

CIRCUIT RIDER

Of Merrimacport United Methodist Church



Volume 16 Issue 2

February, 2012

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.*

Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors.

www.MerrimacportUMC.org

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Pastor's Epistle



February is the month of love. We watch TV advertisements for romantic getaways, we view online advertisements for roses, and almost every store we walk into hopes we will buy their heart-shaped balloons, chocolates and valentine cards to say "I love you" to that special someone.

However, as Christians, our challenge to love is not reserved just for one day a year, nor just for people we like, and takes a lot more sacrifice than buying a box of chocolates! **Rather than Valentine's Day love, Christians are called to sacrificial love.** Although this is a lot harder, the good news is that the source of our sacrificial love does not come from us, but from Jesus. "We love because he first loved us." 1 John 4:19

A prime example of the kind of love we are called to demonstrate is that which has been involved in moving our winter worship location. **The reason behind this decision was sacrificial love.** It is showing sacrificial love to our community so that our worship does not jeopardize safety, for instance if a fire truck should need to get through the narrowed snow-mounded streets. It is

showing sacrificial love to some of our older members for whom the icy slope walking into the church could lead to a bad fall. And it is showing sacrificial love to those who might never come to a church but just might dare to come to a community space to worship.

For some, the different space has been just as worshipful as the church building, but for others it is taking sacrificial love to learn to worship God outside the church building. Others are showing sacrificial love through setting up, tearing down and cleaning the worship space each week, which is a lot of work!

What has been amazing to me is how enthusiastically so many are pouring out this sacrificial love. Even some of our oldest members who would obviously have the hardest time with this, are supporting the change not because they love the idea but because they **have decided to love their church family more than their church building ... and that is sacrificial love.** So as your pastor, I have to say I am very proud of my church family. In a few short weeks we will be back in our wonderful building, and probably with much more appreciation of having our own worship space. But we will not be the same when we go back because **sacrificial love changes us.** I think perhaps it will mean that we will see Jesus in one another much more clearly. And I pray that our community will too. Together in Ministry for Christ, Pastor Gwyneth

Merrimacport News

Operation Snowbird Underway: We will continue worship at the Senior Center four more weeks, through the end of February, and we hope if you have not already attended you might try it out! So far we have held a commissioning of leaders service, as well as healing service, sacred dance and a drama in worship.



The versatility of the space is wonderful. Several have commented how nice it is to have coffee



fellowship right there (as well as the bathrooms!), and the cushioned chairs are fabulous.



Senior Center Setup:

Many thanks to all who helped bring items over from the church building and set up for our first week in our winter worship space! We

are able to store all of our items at the Senior Center, but it is a lot of work each week to put all this together, so many thanks to all who have stepped up to set up, tear down and clean up each week, not only the worship space but the visitor table, nursery space, and coffee fellowship area. If you would be willing to help out sometime in February, please contact Pastor Gwyneth or [sign up online](#) at (password is John316).

Many thanks to Roy Sample for tuning and repairing the piano at the Senior Center.



Youth Group: There's exciting things happening with the Youth Group as they are now beginning to delve into Scripture and what it means to live out our faith in Christ. The group is using a text called, "Essential Truth: Inviting Christ into My Reality," and as usual good food, games, mission projects and fun outings. The youth stepped up to the challenge this month to do Bible Study homework! Some of us adults would do well to follow in their example. Here's one week's worth of assignments: *Monday Isaiah 6:1-5 (Isaiah's vision), Tuesday Revelation 1:9-20, Wednesday Isaiah 6:6-7, Thursday Revelation 5:1-5, Friday Isaiah 6:8-10, Saturday Acts 8:26-29, Sunday Acts 8:30-35.* And of course there were awesome prizes for those who completed their homework! Another assignment was to find three names of God in the Bible, and to look up on YouTube three different Christian songs. Their mission this month was collecting unscented baby wipes for soldiers in Afghanistan. Many thanks to our youth leaders, Rocklan and David Beaver, Connie Haberkern and Nancy Hartmann. Youth group events are listed in the Upcoming section below.



Sacred Dance: Many thanks to Amelia Luke for leading us in worship on January 22 with her sacred dance to "Amazing Grace." Amelia did her own choreography too, and is an

amazing example of courage and faith. Thank you Amelia for sharing your gift!

New Name Tags: You've probably heard more than a few people say, "Oh, I'm so bad with names!" For newcomers it can be especially daunting to learn so many names. Even those who have been in the church for a long time might be too embarrassed to ask someone's name who they feel they should know. Most agree that nametags are a great idea ... the problem is logistics. The church has apparently tried a number of systems over the years, but people forget to take off their tags and they get lost, and they are difficult to store and organize and find each week.

So we are trying a new system, we'll call it Plan C (and if it doesn't work we can always go back for every person who attends worship, as well as blanks for guests, which will be printed each week. The greeter will assist people in finding their tags, and there will be no need for collecting them after worship.

Due to this change it would be helpful to make sure there are Greeters scheduled each week. If you would be willing to be placed on a rotation for Greeting, please contact Shirley Hartmann or Pastor Gwyneth.

And please be sure to wear your name tag each week, and let us know if there are any corrections. Thank you!

Senior Center Parking Attendants: You might not be familiar with this kind of ministry but there are several churches in the area who do this every week at their churches. For us, many of our church folks have never been to the Senior Center and it's scary to go to a new place (which is the reason for this as a visitor ministry). It helps people to see a familiar face by the entrance on Rt 110 waving people into the driveway, and another person in the parking lot with a sign and wave, and to answer any questions like "where in the world do I go in?"

As we move back into our familiar church building in March, we might consider continuing having outside greeters. Let us know what you think by contacting Pastor Gwyneth or anyone on Inspiring Worship.

Parent-Child Study met January 17 for a wonderful dinner of chili and hotdogs, followed by a study of a parable about God's Party – the concept of God's Kingdom being like a party was a new concept to most of the kids and was a fun discussion. We sang some silly songs like Father Abraham, and then played Apples to Apples. Thank you to the Beaver family for hosting our January dinner and study.

Letter from Troop 41



It is with mixed emotions to report that Boy Scout Troop 41 has decided to recharter the troop with The Holy Redeemer Church on Green Street, Merrimac. Troop 41 has been in need of a larger meeting space for the past couple years. The scouting movement is alive and well in Merrimac. There are currently 38 scouts registered with the troop. This spring an estimated additional 10 Cub Scouts are set to graduate into the troop.

With these ever expanding numbers, the troop committee made the very difficult decision to change the meeting location and charter organization back in December. The primary reason for the move is for the safety of the boys. The larger meeting area will allow us to conduct more efficient meetings and continue to provide a great program for the scouts.

On behalf of Troop 41 past and present, I would like to offer my sincere gratitude to the leaders and parishioners of the Merrimacport United Methodist Church for all the support you have given us over the years. Please feel free to call on the troop if you need any assistance. We will do our best to help out. We remain committed to providing snow shoveling duty for the church.

Thank you for everything.

Yours in Scouting.

John Romanowski Scoutmaster, Troop 41

Yankee Swap – This annual tradition was great fun, held on New Years evening.

Trustees News

The Trustees met after worship a few weeks ago and is an exciting group to be part of! We have 9 Trustees and everyone seems excited to jump on board. Here are just a few of the most recent projects. The group is meeting every other month, and next after worship on March 4.

Kitchen Cabinets! If you have not taken a tour of the newly updated church kitchen please stop by the church sometime. Marge and Kurt Pearson have been working

hard to install new cabinets, including a wonderful corner cabinet. No more storing things in the dishwasher!!! Thank you Pearsons!

New Key Box –For those who need to get into the church building we have a new key box at the front door, thanks to Miriam Somero! You simply enter in the code, take the key out and place back after unlocking the door. If you would like the code, please contact Miriam or Pastor Gwyneth. The code will be changed at least annually.

Pinchy Pews? Marge Pearson pointed out several unsafe pews (rocking pews!) as well as many whose boards are separating which cause pinch points. Although it might help keep you awake for the sermon, the Trustees would prefer worshipers be comfortable! Bob Palmer repaired several of the rocking pews. However, as the Trustees discussed options for trying to repair the pew cracks, an interesting idea arose, which was to make pew cushions. Connie Scates offered to make one pew-length cushion to try out and will make ones for the rest of the pews if folks are supportive of this.

Thermostat – Miriam Somero replaced the upstairs thermostat which was broken.

Windows: Kevin Griffin is working on window repair as there are several that won't shut properly. No sense in heating the great outdoors.

Supplies: Marge Pearson posted a list on the kitchen refrigerator for needed supplies. If you see something we need, write it on the list and Marge will purchase!

Cleaning: Karen Benson and Marge Pearson are sharing this work with cleaning bathrooms, kitchen, removing trash and recycling and vacuuming. Marge is also working with Len Bachelder to clear out the downstairs storage area.

Way to go Trustees. Thank you for all you do!

Upcoming

New Evening Bible Study: “Parables from the Backside” meeting **Mondays at 7pm (except UMWomen nights)**. All welcome! FMI please contact Gail Mattos.

Membership Inquirer's Classes Beginning January 24!

These are open to everyone. Although all classes are required for anyone who wishes to join the church as a member, it's wonderful to have current members attend one or more of the classes as mentors and co-learners. There is no pressure to join the church after the classes but after taking these classes a non-member may join at any time. Classes will include a light dinner. Pre-Registration is required so we have enough materials and can plan for dinner and space needs. Please contact Pastor Gwyneth. Here's the schedule,

Tuesdays 5:00-6:30pm

- January 24 Why I'm a Christian (basics of the Christian faith)
- January 31 Why I'm a United Methodist (differences between Methodism and other denominations, Methodist structure and history)
- February 7 Why Merrimacport UMC (church history, vision, structure ... everything you wanted to know about MUMC)
- February 14 Why Membership (membership vows and how we fulfill them through our prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness)
- February 28 What is my S.H.A.P.E.? (learn how an inventory of your Spiritual gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality and Experience can shape how you are filled spiritually and how you serve faithfully)

New Daytime Bible Study, The "I am" sayings of Jesus, every 2nd and 4th Wednesday at 10am at the church. FMI please contact Joanna Sanferrare

Youth Group Retreat in Bridgton, Maine **Feb 3-5.** The group will leave Friday at 6pm (dinner at 5:30pm) and come back Sunday afternoon. Snow date will be the following weekend. Youth Group will also meet and **Feb 19.**

Mission Opportunity: Early Response Training Feb 4 at the Cornerstone UMC, 20 Jenkins Rd., Saco, ME 04072. There is a \$25 registration fee to cover the cost of Basic ERT manual, ERT T-shirt, morning refreshments, and lunch. The Rev. John Blackadar and David Stackpole, UMCOR certified trainers, will conduct this UMCOR training. 2011 brought several disasters to New England, especially in Vermont. The New England Conference currently has about 100 ERTs with UMCOR badges. We are in urgent need several more ERTs to help survivors of future flood/winter storm damage in New Hampshire, Maine, and Vermont.

Emphasis will be put on Mud-out and debris removal tasks during this training.

February Lay Speaking Classes: Two Saturdays: Feb 4 and Feb 18 8:30 AM-5:30 PM. Lexington UMC, Lexington, MA. Basic Lay Speaking Course. Open to Adults or Youth participants! Advanced courses include "Go Preach", "From Your Heart to Theirs" (Preaching II), Worship, Lead in Small Groups. Register online at www.neumc.org/layspeaking-mbh

Upcoming Christian Concerts! Paul Coleman is playing in Portland, Maine on Feb 11 7pm, and Casting Crowns is playing in Lowell, Mass on March 15 7pm. Please fill out a connect card with your interest.

Adult Sunday School meeting next on **Feb 12 and 26** at 10am in the **Senior Center Library (upstairs)** on "**Gifts of the Spirit.**" All are welcome! The group meets every 2nd and 4th Sundays. FMI please contact Connie Haberkern.



Valentine's Cookie Bake will take place during Sunday School on **February 12.** Kids decorate cookies, and then they will be bagged up and

delivered to shut-ins. If you would like to assist with baking cookies, helping the kids decorate, making labels, bagging cookies, cleaning up or delivering to shut-ins, please contact Melissa Luke. Many hands make for light work! Thank you!

Children's Sunday School meets **Feb 12 and Feb 26** for ages 4-12 during worship every other Sunday. Kids, invite a friend!

Parent-Child Study will meet next **Feb 16** at 5:30pm for dinner, learning and fun together. Please RSVP to Pastor Gwyneth if you and your family would like to attend.

Youth Leaders meeting next on **Feb 17** at 8:30am at Nancy Hartmann's home.

Tri-State District Celebration and Stewardship Seminar Feb 19 3:00-5:30pm Eliot UMC, hosted by the UM Foundation of New England for their 20th Anniversary! Featuring Market/Investment Overview, Testimonials from churches & individuals regarding UMFNE partnerships & services, Faithful Generosity - Best Practices: Primer for promoting faithful financial

stewardship within your congregation, A joyful time of fellowship & celebration. Who should attend? Stewardship, Finance & Trustee Leadership, Local Church Lay Leadership & Pastors, Investment & Endowment Leadership. Register by February 15 800-595-4347 X106

UMWomen meets next on **Monday, Feb 27 at 7:30pm** at the home of Rocklan Beaver, 38 Hadley Rd. The topic is Hate (Psalm 137) with discussion leader, Joanna Sanferrare. Please bring as a Mission Gift, Towels and Toiletries for Maris House. All women are invited to attend. UMWomen meets every 4th Monday.

Trustees will meet next after worship **March 4**.

March Lay Speaking Classes: Three Saturdays - **March 3, 10 and 17** 1:00-6:00pm. Location: Wesley UMC, Framingham, MA. Registration Fee: \$35 Registration Deadline: February 21. Options include the Lay Speaking Basic Course focusing on how lay speakers are called to be in ministry, and two advanced courses: Lay Speakers Lead in Worship and Lay Speakers Lead Bible Study. FMI bobhout@verizon.net or contact Robert Hout, Jr. at 781-647-3117

Church Council will be meeting next on **March 20** at 7pm.

Online Training for new church leaders is now available. Pre-recorded modules are available for the Church Council, Trustees, Nominating Committees, Finance leaders, and S/PPRC. Individuals can watch at home or church groups can view the modules when they meet. Modules posted at www.gbod.org/committee_resources

Reminders

Newsletter Deadline – Please submit all calendar information and articles by **Feb 19** to Shirley Hartmann or the church office at info@merrimacportumc.org Thank you!

Pastor Gwyneth will be away during school vacation week, Feb 20-26. Should you have any pastoral care or church business needs, please contact Nancy dosSantos, Staff Parish Relations Chair and she will get you in touch with the pastor on call. Her contact information is: Email: MerrimackChild@aol.com Home: 978-346-8513, Cell: 978-994-2044, Work: 978-373-7875

Merrimacport UMC Website and facebook – Be sure to keep up-to-date on what’s happening through the announcements listed on the church website www.MerrimacportUMC.org and calendar! All facebook posts can also be viewed. If you are on facebook, please “like” the [church facebook page](#) and invite your friends to as well!

Church Calendar Online - Check out the church calendar at 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 or the pastor at pastorgwyneth@merrimacportumc.org

Prayer Chain on Email - If you have a prayer request you can submit anytime by emailing prayer@merrimacportumc.org 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 email as well.

Church Directory - We are continuously updating our church info in a new church database and a first directory has been emailed out with paper versions available at church. Several revisions have been made since the November publication so will be putting out another edition soon. If you would like a copy, please contact the church office.

Current Sermon Series: “Getting Fit for the New Year,” a series on spiritual disciplines to help us grow closer to Christ. If you would like further reading materials on any of these topics, please contact Pastor Gwyneth.

Previous topics: Meditation, Serving, Prayer, Fasting
Feb 5: Communion (Matthew 26:26-32)
Feb 12: Study (2 Timothy 3:14-17)
Feb 19: Confession (1 John 1:5-2:2)
Feb 22: Ash Wednesday Worship at 7 pm

Feb 26 is the first Sunday of Lent. Pastor David Beaver will be leading worship while Pastor Gwyneth is on vacation.

Liturgist:

- February 5 – Gail Mattos
- February 12 – Nancy dosSantos
- February 19 – Walter Paszko
- February 26 – Joanna Sanferrare

Merrimacport United Methodist Church Phone

Book - - The MUMC Phone Book has been an outreach project and resource to the Merrimac community for nearly 30 years. It has been a success because of the dedication and commitment of church volunteers. In addition to the fabulous outreach into the community this provides it has also provided our church with \$4000 annually to support our church budget and its commitments throughout the year.

Our phone book project supports us through: Church Fellowship – Christians working together to support our Church.

- Outreach to our Community – providing a Resource and Connecting businesses.
- Financial Support – Church Operations,
- Scholarships to Camp, Missions, etc.

We need commitment from a number of church members to support this project. It is a short term project from mid-February to mid-April.

Phone Book Plan of Work for Volunteers

When we obtain information from Verizon (usually in February) we need volunteers to proof read. We cross reference with the new Verizon information to ensure we update phone numbers for residents in Merrimac.

In mid/late February we send out a letter with advertising information to our current businesses that advertise giving them a chance to renew at their current rate. In addition we have a letter and information for new businesses to take advantage of this business opportunity.

In March, we need 3-4 volunteers that are willing to follow up with our past advertisers and contact other local businesses. We will provide talking points and support materials. The reality is we need individuals that would be willing to stop into the business say hi, introduce ourselves, and ask them if they have had a chance to consider the opportunity. Ideally if individuals within our church already had a personal connection with a business it is helpful but not necessary. All advertising needs to be submitted by early April so we can begin with the lay out of the book.

Once the book is printed we need a team of volunteers to come together to deliver the phone book. In the past the boy scouts have done this as a community project. It is also a great opportunity for our youth group and

other volunteers that are willing to deliver to specific locations. ***IT TAKES A VILLAGE OF CHRISTIANS TO MAKE THIS WORK - - WE NEED YOUR TIME, LOVE, SUPPORT AND PRAYERS TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN. LET'S TAKE THIS ON IN 2012 AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO GROW IN OUR CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP!***

**CORNEBEEF DINNER
SATURDAY, MARCH 17
4:30 – 6:30 P.M.**

AS USUAL WE NEED PEOPLE TO SIGN UP IN ORDER TO OFFER THIS POPULAR EVENT TO THE PUBLIC.

***PLEASE CONTACT: NETTA STARBIRD (978-346-9279)
OR MARGE PEARSON (978-609-0547)***

THE BIBLE IS...

The leftover letters will inspire you with a biblical quote from Proverbs 25:15.

Hidden Message on last answer page

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BEAUTY	HOPE	POWERFUL	TEACHING
CHALLENGE	INSIGHT	PROPHECY	TRUTH
COMFORT	INSTRUCTION	RELEVANT	WISDOM
ENRICHMENT	JOY	RELIABLE	
GUIDE	MYSTERY	SACRED	
HERITAGE	PERTINENT	SCRIPTURE	
HISTORY	POETRY	SPIRITUAL	



OPERATION SNOWBIRD!
Worshiping at the Merrimac Senior Center
100 East Main Street (Rt 110)
Join us! Sundays in February 11am

February 2012 Circuit Rider

Merrimacport United Methodist Church
www.MerrimacportUMC.org
info@merrimacportumc.org (978) 346-8818



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Return Services Requested