



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

# Aldersgate Advocate

Beside the Alabaster Jar

April 25, 2008

Dear friends,

While vacationing with my family in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, I had several opportunities to walk the beach, enjoy the sea, gather shells, and marvel at the wonder of God's creation and this gift to us, the stewards of creation.

We wonder about life on other planets, imagine through science fiction that we are not alone, but one scientist has written about the seven conditions necessary for life and calculated the likelihood of life on another planet. Much to my surprise he has speculated that it is highly unlikely that intelligent life exists in another part of the galaxy or cosmos. Perhaps our speculating of life on other planets is a sign of our unwillingness to recognize how unique is this experience of human life.

Seeing the beach through the eyes of my grandson, Jefferey, who is one and a half, may have enhanced my understanding of the true glory of this creation. As with most children at first he was frightened by the seeking nature of the waves, running away because they were coming to get him. Once he got used to that idea, he delighted in the repetitive nature of standing and letting his feet be surrounded by water and then free from the water. Yet as he moved farther out and the waves began to cover his knees and thighs he always wanted to be holding a parent's or a grandparent's hand for stability.

It occurs to me that his experience is a great metaphor (although somewhat mixed) for our lives with God who is always seeking and sometimes surrounding, yet willing to hold our hand when we are surrounded. I remember standing alone on the beach one early morning, water waving back and forth up to my ankles, then calves, communing with God. I am grateful that God comes seeking us, over and over. I am grateful that God holds us and steadies us when in times of uncertainty. I am grateful for this remarkable creation that gives glory to God.

Jim Wallace, in his book *The Great Awakening* writes "If Psalm 148 suggests that every part of the creation offers praise to the Creator, our mindless destruction of so many species of plant and animal life has served to actually diminish the worship and praise that God now receives ..." <sup>1</sup> Wallace refers to Brian McLaren, Tony Campolo, and Ched Myers as he lays out for us a new understanding of the creation story from Genesis.

In my communing with God on the beach, I was reminded of the role of harmony in the study of creation. Prior to the Renaissance, if one wanted to study how God created the universe one would study music. The medieval people believed that God sang the world into being and when the planets and spheres turn in harmony, they sing of the glory of God. At the same time, continents away from Europe, Native American people, when faced with conflict in their community, would enter a kiva (their worship space) and chant until the external harmony of the community returned.

Perhaps you've noticed that the choir during April has been singing anthems celebrating God's creation. Communal gatherings through worship and adult study offer opportunity to give praise to God and discover harmony in our lives and in the world. Please join us!

Grace and peace,

Pastor Sharon

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<sup>1</sup> Jim Wallace, *The Great Awakening*, p. 137, Harper Collins Publishers, New York, 2008.

## Worship News

What is the lectionary?

Maybe this is a new word for you, but it has been a tradition for over 60 generations. Even before the birth of Christ, God's people have ordered their lives with assigned readings of scripture for Sabbath or telling of certain stories on specific holy days.

The gospel of John indicates some of those readings within Judaism. In chapter seven we read that Jesus was at the Festival of Booths, a Jewish holy time celebrating the Hebrew people's time in the wilderness. Jesus, in his teaching at the temple, refers to Moses giving of the Law to the people during that wilderness time, an event that would have been fresh in their minds because of the focus of this festival. Scholars suggest that Jesus' teachings about living water and light are also related to the lectionary readings of his contemporary Jewish worship life.

Clearly the readings changed as the early Christian church developed. But by the time of the third or fourth century, the lectionary was clearly established. We, at Aldersgate and in many Methodist churches, use the Common Lectionary, common because it is used by Roman Catholics and a few other denominations. Each edition of our newsletter publishes the scripture assigned for each Sunday. Usually, the lessons you hear in worship are from this assigned list. On occasion, Pastor Sharon or a guest preacher selects other verses for the focus of the sermon.

As we move into May, we enter the closing Sunday's of God's story; May 4<sup>th</sup> is traditionally referred to as Ascension Sunday, the Sunday before Pentecost Sunday. In the gospels of John, chapter 14, as he is talking about his death, Jesus promises a helper, one who will advocate for us, the Holy Spirit. Ascension Sunday acknowledges Jesus' departure after his resurrection and it precedes the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. On that day, Pastor Sharon plans to focus her sermon on Ephesians 1:15-23.

Pentecost Sunday is very early this year and coincides with the secular celebration of Mother's Day. As the worship planning team began their work, they were aware as to how unusual this was and yet were surprised to learn the unique juxtaposition between these two celebrations. There is a deep connection between the mother who gives us life and the Holy Spirit who gives us the breath of life. Pastor Sharon will focus her sermon on 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13.

May 18<sup>th</sup> celebrates our church school children as they help to lead worship at 10:45. The story of creation in seven days from Genesis 1:1-2:4a offers great opportunity for creativity and reflection as we consider this wondrous gift of creation. Please see Pastor Sharon's letter for more thoughts of this gift of God.

May 25<sup>th</sup> is the Sunday of Memorial Day Weekend and the lectionary passages speak about God's comfort and compassion and encourage us not to worry what we will eat or drink, or what we will wear. What can we learn from generations gone by about trusting God and not our own ability to increase our wealth?

Since January, nine members of Aldersgate have been mentoring nine of our students in preparation for confirmation. On June 1<sup>st</sup> at the 10:45 service, those students who have decided to accept God and become members of Aldersgate will be confirmed. The Children's Ed Committee will host a brunch for all members and participants at 9:30. Please join us and meet these delightful new members.

Always a very moving experience, our Senior recognition will take place on June 8<sup>th</sup> at the 10:45 service. The gospel lesson for the day is Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26 and begins with a call to follow Jesus. We will send forth our seniors along their journey with Jesus as we acknowledge their accomplishments.

For June 15<sup>th</sup>, the reading from the Old Testament is Genesis 18:1-15, a visit of strangers to Abraham and Sarah and a foretelling of Isaac's birth, appropriate for this Father's Day Sunday. We continue to offer word and sacrament at 8:30 and a service of word at 10:45. Please join us for either worship.

During June the readings from the Epistles is from Romans. On June 22<sup>nd</sup>, Pastor Sharon will use Romans 6:1b-11 as the basis of her message, "Grace Abounds." Paul asks "How can we who died to sin go on living in it?"

We continue to offer two worship experiences, 8:30 and 10:45, on Sunday mornings throughout the month of June. Adult classes and children's classes are offered from 9:30 to 10:30. We hope you will join us!

## Prayer Concerns

Please keep Jim, Elaine, Maureen, Dave, Charlotte, Sheri, Jack, Cyndy, Gigi, Lillian and Linda in your prayers.

Also, keep the family and friends of Katie in your prayers; Cheryl and Victor in the recent death of Cheryl's mom; our service men and women along with their families. Pray for our children – all the children of our world - that they may live in freedom and without fear.

“Seek joy in what you give not in what you get.”  
— Anonymous

## MVP Focus on Immigration

by Rev. Sharon Jones

For the past year, I have been part of Merrimack Valley Project's focus on immigration. I have heard many recent immigrants to Lawrence and Lowell share their stories, which are often personal testimonies of faith. I have also gotten in touch with my own immigration story, remembering my great-grandmother who lived with her Italian family in Somerville, MA before moving to Passadumkeag, ME. I also heard the story of Rose, 80 years old, who spent her early life worrying that the government would find out about her father's undocumented status. I was moved by her story that still carries great feeling of the things in school she could not do because of this fear. (Just yesterday, I found out that Rose died quite suddenly earlier this week; I am so grateful that I had the opportunity to hear her story.

It seems that after the bombing of the World Trade Center increased our vigilance about border security, we became more aware of the numbers of undocumented immigrants living in our cities and towns. The economic realities in the countries to our south as well as in Africa, have led to increases in people trying to live in the United States. There are also undocumented persons from Europe and Asia living among us. The fear of undocumented people spills over into the population of legal immigrants, as people are arrested and detained without due cause.

My colleague, Rev. F. Richard Garland recently reflected on the biblical response to immigration in his column, **FROM WHERE I SIT**, and I share a portion of that column with you:

*Sometimes I am tempted to quit reading the Bible - it complicates things! Just when I think I know what it says, I read a passage again in a new translation or out of a new context, and discover something I had missed.*

*Lately, with the topic of immigration so much in the news, I decided to see what the Bible had to say about aliens. Wow! Did I get an ear full?! Our ancestors in the faith, notably Abraham and Isaac were aliens. Very early in scripture the law of the community made equity clear: “There shall be one law for the native and for the alien who resides among you.” [Exodus 12:49 and Leviticus 24:21] Business conduct was required to be honorable and attentive to the poor and the alien: “When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field ... You shall not strip your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the alien.” [Leviticus 19:9-10] Those who are not just towards the alien are subject to divine disapproval: “Cursed be anyone who deprives the alien, the orphan, and the widow of justice.” [Deuteronomy 27:19] “I will draw near to you for judgment; I will be swift to bear witness against ... those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts.” [Malachi 3:5] As for today's controversy about illegal aliens, the Bible says: “The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.” [Leviticus 19:34] Ah, the Bible! It complicates things!*

*Digging a little deeper I wondered just what the biblical word alien meant. I couldn't find a distinction between legal and illegal aliens. At its root the word simply means: “One who lives along side of.” More specifically it referred to one from another land who lived next door, that is, basically, a “neighbor.” From very early a core understanding was that “the land belongs to God,” and that “In God's sight all peoples are resident aliens.” Therefore people must live in humility in relationship to each other. The status of those who came from other lands is that they were sacrosanct as guests, and, in view of their weak position in the land, they were to “enjoy” divine protection. Oh, the Bible! It complicates things!*

*Some will argue that things are different now. I would like to agree, but then I read the Bible and discover that thousands of years ago a Pharaoh saw the aliens in his midst and said: “Look, the Israelite people are more numerous and more powerful than we. Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, or they will increase and, in the event of war, will join our enemies and fight against us.” [Exodus 1:9-10] And so resident aliens who did most of the hard work were made into slaves. Oh, the Bible! It complicates things.*

*In our modern world we build walls - in Berlin and Israel and the American southwest. We celebrate when other people's walls come down, and busy ourselves building our own. Some will remember Robert Frost writing, in his poem “Mending Wall,” that “Good fences make good neighbors.” But we conveniently forget that in the same poem he also wrote:*

*Before I built a wall I'd ask to know*

*What I was walling in or walling out,  
And to whom I was like to give offense.  
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,  
That wants it down.*

In an effort to break down the walls that separate, please join us in the MVP Action at Christ United Methodist Church in Lawrence, MA on Sunday, May 4, 2008 at 4:00 p.m. Over 300 people will gather to sing, hear testimonies, and hear from legislators and school superintendents. Join us as we give voice to faith-filled people!

### *To all my Aldersgate family---*

**THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU** for all your thoughts, cards, visits and especially your prayers.

The last 4 months have been a struggle but thanks to everyone involved, doctors, nurses, physical therapists and yes, even the nurses' aides I'm slowly returning to normalcy. I cannot say enough about the care I received at Lowell General and D'Youville Health Care Center. Superb!

I'm more convinced now than ever that prayer does work. I would not be back on my feet walking and gaining strength daily if it were not for your many prayers.

God works in mysterious ways. He may push us to the very edge but will not give us more than we can handle.

Ellie and I thank you again for everything.

Aldersgate definitely is the church with the "Big Heart".

Look forward to seeing you all soon one of these sunny Sunday mornings.

*Love & Hugs, Jack & Ellie*

## *Thank You*

During my recent knee surgery and recovery,  
I once more experienced what a great church Aldersgate is!

I wish to thank our Pastor and all of our church family for all the prayers, visits, phone calls, cards, flowers and last, but not least, the very tasty meals that were delivered to our home. Surgery is no fun, but it helps a lot to be surrounded by so many good friends. The Lord has certainly answered your prayers.

God bless you all, Gigi and Dirk

**Thank you** for the many cards and phone calls!

Your kind thoughts and prayers are much appreciated. Thanks again,  
John

**Thank You** I would like to thank all of you for your help with Katie Sherman's memorial. My cup runneth over as usual. From Sharon to Cheryl to Joanne and all of you who baked, made sandwiches, dips, cheeses, veggies, set-up, cleaned-up and worked in the kitchen, I thank you! How blessed we are at Aldersgate.

Deb

PS – thank you – Deb – for taking the leadership for the refreshments at the fellowship time following the memorial service.

## And

Special thanks to Dan, Doris and Bill, and Geoff for magnificent work with the sound system just in time for Katie's memorial service. Thank you, thank you!

## Bible Readings

### May & June

#### May 4

Acts 1:6-14

Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35

1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11

John 17:1-11



Bible  
Readings

### **May 11 Pentecost Sunday and Mother's Day**

Acts 2:1-21

Psalm 104:24-34  
Corinthians 12:3b-13  
John 7:37-39

### **May 18 – Trinity Sunday**

Genesis 1:1-2,4a  
Psalm 8  
2 Corinthians 13:11-13  
Matthew 28:16-20

### **May 25**

Isaiah 49:8-16a  
Psalm 131 or Psalm 62:5-12  
1 Corinthians 4:1-5  
Matthew 6:24-34

### **June 1**

Genesis 6:11-22; 7:24; 8:14-19  
Psalm 46  
Romans 1:16-17; 3:22b-28  
Matthew 7:21-29

### **June 8**

Genesis 12:1-9  
Psalm 33:1-12  
Romans 4:13-25  
Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26

### **June 22**

Genesis 21:8-21  
Psalm 86:1-10,  
16-17 or Psalm 17  
Romans 6:1b-11  
Matthew 10:24-39

### **June 15**

Genesis 18:1-15  
Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19  
Romans 5:1-8  
Matthew 9:35 – 10:8

### **June 29**

Genesis 22:1-14  
Psalm 13  
Romans 6:12-23  
Matthew 10:40-42

### **Attention – Member Care Needs YOU!**

This committee of two along with several volunteers cares for our Aldersgate family, contacting sick and shut-ins by phone, card or visit, delivering flowers, providing some meals after surgery, and rides to appointments when needed. We would love to have you join us either by setting up meals, rides, visitations, or just by volunteering to be a cook, driver, visitor to shut-ins and members we have not seen in a while. Please be a partner in care and love to our congregation. Please call Joanne 978-256-9400, Lois, or Jane.

### **Summer Church Schedule**

At the April meeting of the Church Council, it was decided to extend our regular hours of worship (two services) through the month of June as we did last year.

**Beginning on Sunday, July 6 and continuing through Sunday, August 31, 2008, Worship will be at 9:30 AM.**

### **Golf Outing to Fund Local Scholarship**

The Mighty Men of Aldersgate United Methodist Church announce their second annual golf outing. The Outing, loosely defined as a tournament and scheduled for the Chelmsford Country Club on Saturday, May 3, 2008 benefits the MM's local scholarship fund.

Competition is fierce among those who play golf religiously even if they are in deep need of salvation. The game is "best ball," allowing a few relatives and former pastors to be brought in to save those who have not played in over a year. (For non-golfers "best ball" means you can hit off your team member's ball if it is closer to the pin.) Rev. Dr. Sharon G.W. Jones, Pastor of Aldersgate, will be caddy to her brother-in-law, providing him with advice on salvation for all, a basic tenet of United Methodism. Greg is this year's judge and Master of Ceremonies at the Awards Banquet. Play begins at 12:00 and the Banquet is set for 2:30. For more information, please call the church office, 978-256-9400.



## Tool & Blanket Sunday

May 11th<sup>h</sup>



For the past several years we have presented an opportunity to give in order to buy a blanket or tool in honor or celebration of our moms and dads to support an important fundraiser through Church World Service. Your generosity in 2007 of over \$600 helped in this worthy cause. And we are asking you for help again!

Church World Service Tools and Blankets make a difference in the lives of children and families by providing blankets, tents and other emergency shelter items in the wake of a disaster. Refugees returning home can be helped with tools to rebuild and seeds to replant fields. Families living in drought-plagued areas are helped to dig wells for clean, safe drinking water, and for water to irrigate crops and gardens.

Aldersgate is one of some 8,000 congregations and groups across the US who help people in some 80 nations, including our own country. Thank you for your continued support of this almost annual event now at Aldersgate. You DO make a difference!

## Rummage and White Elephant Sale!

The Outreach Committee is sponsoring a Rummage Sale and White Elephant Sale on Friday, May 23<sup>rd</sup> from 3 – 8 pm and Saturday, May 24<sup>th</sup> from 9 am to noon! Plan on helping the Outreach Committee in this fund raiser! Debbie

## Aldersgate - Caring for God's Creation

April 22<sup>nd</sup> was National Earth Day. This is not a new issue but we are all more aware of the importance and urgency of global warming.

We, as Christians, are morally bound to love and care for God's creation.

Thanks to Jack Scott's leadership Aldersgate's light bulbs are florescent and energy efficient and thermostats are programmed so they are only on when needed. Thanks to Dan Carey we recycle our paper, plastic, glass and aluminum.

As a church, let us be even more vigilant in decreasing our energy use. A few examples are:

- Turn off the restroom lights as you leave
- Turn off or only use half or one quarter the lights in fellowship hall (there are 4 separate switches)
- Do not use Styrofoam products since they can't be recycled
- Walk to church or town or car pool
- Use powdered borax instead of liquid chlorine bleach
- White vinegar and newspaper make an eco-friendly window cleaner
- Wash clothes in cold water and hang on a clothes line
- Turn off TVs, computers, etc. when not in use

Maybe we as a church family could covenant to turn off all electricity in our home for 1 or 2 hours on a Sunday evening.

Write in some of your ideas for the next Advocate.

Jane

## Capital Campaign Results

Your continued support of our "Together for Tomorrow" capital campaign can be seen in our new floors in the hallways and fellowship hall, the first project to be accomplished. Soon we will see our efforts come to fulfillment in the construction of a new enclosed entryway over the upper door off the back parking lot. We received another check from the Conference Business Office in March and are currently holding over \$28,500 in reserve for this project.

The Trustees, under the able leadership of Dan, are consulting with our architect and several contractors to secure estimates for constructing the exterior walls and interior stairwell. It is felt that we will not at this time have the funds to install the lift that will make both floors accessible. But we are planning ahead to construct the new entryway in such a way as to provide space for this addition in the future.

The Trustees are also hoping to make some very needed improvements to our kitchen. Many thanks to all who are faithfully fulfilling their commitments to this work. If you were unable to make a commitment to the capital campaign three years ago and wish to do so now, please speak to Pastor Sharon or Victor Hamel, who was chair of our capital campaign committee.

## Prayer Shawl Ministry



Our Aldersgate Prayer Shawl Ministry meets on Monday

Afternoons in the Concord Room from 2:30 – 4 PM. It is a warm and friendly group of folks who love to knit, quilt or whatever handwork you enjoy and would be happy if you would come and join us. We have made many prayer shawls and would love to knit one for you to give to someone in need of a reminder of God love and comfort. We make shawls for infant baptisms in our church and have made hats for the Lincoln School in Lowell. Come and join us! If you have a project in mind – share it with us!

## Aldersgate Book Group

Here are some dates and books for you to read! May 20th will be "The Namesake" by Jhumpa Lahiri; June 24<sup>th</sup> will be "The Year of Magical Thinking" by Joan Didion, and July 22<sup>nd</sup> will be "Blessings" by Anna Quindlen. We will meet at 6 PM for Pizza in the Concord Room. Get reading and please join us we would love to have you all....Deb

## Change for Change!



Thank you for your continued participation in our "Change for Change" Program. We welcome and celebrate gifts of "change" (pocket change, spare change, piggy bank change) each week specifically for mission initiatives. You may remember that we were able to help the Paul Center with your change and now we are making a gift of \$250 through your generosity to the Lowell Wish Project. May the jingle and clinking of these gifts placed in the offering plate be music to God's ears and a symbol of our commitment to "change" the world with a closer reflection of the Kingdom!

## What's Happening at Rolling Ridge

**May 6:** The Heart of Leadership: Leading with Spiritual awareness. Margaret Benefiel, author and teacher joins Rolling Ridge Director, Larry Peacock, in guiding a retreat day on Spiritually Centered leadership. Come consider your leadership experiences in light of soul and spirit. 9:30am-3:00 pm; registration fee: \$40 in advance/ \$45 at the door.

**May 12-15:** OASIS- A SPIRITUAL SPA!! A spa experience awaits you at OASIS! Four days at our annual spiritual spa. Each person receives a massage, spiritual direction, classes in yoga, wellness, and meditation. Walking the labyrinth, kayaking on the lake, leisurely dining, and a drumming circle are all part of the experience. You may add sessions of foot reflexology or healing touch. Come for 4 days, or come for one and get a "taste of OASIS". Call for rates and availability. For a complete brochure on OASIS, go to [www.rollingridge.org](http://www.rollingridge.org) and click on programs.

**May 13 : from 7-9 pm DRUMMING FOR JOY**, led by Jane Gossard. If you've longed to get your hands on a drum, if you like to move when you hear a beat be it as simple as clapping your hands or tapping your feet, or if you're just plain curious, then come!! Registration fee: \$15 in advance, \$20 at the door.

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## Root Beer Tasting

Planning has begun for our Second Annual Root Beer Tasting party to benefit our sister church in Nicaragua. Those who attended last year had a great time tasting eight flavors of root beer and cleansing their palates with vanilla ice cream. We are aware that some resorted to root beer floats as the party concluded.

We are looking for families willing to sponsor their favorite root beer. The Jones' found a home brewed root beer in South Carolina that they hope to import for this year's party.

We would also like to provide hor d'oeuvres, so if you are willing to bring something to share, please speak to Richard or David, last year's winner.

### Changed

They held no credentials, no official status,  
but the Spirit's coming had changed  
these ordinary people.  
From fear and uncertainty,  
They were freed and empowered  
to speak and act  
boldly of Christ's saving grace,  
and people followed.  
As we listen, learn, and follow,  
may others sense the Spirit  
near and recognize  
that we, too,  
have been with Jesus.

Roberta Porter *is a retired educator who lives on the coast of Oregon.*

**SPIRITUAL GROWTH CLASSES AND SMALL GROUPS**

## Early Bird Class

**Tuesdays: 6 – 6:45 a.m. Concord Room**

**Leader: Charles**

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**

**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. After Easter, we will be focusing on the book of Romans.

## Prayer Shawl Ministry

**Mondays: 2:30 – 4:00 p.m. Concord Room**

**Leaders: Gigi and Joanne**

If you like to knit, or would like to learn how to knit, please join us on Monday afternoon 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.

## ***SHORT - TERM CLASSES FOR THE SPRING***

### Where Science and Religion Meet

**Sunday Mornings**

**9:30 – 10:30 a.m.**

**Leader: Walt**

**Concord Room**

All are welcome as we discuss the following sessions from the series written by Adam Hamilton:

May 4: Freud, Jung and the "God Gene": Psychology and Religion

May 11: Living Faithfully in a Brave New World

May 18: Critique/Discussion

### Rebuilding Community

**Sunday Mornings continuing until May 18<sup>th</sup>  
10:30 a.m.**

**9:30 –**

**Leaders: Pastor Sharon & Charles**

**Library**

All are welcome as we continue reading "Rebuilding Community" by Robert D. Lupton, which melds the book of Nehemiah with eleven contemporary urban issues, laced with personal stories from Atlanta and other cities. We come to the understanding that the God of the Bible is about restoring people and rebuilding communities.

### Simplicity, Generosity and Joy

**Sunday Mornings beginning June 1<sup>st</sup> – June 29<sup>th</sup>  
10:30 a.m.**

**9:30 –**

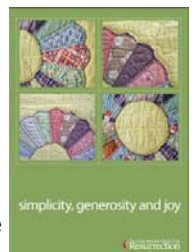
**Leaders: Peter & others**

**Concord Room**

"Our nation is experiencing what many have described as the "American Nightmare." Increasing consumer debt, declines in savings, lower income growth, rising housing costs and a volatile stock market are all contributing to economic insecurity. We live in a society that tells us "you deserve it now," whether or not we can afford it or really even need it."

"We've all struggled with these issues at one time or another. In this series, we explore what the Bible teaches us about financial management and watch sermons by Adam Hamilton that provide us with tools we can use to access our financial situation and develop a financial plan with a biblical foundation. These are important issues that we cannot ignore."

The topics we will study are: Defined by Generosity, Cultivating Contentment and Simplicity, Wisdom and Finances, and When Dreams Become Nightmares.



# CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

## Lenten Mission Church School Project



Our church school supported the “Nothing but Nets Campaign” during this season of Lent. **THANK YOU** to all who donated money to buy mosquito netting, we raised \$480.00, which is enough to supply 48 nets for people in Africa. If you ordered a T-shirt or cap, your order should arrive in mid – May.

## Camp Sunday – March 30<sup>th</sup>

What an energizing day we had learning all about the Methodist camps! The Director of Camp Aldersgate in Rhode Island, Jennifer Carpenter, joined us for the morning and shared photos, songs and stories. We have camp brochures from the summer camp programs offered at Camp Aldersgate in North Scituate, Rhode Island, Camp Wanakee in Meredith, New Hampshire, Rolling Ridge in North Andover, Massachusetts and Camp Mechuwana in Winthrop, Maine. Please look for the camp brochures downstairs in the hall. There are scholarships available to all children and youth who attend a camp program, thanks to our Doris Miller Camp Scholarship Fund. Please see Cheryl for any questions.

A central poster with a pink and white checkered border. The text is centered on a white background. Surrounding the text are illustrations of food items: a slice of Swiss cheese, a green plastic cup, a white chef's hat, a piece of meat on a blue wire grill, a green chili pepper, and a hamburger. There are also colorful streamers and confetti scattered around the poster.

**Church Wide Church School Celebration  
And Potluck Barbecue  
Sunday – May 18<sup>th</sup>**

Our church school will be leading worship during the  
2<sup>nd</sup> service as we celebrate  
the children and youth of our church.

*This will be the last Sunday  
for our regular church school program*

*Potluck Barbecue for all will follow the 2<sup>nd</sup> service*

*Bring your favorite side dish to share*

We hope all the children and youth will be able to  
participate on this Sunday, and that we will all  
support these very important members of our  
church family!

## NO CHURCH SCHOOL PROGRAM ON SUNDAY, MAY 25<sup>TH</sup>

### Thank you Teachers

*We are so blessed to have such loving and dedicated teachers and helpers. Please take time to thank the following:*

*Children's Education Ministries Team:*

*Jill, Dawn, Christine, Debbie, Carol and Luann*

*Teachers:*

*Preschool Teachers: Nancy, Cate and Susan*

*Kindergarten Teachers: Terri and Annette*

*1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Teachers: Dottie and Lee*

*3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Teachers: Holly, Reggie and Dianna*

*5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Teachers: Laurie and Jim*

*7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Teachers: Peter and David*

*9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Teachers: David and Peter*

*Music: Melinda*

*Thank you to all the volunteers who subbed when a teacher was out!*

### *ITALIAN BISTRO NIGHT*

*SATURDAY, MAY 17<sup>TH</sup>*

*4:45 - 8:00 P.M.*



**Our Senior Youth will once again be transforming the Fellowship Hall into an Italian Bistro to help raise money for their trip to Mission Central in July. We will be taking reservations from April 27<sup>th</sup> - May 11<sup>th</sup>. There will be a display upstairs in the hall and downstairs on the information table for people to place their reservations.**

### **June Rotation Church School for Preschool - 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Children**

The Christian Education group will be offering a special church school during the month of June. We will be using a rotation model curriculum called, "The Four Friends". This unit will help the children understand that Jesus can touch our lives through the lives of others.

The children will experience this theme using different media, such as creating a puppet show, art, cooking, computer, and music. All children in preschool - 6<sup>th</sup> grade are welcome to participate. All youth in grades 7 and higher are encouraged to be assistants. We will break up the children into 2 age levels; Preschool - 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, and 3<sup>rd</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Anyone is welcome to lead a class for a Sunday. Please see the sign up sheet downstairs in the hall.

## July and August Book & Craft Time

During the summer months, we will offer a special class for 3 year olds – 4<sup>th</sup> grade that will meet downstairs in room 7 & 8 after the theme conversation. We will listen to a special story, and do a craft related to the message of the book. If you are interested in helping, please see Cheryl or sign up on the sign up sheet located on the bulletin board beginning on Sunday, May 4<sup>th</sup>.

## Confirmation Class

**Our next confirmation class will be on Sunday, May 18<sup>th</sup> from noon – 2:00 p.m. We will join the church wide potluck barbecue, bring a side dish to share, and then we will begin our class.**

**Please pray for the following youth and their mentor partner: Billy & Bob, Andrew & Jim, Walker & Richard, Anthony & Peter, Alexei & Walt, Hannah & Cheryl, Nicole & Debbie, Kim & Christine, and Annalise & Betsey.**

## Confirmation Sunday – June 1<sup>st</sup>



**The youth will be confirmed on Sunday, June 1<sup>st</sup> during the 10:45 a.m. service. There will be a brunch for the confirmation youth, their families and the mentors from 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. as we celebrate these new members of our church family!**

## High School Senior Recognition Sunday – June 8<sup>th</sup>

Congratulations to the following youth who will be graduating from High School:

*Annika, Katherine Ann, Wesley, Kieran, Megan, Sean, Kristine and James*

We will recognize them on Sunday, June 8<sup>th</sup>, during the 10:45 a.m. service. There will be a brunch for all from 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. as we celebrate this milestone in their life!

## VBS - August 11 – 15 from 9 – noon – God's Big Back Yard

**Get ready for an outdoor adventure that starts in our own backyard and will get bigger each day as we take the love of Jesus into our neighborhoods and communities! In God's Big Backyard, children and youth will...**

- Explore Bible servants and be challenged to serve each day
- Listen to people who serve their neighbors and participate with friends in service projects
- Work together to create cool Bible crafts and play fun games that will remind us to serve others
- Celebrate the joy of showing God's love through service to their families, friends, neighbors, community, and Jesus



**This year children & youth, ages 4 - 14 will be in same age-level crews, we will even offer a crew for teens! There are registration forms available downstairs and attached to this Advocate. If you have any questions, or would like to help, please see Cheryl.**

## Worship Arts

**Children, ages 4 through 6<sup>th</sup> grade, are invited to join us each Tuesday afternoon from 4:15 – 5:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. For the month of May, the worship arts children will explore the environment and being good stewards of the world. You can join us on any Tuesday, you don't have to attend regularly.**

## Junior Youth Choir & Bells on Thursday evenings

Junior (Miller) Bells – 6:30 – 7:15 p.m.

Youth Choir – 7:15 – 8:00 p.m.

**All children and youth in 4th grade or older, are welcome to join us each Thursday for our exciting music program.**

## Children's Choir on Sunday mornings

This young children's choir is for children, ages 4 years old – 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Becky Adams will use a variety of musical media as a fun way to learn about music! Your child may go downstairs with Becky after the theme conversation.

## JUNIOR YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

*This fellowship group is for young youth in grades 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Our mission is to provide your children with a safe, healthy and loving environment to help them grow and experience Christianity*

### Miniature Golf Night

Friday, May 9<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

We will drive to Rangeway Miniature Golf in Billerica for an evening of fun! Please bring \$10.00 for golfing and ice cream.

### Outdoor Fun Night

Friday, May 30<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

We will play unusual games outside, please bring your favorite summer time snack to share.



### Movie Night

Friday, June 13<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

We will watch the movie, "Ratatouille" and share our thoughts after the movie. We will of course serve popcorn!



## JUNIOR & SENIOR YOUTH EVENTS

### St. Paul's Feeding Ministry

Wednesday, June 18<sup>th</sup> from 3:15 – 7:00 p.m.

The Junior and Senior Youth will serve a meal at the Elliot church in Lowell. You will receive information in May about what dish you should bring. After we serve the meal, we will go back to church for pizza and subs. Please bring \$5.00 towards the cost of the food.



### Annual Softball Game & Potluck Barbecue

Sunday, June 22<sup>nd</sup> from 3 – 6:30 p.m.

The Mighty Men will once again challenge us to a softball game! **All junior and senior youth and their families are invited to join us for a softball game and potluck barbecue – the mighty men against the youth groups.** Please bring a side dish or dessert to share, we will provide hot dogs, hamburgers, and veggie burgers. Also bring any softball equipment you may have. Friends are always welcome!



## 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 and friends are always welcome!

### Sunday, May 4<sup>th</sup> - Youth Group Time

Sunday, noon – 2:00 p.m.

We will make our own pizzas and watch a movie. Invite a friend!

### Saturday, May 10<sup>th</sup> - Lowell Wish Project

Saturday, 9:45 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

We will meet at church, and then drive to the Lowell Wish Project to volunteer for 2 hours. Friends are



always welcome to join us as we help the community. Please bring money for lunch – we will decide where we will eat.

### **Sunday, May 11<sup>th</sup> - Youth Time & Planning Bistro**

**Sunday, noon – 1:30 p.m.**

We will make and eat pasta, and plan our bistro night.

### **Saturday, May 17<sup>th</sup> - Italian Bistro Night**

**Saturday, 2:00 – 9:00 p.m.**

We will decorate, prepare food and serve from 4:45 – 8:00 p.m. We will clean up from 8:00 – 9:00 p.m.



### **Sunday, June 1<sup>st</sup> - Miniature golf fun**

**Sunday, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.**

We will go to Kimball's to golf and enjoy ice cream. Please bring money for both.

### **Sunday, June 15<sup>th</sup> - Car Wash**

**Sunday, 9:00 – noon**

Bring hoses, rags, sponges, etc. and clothes you don't mind getting wet!

### **Youth Mission Trip**

**Tuesday, July 22<sup>nd</sup> - Monday, July 28<sup>th</sup>**

Our Mission Trip this summer will be working at Mission Central in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania. We will work on Wednesday – Friday, go to Gettysburg on Saturday, Hershey Park on Sunday, and visit Ellis Island and "ground Zero" on the way home on Monday. We will stay at a church near Mission Central from Tuesday night – Saturday morning.

The church we will be staying at has shower facilities, a kitchen we can use, a gym with basketball and volleyball equipment. We may also go to a minor league baseball game, go canoeing, miniature golfing, etc. The estimated cost of this trip is \$250.00, we should be able to cover half of the cost with our fundraising events. Please see Cheryl if you would like to go on this trip. **If you are interested in going on this trip, you need to put a deposit down by Sunday, May 18<sup>th</sup> of \$20.00.**