

Aldersgate Advocate



But we have this
treasure in jars of
clay to show that
this all-surpassing
power is from God
and not from us.

2 Corinthians 4:7

Beside the Alabaster Jar

August, 2006

Dear friends,

As a pastor, I have had the honor, on several occasions, to be invited into family settings when loved ones are passing from this life. Each time, I am aware of God's presence and the thinness of these times. The separation between life and death is very tenuous.

Last week, as Sarah's mother, I was invited into another very thin time as I witnessed the birth of my grandson, Jefferey Philip. The birth was mysterious and wonderful while at the same time being hard work, especially for Sarah. Bravo, Sarah!

Once again I was in a thin time. God was indeed present as we welcomed Jefferey into this new life and I thought of how death is also a birthing into a new life. The wonder that I have seen as Jefferey looks about his new world, fascinated with all of the different lights and colors, causes me to marvel as well. What a gift of life we have been given.

We are also living through thin times, as violence engulfs places around the world, neighborhoods in our own cities, and even some families. Because of God's love for all people, I know deep within my being that God is looking for more from us. God is right here beside us, leading us to ways of resolving conflict that do not involve violence.

To live in thin times, means to understand the thin veil between life and death and to be willing to give of self that others might live. Jefferey's birth and his awe with this creation has reminded me of God's gift to each one of us. May we honor that gift by sharing God's selfless love with our enemies as well as our friends and neighbors.

Please join with me in prayer as we lift our unified voices to God for help in walking in ways that lead to peace and reconciliation. Through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we have been reconciled to God. If we are reconciled to God, then how can we not but seek reconciliation in our own lives.

Peace be with you,
Peace be among you,

Peace be before you,

Pastor Sharon

Worship News

As we move into the fall, we will begin to serve Holy Communion every week. After the last General Conference in 2004, United Methodist churches have been asked to consider serving communion more often. While preparing for a preaching series on the Bread of Life, Pastor Sharon brought this recommendation to the attention of our Church Council, who decided to begin to serve communion weekly at the 8:30 service. It is hoped that this service will continue to be a little more reflective and traditional as we move to this Service of Word and Table.

On September 3rd, the focus of the service will be James 1:17-27 and Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23. These lessons remind us of the promise that God would lay the ways of God upon our hearts. Please join us for this is our last union service at 9:30 am as we finish out the summer months.

Sunday, Sept. 10, 2006 is rally day and Bible Sunday. As a new grandparent, Pastor Sharon was interested to read on the General Board of Discipleship Website (umcworship.org) that September 10th is also Grandparents Sunday. The scriptures for the day are James 2:1-17 and Mark 7:24-37. Remember all are welcome as we come together to worship God!

We continue to read for the gospel of Mark on Sunday, Sept. 17th. The lesson 8:27-38 repeats Jesus' words encourages us to loose our lives for Jesus sake. What does it mean to you to be lost in Jesus; is it even possible to be lost in Jesus?

The lectionary for Sunday, September 24th includes James 3:13-4:3 which reminds us to lift to God all of our needs. The gospel lesson, Mark 9:30-37, ends with the example of a child and reminds us that when we welcome children in Jesus' name, we also welcome him.

Sunday, Oct. 1st is World Wide Communion Sunday. In these times of tension around the world, may we focus our thoughts this day on the world community. The assigned lessons for this day include the story of Esther and Mark 9:38-41 and Jesus' identification with those who do good in his name. Reading them brings to mind the phrase "for a time such as this."

Your worship planning team continues to meet on Thursday afternoons, if any would like to join us this year. We plan and create as we explore scripture together. Please speak to Pastor Sharon is you are interested in participating.

Scripture Readings - September



September 3

Psalm 45:1-2, 6-9
Song of Solomon 2:8-13
James 1:17-27
Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

September 24

Psalm 1
Proverbs 31:10-31
James 3:13-4:3, 7-8a
Mark 9:30-37

September 10

Psalm 125
Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23
James 2:1-10 (11-13), 14-17
Mark 7:24-37

September 17

Psalm 19
Proverbs 1:20-33
James 3:1-12
Mark 10:46-52

Aldersgate's Prayer Ministry

As a community of faith, Aldersgate are many opportunities for you to the Prayer Gathering on Tuesday at home. Please continue to pray for also ask that you pray for children isolated in the mid-east conflict - lacking the basic necessities of life and who live with fear about their daily existence. Continue to keep our college students beginning or returning to college in your prayers.



believes strongly in the power of prayer. There participate in a group prayer ministry such as evenings at 6:30 p.m. at Aldersgate or Nancy Goodick, Jan and Al, Kelly and Jack. We throughout the world who are caught and

isolated in the mid-east conflict - lacking the basic necessities of life and who live with fear about their daily existence. Continue to keep our college students beginning or returning to college in your prayers.

If you have a prayer request, please notify Debbie. She will alert AUMC's faithful prayer partners! We continue to hold all the people you have requested in prayer in the Sunday morning bulletin. Please update Pastor Sharon or the Church Office aware of any additions, changes, and celebrations of recovery or news you wish to share.

My House Will Be a House of Prayer

Is Aldersgate a House of Prayer? We sure hope so, and we also hope that you'll consider joining us on Tuesday evenings at 6:30 for our weekly prayer gathering. There's no pressure to pray out loud; in fact, some weeks we've spent the better part of 45 minutes in silent prayer and it has been a powerful experience. There are other weeks when the 45 minutes seems barely long enough to speak all the requests that are on our hearts.

This is a really rewarding time spent in the presence of God Who Hears what is on our lips and in our hearts. Please join us! For more information, call the Church Office.

Debbie

Early Bird Bible Study

Early Bird Bible Study begins on Tuesday, September 19. The theme for the coming year is "Being a Faith Community." Plan to rise early and participate in this Bible study as together we explore and

gain understanding of what it is to be a community of faith. Classes are held on Tuesday mornings in the Concord Room from 6 – 6:45 a.m. All are invited!
Charles



If you enjoy knitting or would like to learn, you are invited to join our **Prayer Shawl Ministry**. This group of people of all ages (including several children) meets on Thursday evening from 7 – 8:30 p.m. in the Concord Room. Please join us whenever you would like to knit, sing, and pray!

Aldersgate is a family of faith ...



Congratulations to Erica and Stephen who welcomed Tyler Christopher on May 11.

Our congratulations to Michael and Mary, celebrating the arrival of their daughter, Erin Muriel, on June 8.

Congratulations to Audrey and Charles, who welcomed Michael Charles.

Pam and John welcomed Michael Thomas.

Congratulations to Lisa and Jeffrey who celebrate the arrival of their son, Jonathan Kale, on August 1.

Congratulations to Sarah and Tom who with Rev. Sharon and Richard, celebrate the arrival of Jefferey Philip on August 12.

We were so happy to learn of the adoption of Justi this summer! Congratulations to Beth and Sonia!

We wish you all God's blessing as you celebrate these special times in your lives!

It is with Gratitude...

My mom, Norma and I would like to thank you for making the loss of my dad a little easier to bear with your thoughts, kind words, prayers, visits and food. This was such a difficult time and I am blessed to have such a caring church family. Thank you, too, for helping with St. Paul's Feeding Ministry on such short notice. Much love, Deb and Family

To our Aldersgate Family,

Thank you all so much for your thoughts and prayers of comfort during this very difficult time in our lives. Bruce and I appreciate all that you are. We are so truly blessed with very generous and caring friends. From our family to yours, thank you.

In gratitude, Bruce, Maria and Anthony

From Romans 12:13 (NIV)

“Share with God’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.”

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts to all who shared their homes and hearts with Golden Gates, the performing group from St. Petersburg, Russia. Particular thanks to the families who hosted the kids, cooked for the dinner, and made them feel so welcome. Thanks to the families for all they did and to Jack for his great photographs. They will provide great memories over the years. About \$700 was raised to support the costs of the group’s travels and Russian orphanages. Anything we can do brings such joy into these children’s lives. If you would like to learn more about the work done by Vitaly and his group, go to www.russianfolk.com and follow the link for “Music in Mission.” It is our honor and privilege to know all of you and to have such a warm and kind church home.

Donna, Mike, Alexei, and Sergei

Called out by Jesus Christ to serve our congregation, community ...

A Message from Your Trustees About Capital Campaign Projects

In the March-April issue of the Advocate, Victor, Chairperson of the Capital Campaign stated:

"In 6 months from now, Aldersgate will be getting our first monies from the conference. The Trustees, working with the Church Council, will now consider all the opportunities and needs we have, and over the coming months put a plan together for how to best use these wonderful gifts you have pledged. As a reminder, they will be considering an enclosed stairwell and elevator at the back entry. They will also be considering repair of the floors in fellowship hall and the front entry, in addition to one more meeting classroom in fellowship hall, a new stove and some kitchen renovations."

I have been asked by the Church Council to provide a status on what actions the Trustees have taken with respect to planning for these projects. We do not yet have our first disbursement of the funds collected by the Conference, so we are not sure of exactly how much that will be. However, we have begun planning actions for these projects as follows:

Floor: The Trustees have contacted two different General Contractors to get estimates for repair of the floor and replacement of the tiles in both the hallway and fellowship hall. Both contractors have had a chance to inspect the floor and underlying structure, and were provided copies of the original architect's drawings from the 1990 building project. During this process some questions were raised regarding the structure of the floor. It appears to have too much flex and that is one reason the tiles are cracking. Because the church is considered a commercial building, changes to the structure would require a formal architectural process. As a consequence, a structural engineer was consulted and has also had a chance to inspect the flooring and substructure. If we want a full structural analysis then that will be an additional cost of several thousand dollars. One contractor has provided a proposal based on his inspection of the building and the drawings we provided. We will be contacting the other contractor to get his views. This is a project in process, the completion of which will depend to some extent on the cash flow back from Conference.

Enclosed back entry stairwell and lift: The architects that surveyed the church in Nov 05 have proposed to provide three design alternatives of a new "Daily Entrance with Elevator" and then provide detailed schematics and specifications of a chosen design for \$12,000. The Trustees feel that the proposal is more ambitious, and hence more expensive, than required. However, until we are fairly certain of the cash flow of contributions back from the Conference, negotiations with the architects are on hold due to the potential costs involved.

Kitchen: The Trustees currently plan to form a "Kitchen subcommittee" of interested members who are experienced users of the kitchen to assist in developing requirements for the kitchen renovation and to review the design prior to finalization. If you are interested in being a member or providing input to this subcommittee, please let me know either in person, by phone (978-256-9400).

Classroom in Fellowship Hall: During the visit by the architects last year, it was suggested that another classroom could be created by taking the current storage room adjacent to the Concord Room and extending it out into fellowship hall for a distance. A smaller closet just for the table and chair racks would be created at the opposite end of the hall. The analysis of the architects was that partitioning the hall would be prohibitively expensive because of the irregular shape of the ceiling. Hence we will probably proceed with the expansion of the storage room but no work has yet been done on this project.

As perhaps you can tell, we have experienced some "sticker shock" over the prices of professional architect and engineering services. However, the Trustees are committed to getting the maximum improvement to Aldersgate for every dollar of your generous contributions.

If you have any questions about the contents of this article, please feel free to ask.

Dan, Chairperson, Board of Trustees

The Men of Aldersgate United Methodist Ch_ _ ch. What's Missing?

The men of Aldersgate are on the move! Early in August a small group of the Aldersgate men met for breakfast, fellowship and a planning session. An initial project was agreed upon and plans for completing are well underway. Help will be needed for this and other projects. The group invites other men in the congregation to join them as we seek to utilize our skills and talents to accomplish projects at the church and in the community. The next meeting will be announced soon. Contact any of the men on the photo to get more information about the group and the upcoming project. We need your skills and strength.

Charles

Faire Alert! Faire Alert!

In preparation for the 2006 Faire Festivities (December 1-2), we welcome any assistance gathering the following items and donations.



- Glass jars with corks or glass toppers
- Small jars or decorative containers
- Holiday craft ideas or kits
- Plastic containers for center pieces

We need folks to spray gold and silver on baskets!

We have tons of pine cones that need to be glued and "adorned" with glitter.

Betty and Carmen will teach you to wire bows – give either a call and offer your help!

Carmen's number is 978.256-9400.

If you grow herbs and could donate some of your harvest, please contact Gigi at 978.256-9400.

For information on new projects and how to help, please contact Bonnie at 978.256.9400!

The planning meeting workshop dates are:

September 11 at 7 p.m.

October 2 at 7 p.m.

November 6 at 7 p.m.

Get these dates down and join in on the exciting plans for our faire!

VNA HOSPICE OF GREATER LOWELL

A Training Program for Hospice Volunteers will begin on Wednesday, September 27th – November 15th from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. If you have a caring and compassionate heart and can give 2-4 hours per week, please contact Cathie Milliken, Coordinator of Volunteer Services, 978.459.9343, VM #2725.

and the world through loving, witnessing...

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. –Matthew 5:6

A TALE OF TWO ROBINS

Those last few minutes before leaving the house for work can be a little rushed, but on that bright, late June morning, I was stopped by the insistent chirping of what I thought was a very large bird. "Big Bird" turned out to be a young, and very hungry, robin, one of two babies out for breakfast with mom. The quieter of the two was never more than a hop or two behind its mother in my garden, but the noisy little guy stood by himself in some freshly weeded dirt.

Momma robin was plucking juicy bugs from the ground and feeding her babies, but the little one that followed her closely got the lion's share. Apparently, the approach of "I'll just stay here making noise till mom notices me" wasn't working quite as well. But, being a good bird-mom, the elder robin did not forget the second baby, and the increasing volume of the chirps eventually brought results.

It didn't take long for me to make the connection that God placed before me that sunny morning. Sitting back and waiting for God to "feed me" was not nearly as effective as running after Him, staying in His presence, seeking all He has to teach me and show me. Too many times I am the one doing things on my own. That old adage, "God helps those who help themselves," works up to a point. But why should I be struggling at the edge of His glorious garden when I could be in the midst of it, by His side every moment of every day?

"He who comes to me will never go hungry," Jesus said, "and he who believes in me will never be thirsty." (John 6:35) We are blessed to have the freedom to assemble in worship, to own Bibles, to pray, to speak His Name in public. And yet, as a people, we are more driven by all the world has to offer. We are satisfied by a "snack" – the reading of His Word in church on Sundays, when we could be feasting on a banquet every day, savoring God's Word to us and delighting in His presence.

Are you still waiting for God to come after you? He already has! Jesus came that we might have life, and have it abundantly! That second, noisy little robin eventually gave up his freedom to sit in his own little corner of the garden and ran after mom.

May each of us run to Him who is waiting to provide us with all we need, and more than we could ever hope for.

Blessed Heavenly Father, You have given us so much. We sometimes put more value in the blessings than we do in the "Bless-er." May our pray ever be, More of You Lord, more of You. May You be our first thought on waking and our last thought upon lying down to sleep. And all the hours in between, may our hearts and minds be drawn to You. Jesus promised to be with us always, but we sometimes never even notice. Hear our prayer, Lord, and feed us with Your presence and Your Word.

In His Name, Amen.

Debbie

Humor Corner

My young grandson called the other day to wish me Happy Birthday. He asked me how old I was, and I told him, "62." He was quiet for a moment and then he asked, "Did you start at 1?"

Submitted by Carole

News from Outreach Ministry



We are collecting material aid for our sister church, Sierra Maestra, with a focus on school supplies. Pens, pencils, sharpeners, erasers, paper, pads and notebooks are all welcome. There is a box in the hallway in the church for the supplies. **Also** please remember that it costs us \$15 per box to ship the supplies. Donations in support of the Covenant can be marked "Nicaragua." Any questions, please contact Bob (978.256.9400).

On Christian Hospitality

"Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms." 1 Peter 4:9-10

Hospitality is a skill that we don't often practice in today's world with both parents working, soccer schedules, graduate classes, and all the other things we have to fit into our lives. When we practice hospitality, without the expectation of something in return, we share with others the love that God has shared with us. After all, as fallen people we had all become strangers to God, but at the Last Supper, our Lord invited us back to the table and made us members of His family.

In "Bowling Alone", a book and a website (www.bowlingalone.com) on the increasing social isolation in America, Dr. Robert Putnam points out that attending club meetings has decreased 58% in the past 25 years. During that time families eat together 33% less often than they used to, and we have friends over 48% less frequently. All of this has been happening while the rates of depression have skyrocketed in not only our culture but in most industrialized nations. God made us social creatures

And we are intended to be in community and in covenant with each other. We don't function at our best, and we don't fulfill God's plan for us when we live in isolation.

One possible reason why we don't practice hospitality very often is that the media has set standards for us that we have trouble meeting. Women's magazines talk about entertaining and that is not the same thing as hospitality. Entertaining is about a large house and perfect table settings. When we practice hospitality, we concentrate on meeting the needs of others and we don't pretend to have more or be more than we really are.

Of the two, I find hospitality to be more difficult because it requires more of me. Practicing hospitality is an act of service and the role of servant is hard for me and, I imagine, for most of us. I

don't know about the rest of the families who hosted our Russian visitors in August, but I sometimes chaffed in the role when their needs and wants were more than I had planned on doing. I need to work a bit harder on that not grumbling part. Thank you to all of you who stretched yourself and shared yourself with our Russian visitors in August.

Donna

Request from our "Stamp Lady"

Charlotte appreciates all the stamps our Aldersgate Church family has been putting in her box in the hallway outside the church office. She would like to make a request that you leave at least 1 inch around the stamp so that she can forward them on to the Alliance Women's Stamp Ministry in Fort Myers, Florida. Keep up the good work in helping with this important project that funds the purchase of Sunday School supplies for missionary work in Central and South America.

Thank you, Charlotte for leading this effort here at Aldersgate!

Rolling Ridge - A Sacred and Beautiful Space Set Apart for Rest and Renewal Discovery and Community

Upcoming Opportunities

September 14 *Understanding Your Prayer Style*

Retreat Leader: Gail Arpin-Finck

Prayer is a wholly personal experience. The way in which we pray has everything to do with our individual personality. This experiential, interactive workshop will help you explore more deeply your own spirituality, discover your natural prayer style and effective techniques for communicating Spirit with others. Ideal for ministers, spiritual directors, formational spirituality leaders or anyone on the spiritual path. Includes group presentation, personal sharing, meditation and quiet time. Bring your journal! Contact Rolling Ridge for more information at 978.682.8815.

On November 8-10, Bonnie will lead a retreat on *Conflict as a Ministry Tool*. Bonnie teaches groups and individuals to confront conflict constructively and direct energy toward growth, reconciliation and healing. Bonnie believes the restoration of our relationship with each other is critical to our relationship with God. Bonnie is a member of Aldersgate and also serves as a Parish Consultant for the New England Conference.

Contact Rolling Ridge at www.rollingridge.org

New Job Opportunity

Position: Director of Development

New England Deaconess Association

Founded by Methodists in 1889, the Deaconess Abundant Life Communities is one of the longest-enduring, not-for-profit providers of quality residential and health-care services for older adults in Massachusetts today. In each of our communities, we strive to nurture the mind, body, and spirit in an environment of dignity and respect for the lifelong contributions of our residents.

We are currently seeking a Director of Development. The Director is responsible to plan, develop, and maintain a comprehensive private and public-sector, fund-raising program to enhance our mission and vision. The Director will work closely with board members, senior staff and volunteers to develop strategic plans and goals for expansion of our program.

We are looking for someone who is highly organized, has the ability to work independently as well as part of a team, take initiative, and has excellent written and oral skills and strong organizational skills, be detail oriented and able to balance multiple priorities. Qualifications include a bachelor's degree, connected experience, and the ability to work with senior-level people. Experience in the not-for-profit arena is a plus.

If you are interested, please forward your resume to:

Nancy Marzilli, Human Resources Director

Deaconess Abundant Life Communities Fax: (978-318-9599

80 Deaconess Road, Concord, MA 01742 Tel: (978)369-5151, Ext. 368

School of Christian Mission - September 14-16, Camp Aldersgate

North Scituate, RI

Registrar: Cirginia Ahart 413.527.4828

The Study Leader for *Shalom – Peace – Salaam* is Bonnie Marden. This is an opportunity to study and worship together in a casual setting with the lakeside and woodland paths nearby – all contributing to a special and sacred area. Housing includes doubles and quads, with upper bunks used only with permission. There are other housing options nearby if you choose not to stay at the camp.

Contact Bonnie if you have any questions about this opportunity.

AND TEACHING GOD'S WORD.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH CLASSES AND SMALL GROUPS

Jesus tells us in Matthew 18:20: "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." This summer we continued a time for adults to gather and study the Word of God after the worship service. Our Lord helped us open our eyes and ears to how we need to incorporate his teachings into our daily lives. The Adult Study group is continuing to be open to the presence of the Lord in our planning for the fall program. We will be offering 2 different study groups on Sunday morning and will also have other opportunities for you to participate in. There will be an Adult Study brochure distributed in September.

Early Bird Class

Tuesdays: 6 – 6:45 a.m. Concord Room

Beginning September 19th

Leader: Charles

The theme for the coming year is "Being a Faith Community". Plan to rise early and participate in this Bible study as together we explore and gain understanding of what it is to be a community of faith.

Thursday Morning

Thursdays: 10:00 a.m. Concord Room

Beginning September 22nd

Leader: Pastor Sharon

This class is a low key community study that acts as much as a support group as it does a Bible study. We will once again study a book from the Bible using the Interpretations study guide book.

Prayer Gathering

Tuesdays: 6:30 – 7:15 p.m. Concord Room

Leaders: Debbie, Carol

My House Will Be A House of Prayer

Is Aldersgate a house of prayer? We sure hope so, and we also hope that you'll consider on Tuesday evenings at 6:30 for our weekly prayer gathering. There's no pressure to pray out loud; some weeks we've spent the better part of 45 minutes in silent prayer, and it has been a powerful experience. There are other weeks when the 45 minutes seems barely long enough to speak all the requests that are on our hearts. This is a really rewarding time spent in the presence of God Who Hears what is on our lips and in our hearts. Please join us! For more information, call the church office.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Thursdays: 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. Concord Room

Leader: Cheryl

If you like to knit, or would like to learn how to knit, please join us on Thursday evening in the Concord Room to knit Prayer Shawls. If you have someone in mind who would love a Prayer Shawl as a reminder of God's love that surrounds and gives comfort, please let us know.

The Holy Mystery

Sunday Mornings

September 17th for 6 – 8 weeks

Concord Room

Leaders: Pastor Sharon & Walt

9:35 – 10:35 a.m.

All are welcome to learn more about the official United Methodist position on Holy Communion.

Begin at the Beginning - A New Study in Genesis

Beginning on Sunday, September 17th – time TBD

Leaders: Debbie & others

There's something new this year at Aldersgate – a Bible study that will continue as long as necessary!

Would you like to really dig in to Scripture? To linger on difficult passages and ask the hard questions? This is your chance. We'll start at "In the beginning..." and journey through Genesis, encountering huge lives lived in faith for a great and glorious God.

This study will be structured to fit the needs and desires of the class. We'll spend as much time as we need to mine the riches of God's Word. Will everyone make every class? Of course not, but that's okay. We'll take notes and provide extra materials for all who want them. And who knows... when we've made it to Genesis 50:26, we may keep right on going through Exodus!

If this has piqued your interest, please contact Debbie

CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Bethlehem Village: Where a Savior Is Born

Forty three children and youth, and twenty nine adults traveled back in time to Bethlehem Village to take part in the excitement leading up to the birth of Jesus. We had 4 tribes: Levi, Reuben, Issachar, and Naphtali camped out front of the church in tents. We all learned the customs and practices of living in a Jewish Tribe and the events that led up to the birth of Jesus. Our tribes were multi-aged, and the older children looked after the younger children. Each tribe had the opportunity to become a "family". All the tribes traveled daily to visit the Census Taker, and were surprised on the first day when they were asked to sign the census and pay taxes! Our Fellowship Hall was transformed into a Marketplace where we learned the trades of cloth dying, bread making, grinding grain, clay toys, perfume, coins, beads, mosaics, and musical instruments. We learned upbeat songs during music time, played some instruments and enjoyed playing some fun games. Everyone enjoyed the opportunity of either playing the Shofar, or listening to the Shofar. The children seemed to understand how to play the horned instrument better than the adults!

We decided our mission project was to support the schools connected to our sister church in Nicaragua. We collected construction paper, pencils, markers, crayons, and other school supplies. We decided to support these schools because the cost of school supplies in Nicaragua is very expensive and children cannot attend school without them. We received many donations – Thank You!

This experience was a great success (for young and old), due to the dedicated adults and youth who shared their time and talents, but more importantly to the great enthusiasm of the children. Several children were disappointed to see this experience end on Friday. We concluded our program on Friday when the children, youth and adults sang songs they learned, shared their experiences, and enjoyed pizza and a birthday cake for Jesus. We will be offering Vacation Bible School again next year, watch for the information and dates in the future.

SUMMER BOOK & CRAFT TIME

This summer we offered a new opportunity for the children during worship time. After the theme conversation, the children were dismissed and traveled downstairs to listen to a special book and make craft. The children really enjoyed this more relaxed time and loved listening to the stories and trying some very creative art projects. We will offer this program again next year. Thank you to the following for helping: Jim, Peter & Debbie, Christine, Lee, Jill, Laura, and David.

RALLY DAY - SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2006

WORSHIP SERVICES: 8:30 & 10:45 A.M CHURCH SCHOOL REGISTRATION: 9:15 A.M.

CHURCH SCHOOL FOR ALL AGES: 9:30 A.M. LUNCHEON/BARBECUE: 12:00 NOON

Our church school program will begin on September 10th for all ages. Please bring your child/ren registration form with you that is attached to this Advocate. Please consider the different ways you

can help during the year. We will celebrate this special day with a barbecue/potluck lunch after the 10:45 a.m. service. Please bring a side dish to share, we will supply the hot dogs and hamburgers.

BIBLE PRESENTATION

On Sunday, September 10th, during the 10:45 a.m. service, we will present our 3rd grade children a special Bible. This is an important occasion for these children, and as their church family we need to support them. Each 3rd grade child and their family will receive a letter in the mail explaining what will happen on this Sunday.

CONFIRMATION CLASS

Pastor Sharon and Cheryl will be leading a confirmation class for any youth in grade 7 or higher beginning in January. This class will help you learn more about taking the next step in your faith journey. There will be an informational luncheon in November for anyone interested in participating in this class or being a mentor. More information about this opportunity will be in the next Advocate.

WORSHIP ARTS

Children, ages 4 through 5th grade are invited to join our worship arts team this fall! We will begin this program on Tuesday, September 19th from 4 – 5:30 p.m. All children are welcome to participate; you do not have to be a member of the church. Cheryl Ortolf will also pick your child up after school at the South Row School. Please talk to her ahead of time so you can make the proper arrangements with the school.

We are very excited to welcome back Becky, our Children's Music Director. Rebecca Adams worked with us again during Vacation Bible School this summer and had the opportunity to get to meet some of the children. She once again has many creative and fun ideas for the music portion of this program. We will divide the group by age; the younger group will comprise of ages 4 to 7, the older group will be ages 8 to 11. If you have any questions, please see Cheryl.

JUNIOR CHOIR BEGINS:

Tuesdays: Beginning on September 19th from 5:30 – 6:30 p.m.

All youth in grades 4 – 8 are welcome to join us in this exciting choir! Our Children's Music Director, Rebecca, will be leading us in singing, learning to play some instruments, and having fun! Hope to see you on Tuesday afternoons.

JUNIOR BELLS BEGINS:

Thursdays: Beginning on September 21st from 6:30 – 7:15 p.m.

All children and youth in grade 3 or higher are welcome to join us as we have fun learning how to play bells. You do not have to have any experience to join us. If you have any questions, please see Becky.

JUNIOR YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

We are entering our 2nd year of our newly created and exciting fellowship time for youth in grades 4-6. We met monthly last year and will meet twice a month beginning in the fall. We are finalizing plans for this upcoming year and encourage parents and youth to share their ideas and visions for this Christian fellowship group. All young youth in grades 4 – 6 are welcome to join us. Friends are always welcome!

Our first meeting for the fall will be on Friday, September 29th from 6 – 9 p.m. We will have pizza and go cosmic bowling. *A Junior youth newsletter will be mailed out in September with more details about this program.*

SENIOR YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

We are a fun group of spiritually focused youth who celebrate Christ's presence among us by engaging in community and group activities, church participation and mission projects.

All youth in grades 7 – 12 are welcome to join us at any time; you do not have to be a member of the SENIOR youth group. There is no special sign-up sheet; you just come when you can. We ALWAYS welcome friends, or anyone else that happens to be with you. You are an important part of this group!

The following are some activities for September, you will also receive a personal letter outlining our fall program. We hope you can join us!

LOCK-IN

Friday, September 15th 7:00 p.m. – Saturday: noon

Come join us as we celebrate the beginning of a new season of opportunities for community and group activities, church participation and mission projects. Friends are always welcome. We will be going miniature golfing at Kimball's, please bring \$10.00 to cover the cost.

ST. PAUL'S FEEDING PROGRAM

Wednesday, September 20th: 3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Please join us as we serve our community by preparing and serving a meal at the Elliot Street Church in Lowell. We will also need some adult helpers. If you cannot make it to help out at the location, you can prepare some food for us to take. I will let you know the options at our fellowship time on Sunday, September 15th.