

# CIRCUIT RIDER

Of Merrimacport United Methodist Church



Volume 15 Issue 12

December, 2011

**Vision Statement:** Merrimacport United Methodist Church will be a church that develops a strong sense of God's presence and reaches out to every person through God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

**Mission Statement:** Merrimacport United Methodist Church provides an opportunity to build and strengthen a relationship with God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

Slogan: Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors.

Website: [www.merrimacportumc.org](http://www.merrimacportumc.org)

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## **Pastor's Epistle - -**

At the heart of Christmas is the "good news of a great joy" spoken of by the angel in Luke 2: "For today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ, the Lord."

We sing carols about bringing tidings of joy, but for many, Christmas can be a time of stress, emptiness and depression. Both of my parents died this time of year, and like many others the decreasing sunlight affects how I feel and function. And as a pastor, the Christmas season is one of the busiest in the life of the church.

But it is from within this time of darkness that the light of Christ can shine most brightly. The good news that we celebrate at Christmas rises above happy times or difficult times. God speaks the "good news of great joy" into our hearts through our Savior, Jesus Christ. The joy that came into the world in the Holy Child would continue as that Child would grow up and sacrifice

his life to save us, "who for the joy set before him endured the cross." (Hebrews 12:2). Not even a cross could take away the joy of our Savior.

Once we begin focusing on the true joy Christ makes possible, that joy comes bubbling out in love for others that they might also know the joy of Christ. We want to spend money on gifts that honor Christ; how many loved ones would be more blessed by a gift to their favorite charity in their name rather than one more sweater? We remember the needs of neighbors and offer our time and help. We see homeless folks with new eyes, remembering the words of Jesus from Matthew 25: "Whatever you did for one of the least of these, you did for Me." And as we serve our Savior we find even more joy returned to us.

And so this Christmas season, whether you are experiencing happy or sad times, my prayer for all of us is that we might know and experience the true love and joy that our Savior brings, and spread that love and joy to everyone we meet!

God be with you all for a joyous celebration and a Merry Christmas!

Together in Ministry for Christ,  
Pastor Gwyneth

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## **Advent Begins November 27!**

Advent means "coming" and is the time we prepare our hearts as we reflect on the birth of Christ as well as the future coming of Christ. A great time to invite a friend to worship!

### **Advent Series**

**The Journey:** Walking the Road to Bethlehem (in conjunction with DVD Bible Study)  
November 27 - Dec. 25 (5 weeks)

#### **Nov. 27: First Sunday of Advent**

Sermon on Mary of Nazareth (Luke 1:26-38)  
Advent Candle Lighters: Steve, Melissa, Amelia and Jacob Luke  
Liturgist: Emily Sample  
Hosting Fellowship Hour: Laurie Paszko  
Altar flowers: In memory of my mother, Dora Nelson's birthday from Dorothy Whiting.

**Dec. 4: Second Sunday of Advent (10 a.m.)**

Sermon on Joseph of Bethlehem (Matthew 1:18-24)

Advent Candle Lighters: The Gilchrist, Sample, and Lemieux families

Liturgist: Joanna Sanferrare

**Dec. 11: Third Sunday of Advent**

Sermon on Mary’s Visit to Elizabeth

(Luke 1:39-45)

Advent Candle Lighters: Dot Whiting and Connie Haberkern

Liturgist: Connie Haberkern

Fellowship Hour: Jan Baumgardner/Louise Yates

Altar Flowers: “In honor of my whole family” by Connie Haberkern

**Dec. 18: Fourth Sunday of Advent**

Sermon on the Journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem

(Luke 2: 1-7)

Advent Candle Lighters: David, Rocklan and Ethan Beavers

Liturgist: Walter Paszko

Fellowship Hour: at Joe & Beryl McKenna’s, 17 High Street.

**Dec. 24: Christmas Eve**

The Manger (Luke 2:8-20)

Family Christmas Eve Gathering 4pm

Candlelight Christmas Eve Worship 7pm

Midnight Christmas Eve Service 11pm

Dec 25 Worship and Carols 11: 00 A.M.

Liturgist: Gail Mattos

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**Adult Advent Study has begun but newcomers**

**are still welcome!** Gail Mattos is leading this DVD based study called “The Journey, Walking the Road to Bethlehem” by Adam Hamilton. The group will meeting **Mondays through Dec 19 (except for Nov 28)** which is when UM Women meets). FMI please contact Gail or the church office. Let’s make time for Jesus who is the reason

for the season!

Liturgist: Gail Mattos

**Family Advent Study has begun but newcomers are still welcome!**

Pastor Gwyneth is leading a weekly Advent study on Thursdays 5-7 pm for families, hosted at the Beavers home in Merrimac. The study called “The Journey, Walking the Road to Bethlehem” by Adam Hamilton will continue meeting on **December 1, 8, 15 and 22**. Parents and children participate in the study together, which includes dinner, carol singing, DVD, discussion, Christmas crafts and more. Children age 8+ are invited, or younger so long as they are able to participate meaningfully. FMI please contact Pastor Gwyneth or the church office.

**Sunday School for children ages 4-12**

meets during worship every other Sunday, which will be **Nov 27 and Dec 11**. Kids, invite a friend!

**United Methodist Women**

meet the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month. UMW will next be meeting on **Nov 28 at 7:30 pm** at the home of Gail Mattos, 71 West Main Street. Topic: Psalm 23, Praying Our Fears led by Netta Starbird. Please bring a Mission Gift as you are able: Children’s books or toys for Safe Recovery. All women are invited!

**Youth Band**

has begun rehearsing for the Christmas season, and will be meeting **after worship on Dec 11**. All youth who play an instrument are welcome to join. FMI please contact Laurie Paszko.

**Bible Studies at the Church:**

The **daytime Bible Study** will meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays **12/14 and 12/28** at 10am. Adult Sunday School will meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays **11/27 and 12/11** at 10 a.m. **(there will be no Sunday School on Christmas Day)**. All are welcome to join us!

**Santa Parade Float** – The **Santa Parade is Dec 4**.

Our church Happy Birthday Jesus float is already designed. **If you would like to assist** with making

the float and other planning, please see Marge Pearson. Only a few people will actually be on the float, but anyone is welcome to walk along with us in the parade.

**Worship is moved to 10am on Dec 4** due to the Santa Parade! Please remind others about this tradition. Pastor Gwyneth will bless our church float in worship too!

**Emmaus House Mission** - If you would be able to prepare a meal for this family shelter, available dates include the first Thursday, **Dec 8, Jan 5, Feb 2 and Mar 1**. The church can reimburse you for the expense if you are unable to donate the cost of the meal. Please sign up on your connect card or contact Gail Mattos.

**Cookie Walk / Sale on Dec 10 from 9 a.m.-1p.m.** This fun, annual church event will be held at the Merrimac Senior Center on 100 East Main Street. We need lots of cookies to make this event a success.. Please contact the church office or Maryellen Meegan to let us know how many cookies you can bake!

**Parent Meeting on Dec 11** – if you are a parent with school-aged children, please attend this meeting after worship to discuss our safe sanctuaries policy, which is in the process of being drafted by the Staff Parish Relations Committee, as well as an update on the church CORI (background check) process. Thank you!

**Caroling on Dec 18.** All are invited by the youth group to join in caroling at a nursing home (likely Haverhill Crossings) and several of our shut-ins to bring them some Christmas joy. Time will be announced soon in the worship bulletin and on the web. FMI please contact Pastor Gwyneth or the church office.

**Three Worship Options on Christmas Eve!** There will be a family Christmas Eve worship at **4 p.m.** And there will be the traditional **midnight**

Christmas Eve gathering at **11p.m.** This year we will be adding a **Candlelight Christmas Eve worship at 7 p.m.** All are welcome to any of these worship gatherings, and please invite your friends and neighbors too.

**Worship on Christmas Day** will be held at 11a.m. on Sunday, December 25. We will gather to sing carols and hear some of the meaning and history behind the carols as well.

**New Church Directory!** Shirley Hartmann and Pastor Gwyneth have been updating our church info in a new church database. Please make sure your contact information is correct and is the info you would like printed for the church family. Those on email will receive a copy by email, paper copies will be available at church and mailed to shut-ins. If you don't fall into one of these groups but would still like a directory, please contact the church office. Thank you!

**Church Calendar Online** Check out the church calendar at [www.merrimacportumc.org](http://www.merrimacportumc.org) under the calendar tab. If you have any additions or revisions to make, please email the church office at [info@merrimacportumc.org](mailto:info@merrimacportumc.org) or the pastor at [pastorgwyneth@merrimacportumc.org](mailto:pastorgwyneth@merrimacportumc.org).

**Nursery Needs** – Many thanks for all the nursery donations so far. Currently the nursery is still in need of diapers size 2 & up, pull-ups and diaper cream. Or just make a financial donation marked “nursery” and we will pick up the needed supplies. Thank you! FMI please contact Karen Benson.

**Prayer Chain on Email** – If you have a prayer request you can submit anytime by e-mailing . If you would like to be added to the Merrimacport UMC prayer chain to receive prayer requests from worship as well as through the week, please contact this e-mail as well.

**New Administrative Meeting Schedule:** Staff Parish Relations Committee meets the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month at 7pm. Inspiring Worship meets the

2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday at 7pm. Church Council meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday at 7pm. Trustees and Finance meet concurrently on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

**Heads up for January!** Some events tentatively being planned for January include a Yankee Swap, commissioning service for new leaders, and through-the-Bible study. Find out more in the next edition of the Circuit Rider.

\*\*\* THANK YOU \*\*\*

We want to thank Roger Clark for his extremely generous donation of two (2) new refrigerators!

In last month's letter, we put out a plea for gently used replacements of the very weary refrigerators that were donated in used condition over 12 years ago.

1 Peter 4:10 . . . "as each has received a gift, use it to serve on another as good stewards of God's varied grace."

During our Pot Roast Dinner, pastor Gwyneth was introduced to Roger at which time he expressed to her his intent to offer this much needed gift to our church, and within days, the units arrived and the old were taken away.

The gift is used daily and will be appreciated for many years. Thank you Roger!



*The Annual United Methodist Women  
Cookie Walk  
will take place on  
Saturday, December 10  
from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.  
at the Senior Center in Merrimac*

*We **need your help** to make this a success.  
**Please sign-up** to make cookies by  
contacting the church office, Maryellen  
Meegan, or  
by signing a church connect card on Sunday  
morning to let us know how many cookies  
you can bake! Thank you!*

*The proceeds of this sale will help support  
the mission projects of the UMW*

*Come choose from an array of cookies - -  
great for gift giving, for company, or to  
treat yourself!*





6 1/2"  
POT

\$10.00

(PINK - WHITE - OR RED)  
(CIRCLE ONE)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

No. of plants: \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$10.00 =  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

By \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

By \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Orders must be in by December 18.  
You may place them in the offering  
plate or call Julie Lemieux (978-373-  
0623) Checks may be made payable to  
Merrimacport United Methodist Church,**

## News about Past Events



Youth Group  
Serving at  
Pot Roast  
Supper

The youth group had dinner together then learned all about food safety practices from Marge P. to prepare them for serving at the pot roast supper! After the seminar the youth group decorated aprons and tee shirts to wear at the supper. Dessert was made by one of the youth - - amazing apple crisp. The pot roast supper on Nov. 12 was awesome, and especially having all the youth helping out. Thank you for your hard work preparing, cooking, serving, cleaning up and showing hospitality to those who came in the doors!



Youth on  
the Way  
to the  
Overnight  
Superbowl



**Youth Group Events!** The youth group played laser tag on November 15 after worship. Then following Friday they attended their first all night event, the Word of Life Superbowl. The group headed out from the church for Manchester to watch a hockey game. Then a Christian speaker addressed the youth followed by an invitation for youth to respond with a commitment to Christ. After there were games on the ice. Some of the crew went back at midnight, but most stayed. From midnight to 3 a.m. the group went to a sports center, then 3 a.m. - 6 a.m. went bowling in Nashua. A group of parents came in another car to help drive everyone home since the chaperones had been up all night. Overall it was a fabulous night. Many thanks to Nancy, David, Rocklan, and Connie for chaperoning, and to Jane, Melissa and her sister for helping with the morning drive, and especially to 10 youth who joined in this meaningful and fun event. More fun events are in the works, including a February retreat.



## **Group Making Cinnamon Christmas Ornaments**

**Advent Family Study:** The first week of the study was great fun and meaningful for all who attended. The study will continue to meet on December 1, 8, 15 and 22.

**Pastor Gwyneth in the News:** Pastor Gwyneth and her husband Jamie's profile in the Daily News!

**Sacred Dance:** The Youth sacred dance group interpreted the words of their song in worship beautifully! The group will be in worship on December 18 and Christmas Eve as well.



Giving Out Candy From Church on Halloween

**Halloween Outreach:** This was the first year giving out candy from the church on Halloween and was great fun! We had a small turnout most likely due too the weekend storm but everyone who came had a great time. Thanks to all who helped set up, serve candy and even our neighbor who brought over hot cider when it started to get chilly!

**Congratulations** to the granddaughter of Len and Nancy Bachelder, Jenifer Mattinson, on her marriage to Rob Call 11/11/11, performed by Pastor Gwyneth.

**Trustees Work on the Parsonage Chimney:** Often the people at the church work behind the scenes. There are folks who clean the bathrooms, vacuum and clean floors, clear out the pews after Sunday morning, provide rides, write cards and many others. Some of the work that might be least noticed is on the pastor's home or "parsonage" owned and cared for by the church. Much work was done during the pastoral transition, but some of the recent jobs included pumping out the septic tank and finishing some work on the chimney. Many thanks to **Lou Difiore** for heading up much of this parsonage work!



**Roger Clark**

**Refrigerator Donation:** Thank you for the amazing generous response of the donation of two new refrigerators by Roger Clark. Both are brand new from Lowes, and have been quickly put to use! The fridges were both sizes properly, allowing access to the kitchen light switch as well as providing more air space for the one in the fellowship hall. Thank you again to the Clark family for their generous gift.

**Many Thanks for all of the Thanksgiving Food Donations** for the Merrimac Senior Center Food Pantry. Donations of non-perishables can be brought in at any time and left by the front door. Please contact Nancy Bachelder for current most-needed items.

**Thank you to everyone for your faithful stewardship commitment!** We had a wonderful blessing of commitment cards on Sunday, November 20, followed by an amazing stewardship celebration lunch hosted by the Finance Committee. Thank you especially to Netta Starbird and Nancy Hartmann for heading up the kitchen.

**Lay Leadership 2012** was voted on during Charge Conference and reviewed in the November Church Council meeting. Please see information in the newsletter. There are still a few openings for ministry positions – if you are interested or would like more information, please contact Pastor Gwyneth.

**Merrimacport UMC Website and facebook** – Be sure to keep up-to-date on what’s happening through the announcements listed on the church website and calendar! All facebook posts can also be viewed. If you

are on facebook, please “like” the church page and invite your friends to as well!

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**Merimacport United Methodist Church  
LAY LEADERSHIP 2012  
Changes in Bold**

**Church Council**

- Nancy Hartmann, (Chair)
- Open (Assistant Chair)**
- Sharon Hopkins (Council Secretary)
- Len Bachelder (Treasurer)
- Netta Starbird (Financial Secretary)
- Nancy dosSantos (SPRC, Lay Member to Annual Conference)
- Maryellen Meegan (UMW)
- Marge Pearson (Trustees)
- Shirley Hartmann (Church Secretary)
- Jane Sample (Membership Secretary)
- Gail Mattos (Discipleship)**
- Emily Sample (Youth Rep., **Jr. Secretary**)

**Trustees**

- Open (Chair)** Steven Luke
- Len Bachelder Miriam Somero
- Margery Pearson Bob Palmer
- Kevin Griffin** Edward Jones, Jr. Trustee
- Karen Benson**

**Stewardship/Finance Committee**

- Open (Chair)**
- Len Bachelder (Treasurer)
- Netta Starbird (Financial Secretary)
- David Henry (Assistant Financial Secretary)**
- Sharon Hopkins (Back-up Treasurer, **Auditor**)
- Open**

**Staff Parish Relations Committee**

- Nancy dosSantos, (Chair) 2013
- Nancy Bachelder - 2012
- Sharon Hopkins - 2012
- Julie Lemieux - 2014

- Open**
- Open**

**Lay Leadership 2012 (cont-)**

**Lay Committee on Leadership (Nominations)**

Nancy dosSantos -2012

Jane Sample - 2013

**Beryl Puddester-McKenna -2014**

**Open**

**Open**

**Historian**

Len Bachelder

**Outreach**

Margery Pearson

Maryellen Meegan

Connie Haberkern

Netta Starbird

Fay Kimball

Dorothy Whiting

Ruth Pettingill

**Open**

**United Methodist Women**

Maryellen Meegan (President)

Beryl Puddester-McKenna (Vice President)

Gail Mattos (Secretary)

Ruth Pettingill (Treasurer)

**Discipleship**

Gail Mattos (Discipleship Leader)

**Open**

**Open**

**Inspiring Worship**

Joanna Sanferrare

Gail Mattos

Beryl Puddester-McKenna

Jane Sample

Julie Lemieux

Nancy dosSantos

Len Bachelder

**Communications & Technology**

Nancy Hartmann

Jane Sample

**Open**

**Youth Ministry Leadership**

**Open (Sunday School)**

**Nancy Hartmann (Youth Group)**

**Connie Haberkern (Youth Group)**

Jane Sample ( Sacred Dance)

Jan Baumgartner (Sacred Dance)

**Youth Ministry Leadership (cont-)**

**Karen Benson**

**David Beaver (Youth Group)**

**Rocklan Beaver (Youth Group)**

Melissa Luke (Sacred Dance)

Laurie Paszko (Youth Band)

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*A Christmas Tapestry*

“Christmas remind us we are not alone. We are not unrelated atoms, bouncing and ricocheting amid aliens, but are a part of something, which holds and sustains us. As we struggle with shopping lists and invitations, compounded by December’s bad weather, it is good to be reminded that there are people in our lives who are worth this aggravation, and people to whom we are worth the same. Christmas shows us the ties that bind us together, threads of love and caring, woven in the simplest and strongest way within the family.”

- Donald E. Westlake



Please help decorate the “mitten tree” at church by bringing mittens, hats, or scarves for the children of Donaghue and Sweetsir Schools here in Merrimac. They will be given to the school nurse for distribution.

