

CIRCUIT RIDER

Of Merrimacport United Methodist Church



Volume 15 Issue 11

November, 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

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Pastor's Epistle - -

*As you therefore have received Christ Jesus The Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, **abounding in Thanksgiving.** - - Colossians 2:6-7*

What do you think of when you hear the word, Thanksgiving? Often we think of the holiday in our nation's history, which we will be celebrating at the end of this month of November. Or perhaps we think of the many blessings for which we are thankful, such as family, friends, health, housing and many other provisions. **I am particularly feeling thankful for the wonderful ministry experience so far at Merrimacport,** and that I have been so warmly and openly received as part of the family.

Though I obviously miss everyone in Maine, it took no time at all to begin referring to Merrimacport as "our church." Everyone with no exception, has jumped right on board with using technology in worship, getting Sunday School and Youth Group started, our new website and database, and enthusiastically joining in projects such as cleaning our upstairs office and community outreach on Halloween (find out more as you continue reading the newsletter!) Many people attended the Meet & Greet gatherings at Connie's or Joanna's to hear about my faith journey, and so many of you have regularly shared words of encouragement. Even though some of the more stressful work of the church (being honest here), such as designing the stewardship program and discussing how we are moving forward with Safe Sanctuaries, we have had thoughtful, Christ-centered conversation. One member said to me the other day, "You seem like you really love what you do." It's true; for the opportunity God has given me to serve among you I feel truly thankful.

But what about when things aren't going so well? **It comes naturally to feel thankful when there are smooth roads, but what about when the pavement starts getting a bit rough?** I think back to when I spent several months with my mother in the hospital as she was dying of cancer. Yet the presence of Christ was sufficient to see me through, and I am thankful for that special time with my mom which even including praying with her to receive Christ.

As Christians, Thanksgiving is most importantly a faithful attitude that shapes the way we live, the choices we make and our outlook on the future. This attitude transcends outward circumstances since our thankfulness is founded in what Christ has done for us. Therefore, for the Christian, Thanksgiving can be celebrated in hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, soup kitchens, homeless shelters and war zones, as well as

in our warm and comfortable homes.

Thanksgiving is not about being the luckiest, the richest, or the healthiest. It is about **knowing in the depth of our being that we belong to God through our Savior Jesus Christ.** And from that depth of belonging emerges a thankful joy leading us to celebration and generosity. These are the Thanksgiving blessings I pray for you. A joyful heart "abounding with thanksgiving" in Christ, and the gift of responding to the joy we experience by giving ourselves for others.

I pray God's richest blessings on you this Thanksgiving!

Pastor Gwyneth

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Stewardship Series

Our calling as stewards of all God's gifts.
November 6-November 20 (3 weeks)

Sunday, November 6

11:00 A.M. Worship

The Great Requirement (Michah 6:1-8)

We will consider how we are using the resources we have to good stewards of God's mercy and justice.

Liturgist: Sharon Hopkins

Hosting the fellowship hour: Sharon Hopkins.

Sunday, November 13

11:00 A.M. Worship

The Great Commandment (Luke 10:25-17)

We will consider how we are using the resources we have to good stewards of God's love as we love God, neighbor and self.

Liturgist: Julie Lemieux

Hosting fellowship hour: Melissa Luke

Sunday, November 20

11:00 A.M. Worship

The Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20)

We will consider how we are using the resources we have to good stewards of God's call to attract others to Christ and to teach them the way of salvation.

Liturgist: Joanna Sanferrare

Altar flowers: In memory of my mother Eleanor Kuehner's birthday from Joanna Sanferrare.

Today is stewardship dinner following the service.

Sunday, November 27

11:00 A.M. Worship

Liturgist: Miriam Somero

Hosting fellowship hour: Laurie Paszko

Altar flowers: In memory of my mother Dora Nelson's birthday from Dorothy Whiting.

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Advent Series

The Journey: Walking the Road to Bethlehem

(in conjunction with DVD Bible Study)
November 27 - Dec. 25 (5 weeks)

Nov. 27: Mary of Nazareth (Luke 1:26-38)

Dec. 4: Joseph of Bethlehem
(Matthew 1:18-24)

Dec. 11: Mary's Visit to Elizabeth
(Luke 1:39-45)

Dec. 18: From Nazareth to Bethlehem
(Luke 2: 1-7)

Dec. 24: The Manger (Luke 2: 8-20)

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Staff Parish Relations Committee will be meeting **11/1 at 7 p.m.** and before Charge conference on **11/3 at 6 p.m.**

Charge Conference is scheduled for **11/3 at 7 p.m.** All church members are strongly encouraged to attend as we engage in conversation with our District Superintendent, Rev. Jan Davis and vote on important *matters* such as pastor's salary. Thank you to **Emily Sample** for agreeing to serve as our Conference Secretary!

Youth Group will be meeting (with dinner) on Sunday, **11/6 at 5 p.m.** **Please bring a friend.**

The New Website is Up! Check it out at www.merrimacportumc.org. We will be continuing to update information on the site so please provide any feedback to Nancy Hartmann or Pastor Gwyneth.

Safe Sanctuaries: The Staff Parish Relations Committee (SPRC) is drafting a safe sanctuaries policy to provide a safe environment for youth as well as those supervising youth. Please contact Nancy dosSantos, SPRC Chair, with any input or questions.

The Church Choir is looking for more voices to facilitate worshipful music. The choir will be adding some Saturday afternoon rehearsals as well as Sunday mornings at 10 a.m. Please contact Jane Sample if you feel the Lord's calling to bring a joyful noise to the Lord!

Lay Committee on Leadership has begun meeting, the team that discerns leadership and other positions for the coming year. Please help out our new pastor by indicating on the Connect Card where you feel called to serve in 2012. Thank you.

Nursery - If you would be willing to serve our littlest people on a rotation basis every few months, please indicate this on the Connect Card!

E-MAIL ADDRESS - -

We would like to e-mail the Circuit Rider to any of you that have e-mail addresses. It would help save postage, paper. If you have an e-mail address please send it to:

Shirleyinma6@aol.com

Contact Information To contact Pastor Gwyneth you can reach her at pastorGwyneth@merrimacportumc.org or 978-346-8989. To contact the church secretary, Shirley Hartmann, you can reach her at 978-346-7233 or our new church e-mail info@merrimacportumc.org.

Bible Studies at the Church: The daytime Bible Study will meet the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays **11/9 and 11/23** at 10 am. Adult Sunday School will meet on the 2nd and 4th Sundays **11/13 and 11/27** at 10 a.m. All our welcome.

Word of Life Superbowl registrations Due 11/1 to Connie Haberkern. Friday, **11/18 at 6 p.m.** - hockey game in Manchester, NH followed by Gospel message and all night activities from 10 p.m. - 6 a.m. **Youth 10+ are invited** to attend and some drivers will be leaving at midnight. Council voted for the church to pay half of the ticket price out the youth fund, so the fee is now \$21/person. For questions please contact any of the youth group leaders: The Beavers, Nancy Hartmann, or Connie Haberkern.

United Methodist Women will meet at the home of Gail Mattos, 71 West Main Street at **7:30 p.m. on Monday, November 28th**. Topic: Praying Our Fears (Psalm 23. Netta Starbird is discussion leader. Mission Gift: **Children's books or toys for Safe Recovery.**

**POT ROAST DINNER
NOVEMBER 12, SATURDAY
4:30 - 6:30 P.M.**

**Adult: \$10.00
Age 4-12: \$4.00
Under 4: Free**

Earlier on this same day in Merrimac, other churches are hosting holiday fairs and later we are planning to present our ever-popular dinner.

It is import that we have a sufficient number of people to commit to help present this much needed fundraiser. As most of you are aware, our maintenance and refurbishing of the parsonage this year was very costly.

A clipboard for signup is located in the church foyer or call Margery Pearson (978-609-0547.)

NEEDED - Refrigerators - The 2 refrigerators that we currently use in the church kitchen area, were generously donated to us over 9 years ago (and they were in used condition then). It is obvious that we need to replace them as soon as possible. If anyone would like to donate a full-size refrigerator in good condition or has one available for a reasonable fee, please contact Margery Pearson (978-609-0547)

New Church Directory Coming Soon! A free software has been installed on our web-site domain called Church info, which will allow us to print updated directories anytime, as well as print off labels for the newsletter or any group we create and even create email lists. Shirley will be entering data over the next few weeks and be inviting everyone to verify information to

make sure it is correct before publishing an updated directory. Thank you for your cooperation in this project!

Sunday School Planning Meeting November 8 All parents and teachers are invited to join us after worship on November 6 to discuss how the Sunday School is going. Please join us!

Help Plan Worship for 2012 We are coming to that time of year when we begin to look at sermon series themes for the coming year. Pastor Gwyneth would like to open this process to our entire church. So please consider these three questions, and contact Pastor Gwyneth with any suggestions.

. Is there a particular spiritual/Biblical topic that you wrestle with or would like to know more about?

. Are there life issues or topics that the unchurched people you know are dealing with? In other words, are there topics that would provide a good point of invitation if we offered a sermon series on them?

. Is there a specific book of the Bible or a biblical character that you would love to see me do a sermon series on?

Bishops Day on the District November 19 Bishop Pete Weaver will be with the Tri-State District at the First UMC in Portsmouth from 9:30 a.m. - Noon for worship and conversation. Childcare is provided. FMI please contact Pastor Gwyneth, and to register, please contact the district office at 978-682-7775 or tri-state@neumc.org.

Newburyport News Profile

Pastor Gwyneth and her husband, James are being interviewed by the Newburyport News so please keep an eye out for their profile!

Halloween Outreach Oct 31 As a last minute outreach ideas this year, we will be giving out candy at the church on Halloween!

Please pray that families will stop by and we can give out the best candy in town as a way of saying Jesus loves you!

Several people have already donated candy, and so far we have four of us giving out candy (we're going to dress in church robes as disciples of Christ). If you'd like to help out just let me know.

In addition to prayer, please spread the word to friends with kids to stop by next **Monday, 10/31 from 5-7 p.m., setting up around 4 p.m.**

Treating for Christ,
Gwyneth

New England School of Congregational Development Nov. 4-5

This is a fabulous opportunity for New England Methodists. If you would like to attend along with Pastor Gwyneth, please contact the church. FMI go to the School of Congregational Development on the United Methodist [New England Conference](#). Online registrations by check, credit, debit, or PayPal. On site registrations must pay by Cash or Check only (no Credit Card payments accepted on site)

Fall Back, Spring Ahead! Daylight Savings Time **ends on November 6**. Be sure to set your clocks back one hour Saturday night.

Stewardship 2011

We will be leading an exciting worship series on stewardship the first three Sundays of November. Although we won't be avoiding the topic of money, the topics of stewardship of God's justice and mercy, stewardship of God's love (The Great Commandment), and stewardship of God's call to make disciples (the Great Commission).

We hope as faithful stewards within your church family you will be present with us during those weeks. Commitment cards can be placed in the offering any Sunday in November, but on the third Sunday, November 20, the pastor will be performing a "blessing of commitment cards" and we especially hope you can be there for that. Finance has designed new commitment cards this year, and we hope they will be helpful to you as you prayerfully discern your financial commitment. Above all, please keep your church family in prayer that together we would be good stewards of all God's blessings.

Family Advent Study Beginning November 17!

Pastor Gwyneth will be leading a weekly Advent study on Thursdays 5-7 p.m. for families, and will be hosted at the Beavers home in Merrimac. The study called [The Journey, Walking the Road to Bethlehem](#) by Adam Hamilton will begin November 17, and continue meeting on December 1, 8, 15 and 22. Parents and children will participate in the study together, which will include dinner, carol singing, DVD, discussion, Christmas crafts and more. Children 8+ are invited, or younger so long as they are able to participate meaningfully. To register, please contact Pastor Gwyneth or the church office

An adult version of the Journey may also meet - possibilities include daytime or Sunday evenings beginning the week of November 20. If you would be interested in leading and/or hosting in your home, please contact Pastor Gwyneth.

Please sign-up for either study using the Connect Card in worship, or by contacting Pastor Gwyneth or the church office.

Earthquake Disaster Relief for Turkey

The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) is in conversation with

partners in Turkey, seeking to respond to emergency needs following the 7.2 magnitude earthquake there that has caused injuries, deaths, and widespread destruction. Food and medicine are most in demand after a 7.2 magnitude earthquake shook eastern Turkey on Sunday, leaving more than a thousand injured and at least 240 dead. UMCOR is in conversation with partner International Blue Crescent (IBC) and is seeking to help meet some of these and other needs, such as blankets, plastic sheets, and hygiene kits for survivors. For the full UMCOR news release, [Click Here](#). Your support for International Disaster Response, [UMCOR Advance #982450](#) is urgently needed to meet both immediate and long term needs. Please give generously.

Office Computer Donation

We have a computer donation! Thank you for the amazing response. We look forward to receiving the donation within the next month or so as we spec. out the needs of the church.

Emmaus House Mission

Many thanks to the Beavers who prepared the Emmaus House meal in October for the wonderful church mission to families in this shelter. If you would be able to prepare a meal, available dates include the first Thursday of November, December, January, February and March. The church can reimburse you for the expense if you are unable to donate the cost of the meal. Please contact Gail Mattos to sign up.

Craft Tables

We have set up craft tables for Elementary School age children to try during worship after the children's message on weeks when there is no Sunday School. If you any craft ideas, especially that would fit the message that day, please contact Pastor Gwyneth.

Administrative Meeting Schedules

We are currently trying to consolidate our administrative meeting and minimize the number of times church leaders are out weekday evenings. Therefore, the majority of administrative meetings will be scheduled on Tuesday nights as well as occasional Sundays after worship. So far the following groups have agreed on a schedule. Staff Parish Relations Committee will be meeting the 1st Tuesday, Worship will meet on the 2nd Tuesday, and Church Council on the 3rd Tuesday. In addition, some committees will meet every 2-3 months instead of every month, and use email or phone to complete projects between meetings.

Administration of the church is important as these committees serve as the support structure for all the ministry that happens in this church. However, administering the work of the church should never be burdensome. If you have further ideas on structuring our administration to increase our efficiency and best further the work of Christ please let us know!



***ARTICLES FOR THE DECEMBER
CIRCUIT RIDER WILL BE DUE TO
THE SECRETARY ON NOVEMBER
20TH.***

THANK YOU!

Pumpkin Decorating Party



The church pumpkin decorating party was great fun for all ages and we had a great turn out. Older youth carved pumpkins, others painted and glued decorations. Most decorating was just plain silly but a few pumpkins displayed uplifting symbols such as the Methodist cross and flame. Many thanks to Marge P. for organizing this event. View more photos on the [Pumpkin Decorating Album](#)



Office Cleanup - You might remember what a disaster the upstairs office had become. Thanks to many hard workers who stayed after worship one Sunday, the whole office is cleared out! Marge Pearson also painted, and we moved up a filing cabinet and are slowly re-locating old choir music to store downstairs. The copier, printer and fax machine all fit in the office, and have a big desk to work on from downstairs. Please peak in the office to see the results of your hard work. You can view pictures on the [Office Cleanup Album](#).

Also many thanks to Marge for framing and hanging some beautiful artwork around the Bigelow Room off the sanctuary. The painting of the child looking up at Jesus in the new children's craft area there is especially meaningful. Thank you again to everyone. What a wonderful team!

Youth Group Breakfast



The new youth group got off to a fabulous start with a pancake breakfast put on by the Beavers and activities led by David B and Nancy H. This group played some games that provided some discussion around trust, partnership, etc., shared in a devotion led by David, and discussed ideas such as what should a youth group do, what do you want to learn at youth group, what is important to you, and what community based mission could youth participate. Some of the youth comments included assisting in a soup kitchen, conducting a food drive, performing music for a charity, heading up relief donations for a disaster, leading worship at a nursing home, leading worship at church, 30 hour famine., Wanakee retreat, fun events, such as laser tag or fishing, learning how to apply faith to everyday life, and learning to share about Jesus with others. What is important to youth? A few they listed include God, family, Global outreach/awareness, the environment friends/co-workers/teammates, pets, dance, teachers.

Many thanks to the youth group leaders and all the youth who came out to be part of this awesome new group! You can view pictures on the [Youth Group Breakfast Album](#)