peter

Johnston or Marian Channon if you can help.



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.



WE'RE ON THE WEB AGAIN! Wollycong.org

Thanks to the efforts of Jim and Arthur Barrett, and a team comprised of staff and church leaders, we now have a brand new website design. You can reach us the way you always have at: www.wollycong.org



Benediction, Easter Sunday, 2010