



# SPIRIT SONG

## “Lent, Easter, and Post Easter”

Dear Members and Friends,

March 24, 2009

Well, it's almost Easter. In two weeks we will be in Holy Week. It seems to come around faster each year. When we were all younger, everything seemed to take forever. Of course, that was when we actually looked forward to our birthdays and having people over. Somebody told me today that day of my next appointment will be her daughter's sixth birthday. To her, her last birthday was so long ago that she had forgotten that she had had people over and had had a big celebration. Of course one year for her was a sixth of her life. What is a year to us who are over sixty? It is much less than a sixth of our lives? What about if we are older?

At this writing, we are still in Lent, the season that prepares us for Easter. And during Lent this year, some of us have been studying Rueben Job's *Three Simple Rules*. This has been a five week class on the *Three Simple Rules* which came originally from the General Rules written by John Wesley for the United Methodist Church. We read in his book that Wesley was concerned that one could have all of the structures and systems right but still lack the power of God that could be translated into a Christ like life. So, Wesley came up with disciplined practices that could be used to be incorporated into the early Methodist Classes of the Methodist Movement. Those practices are the Three Simple Rules which we have been learning about. They are Do No Harm, Do Good, and Stay in Love with God. We have gone over the first two rules as of this writing, and they are very hard. We have yet to do Stay in Love with God, but that may prove to be equally as difficult. Hopefully all of those taking the course are growing in their walk with God in Jesus Christ, and the Christian Faith is being put into practice in their lives. And hopefully, it will get us ready for Easter.

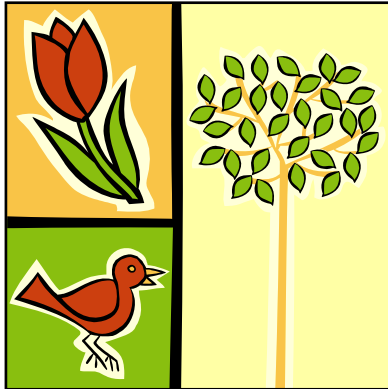
Before we know it, Easter will be here, with all of its glory. Hopefully, it will be a little warmer, as we have two events that are held outdoors. We will have the Cross Walk on Good Friday, beginning at 9:00 a.m. from the Federated Church. We will be supplying the Cross this year, thanks to our own John Hunt. And the Federated Church will be supplying the song and scripture sheets. We will be going to the Overlook, and then we will place the Cross right outside the Post Acute Unit in the back of the building. We shall return to this same spot at 7:00 a.m. on Easter Sunday when we have the Easter Sunrise Service. We will join with the Federated Church for this service, the Cross Walk, and well as the Maundy Thursday Service which will be in our church at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday and the Good Friday Service of Tenebrae, which will be at 7:30 p.m. at the Federated Church on Good Friday. There will also be a breakfast at the Federated Church after the Easter Sunrise Service. We will celebrate the resurrected Christ in all of these services in our joyous worship.

Finally, before Lent ends and Easter begins, we are to finally begin Natural Church Development. Natural Church Development is according to the brochure a process of discovering and improving the health of your (our) church. We will be using a diagnostic survey with thirty participants from our church and we will measure our church in 8 quality characteristics of healthy churches. Those eight characteristics are empowering leadership, gift oriented ministry, passionate spirituality, functional structures, inspiring worship, holistic small groups, need- oriented evangelism, and loving relationships. We have a new NCD Coach, Peter Schilling, who will be leading us through this process. It will last until after Easter and should give us three to five things to work on from the Action Planning Workshop which is the last step of the process. Please pray for this process, that God would bless this process and enable us to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ and as the church of Jesus Christ here in Charlton.

Sincerely in Christ,

The Rev. Dr. (Pastor) Paul E. Samuelson

# Outreach/Mission News for April



Mission projects are springing up all over the place at Charlton City United Methodist Church!

## **Sue Givens—Missionary from Paraguay**

To start the month of March off we hosted Sue Givens a missionary from Paraguay. Sue is the director and fund raiser extraordinaire for New Horizon Methodist School in the South American country that is in the center of that steamy continent. God has heard the cries of his children and hope is rising where there was nothing but despair for the children of this incredibly poor country. The school's Website is [www.paraguayschools.org](http://www.paraguayschools.org) , you will hear more\_during the next Mission Moments.

## **CROP Walk**

CROP Walk has been another resounding success story, thank you for all who walked and sponsored our walkers for this original walkathon that raises funds and awareness for food and crop management. Your dollars go right to work to improve the lives of people right here in the Tri-Community area-25% of the funds will go to Food Share in Southbridge and the remaining dollars go to teach sustainable crop management practices in poverty stricken regions in the US and around the globe.

## **Youth Starve for Hunger**

Our youth will STARVE for hunger Good Friday noontime until Saturday 6 pm Easter weekend to raise their awareness and serious dollars for the poorest of the poor. A dollar day will save a starving child. Our kids will not eat for 30 hours so they can save lives through World Vision; this is a terrific youth event that teaches them so much about giving back. See a youth to sponsor or check their table out next to Harmony the Heifer.

## **Heifer**

Harmony the **Heifer** is really teaching our kids about working for money to help others. See Mrs. Hickey or any Sunday School child to lend a dime or two to this great mission tradition. Our Sunday School has been sponsoring Heifer Project for many years and this shows children how they make a difference in some else's life.

## **Food Pantry**

Wow!! Thank you generous people for the awesome amount of food you have lovingly donated to the food pantry, the shelves were overflowing with nonperishable food donations on the fourth Sunday of March. Our food pantry coordinator Sharon Johnson will need strong arms to carry all that great food to receiving community food pantries!!

## **SIHN**

SIHN training will be April 4 10-12 at the Southbridge Library. This is an opportunity to meet Laura Kaplan, the new director and be updated on all the changes even if you've been through the training. If you haven't been through a CORI check our Lori Pickering can take care of this formality that day as well. I urge all who are curious about how you can serve the homeless families here at our backdoor- come. Serving and learning is free. No money needed just time and a desire to help children and their parent(s) going through tough times. SIHN has an open week available to serve April 12 - April 18, see or call Vicki Foskett or Lori if you have some available time that week to help.

## *Missionary Visits from Paraguay*

On March 2nd, in spite of the snow, the UMW joined with the Outreach/Mission Committee and welcomed missionary Sue Givens from Paraguay. Sue is the Director of New Horizons Methodist School which opened in 2001, serving grades one thru seven. The school serves families from low income homes and currently has 525 children enrolled. The school also has a waiting list of 100 children. We have a unique opportunity to be part of this mission and can donate directly to Latin America Mission, The Paraguayan Outreach/Sue Givens, P.O. Box 52-7900, Miami, Florida 33152-7900 or to High Mill Church of the Resurrection, The Paraguayan Outreach 1920 Schneider St. NE, North Canton, Ohio 44721.

Like the hymn "Onward Christian Soldiers", we are marching forward with a complete division of officers. A big thank you to Marilyn Gerrard, President, Sandra Dam, Vice President, Claudia Blauvelt, Treasurer, and Judy Crowley, Secretary. We are looking into new ways to reach out to more women in our church family. Thank you to everyone for returning the UMW survey sheet.

Our next UMW meeting will be a breakfast meeting on April 18th in celebration of Earth Day. Keep tuned for further information.

## *Trustees Twitter*

The trustees are off to a busy start in 2009. And as Chairman, I am excited to finally begin connecting with all members through our newsletter on a regular basis.

With warmer weather finally just around the corner, the trustees are reminded to thank everyone who worked so hard to conserve our oil consumption over the past winter. Yes we are still "smarting" over the not so successful oil consortium lock in price. But that does not overshadow the great job of conservation. Your efforts did not go unnoticed!!

Looking forward to '09', the trustees have two major undertakings that need lots of research, hard work, and most importantly, input from everyone.

First, this will likely be the "year of the bell". Late last year we updated our pricing for the removal of the bell from 12 Stafford St. and I am hopeful we will be able to finance the first phase of removal, restoration, and eventual move up to our new home. I know this is an exciting prospect for so many members and we look forward to the day when the bell tolls @ 72/74 Stafford!!!

Secondly, 2009 will also be the revival of our research, and eventual decision, regarding the organ @ 12 Stafford St. As many of you may or may not know, our present organ has at least four pedals and five keys in the grave and can no longer be revived with "band aid" repairs. Marion is essentially working miracles every Sunday avoiding the embarrassing sounds of a weary musical instrument. Those of you who witnessed the recent wedding at our church know just how beautiful it was. Beautiful for everyone..... EXCEPT Marion..... who was forced to make serious changes during some songs to avoid disaster.

So, with a renewed sense of urgency, the trustees have already met with two experts this year and intend to meet with many more in the coming weeks and months to provide the most educated recommendations for this enormous undertaking.

Yes there are many more issues we're tackling but Hannah doesn't want me to put her readers asleep!!!

Would you like to "CHAT WITH THE CHAIR" about these very exciting issues???

Call me anytime 508-248-5729 or shoot me an "e" @ [himmis@aol.com](mailto:himmis@aol.com)

Jim Hall, Trustees Chairman

# *What does it mean to worship?*

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!  
You have set your glory above the heavens.  
From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise

*Psalm 8: 1-2*

Most of the time when we enter a worship service, we come with the attitude of what can I receive from the service? Has the music committee picked good songs this week? I hope the sermon is funny this week. Will I leave feeling it was worth my time to be here today?

When we enter a worship service, the question in our minds and hearts should always be; what can I give to be in worship through my singing, listening and participation, that will be pleasing to the Lord? How can I be obedient in worship and not seek self but God. David did this very thing. Throughout the Psalms David praised God and worshiped Him. Worship is what comes out of an understanding and realization of who God is, and what He means to us personally as Savior and Lord. Give praise to the Lord for what He has done in our lives and for who He is. Worship is a wonderful thing, and becoming a worshiper is what God created us to be. The first commandments given to Moses tell us to worship only God. So open your hearts and come with gratitude and love to Sunday worship prepared to let God know how awesome He really is.

from *Experiencing Worship* by Stephen M. Newman

## *Prayers*

**Sunday - Passionate Worship** - Lord, we pray that United Methodist Churches across the globe would have an awesome encounter of worshipping You in Spirit and in truth today (John 4:24)

**Monday - Calling Young People into Ministry** - Lord, we pray that You would raise up laborers for the harvest (Matthew 9:37-39).

**Tuesday - New Churches** - Lord, we pray that You would raise up 400 new United Methodist Churches in America in places where there is no vibrant witness for the Gospel right now (Romans 15:20).

**Wednesday - Ministry to the Poor** - Lord, we pray that You would use United Methodist churches to alleviate poverty, stamp out malaria and HIV/AIDS, and minister to the less fortunate and overlooked in the name of Jesus (Matthew 25:40).

**Thursday - Renewed Vitality of the UMC** - Lord, we pray that You would bring renewed vitality to the United Methodist Church (Ezekiel 37) and that You would daily add to Your church through professions of faith (Acts 2:47).

**Friday - Unity** - Lord, we pray for a healthy unity across the United Methodist Church such that the unbelieving world may see and believe in You (John 17: 20-21).

**Saturday - The Word** - Lord, we pray that as the Word of God is preached in our church and other Methodist churches tomorrow that You would bear fruit that will last forever (Isaiah 55:10-11).

## *Sunday School News*

Wow!! The kids have been busy. On March 1<sup>st</sup> we rolled and baked pretzels and more pretzels and oh yeah more pretzels. Thank you teachers for all the pretzel dough you made and thank you to Hanna and Jennifer for staying and baking the pretzels. They made an amazing \$106.50 for our start of Heifer Project, that's a lot of dough (ha! ha!). We even have a name for our heifer, her name is HARMONY. Since then they have added another \$50.00 by doing chore for you, a work crew is being put together to clean Ken Juliens yard for another \$100.00, so we are halfway there. Tell your kids to keep up the good work. You may be asking what is this Heifer Project. The Sunday School raises money to send an animal to an impoverished country. This animal will help the family become self sufficient with the food products it may provide to not only help the family nutritionally, but also economically, the labor help, and clothing or fertilizer. This gift is also passed on to another family through it's offsprings. So, this is the gift that hopefully keeps on giving. This year we decided to raise money for a heifer, which we have never done before. The children are suppose to do extra chores to earn money for this project. We will collect money until April 19<sup>th</sup> the week after Easter. Come see how Harmony is coming along, visit her picture in the Narthex.

Keep June 14<sup>th</sup> open on your calendar. The Sunday School will be performing Donkey Tales for Children's Sunday. We have already started practicing the songs and hope you have heard them at home too. If your family does not have the CD or words please see me, we will make sure you get one. For Easter service the Sunday School will be performing one of the songs. *There will be no Sunday School on Easter.* After Easter we will start practicing the speaking parts. Come find out how important a lowly donkey was to God. Please join us afterwards for an all church picnic, there will be hamburgers and hot dogs and plenty of pot luck dishes. A sign up will be on the table in the Narthex.

For those of you who are planning your summer, we will be having Vacation Bible School (VBS) July 28<sup>th</sup>, 29, and 30<sup>th</sup> in the evening. Have your kids come camping with us these nights and invite a friend too. More information to follow.

You have some amazing kids and we have some amazing teachers.

Karenlee Hickey  
Sunday School Superintendent

## *Innocence Is Priceless*

One Sunday morning, the pastor noticed little Alex standing in the foyer of the church staring up at a large plaque. It was covered with names and small American flags mounted on either side of it.

The six-year old had been staring at the plaque for some time, so the pastor walked up, stood beside the little boy, and said quietly, "Good morning Alex"

"Good morning Pastor", he replied, still focused on the plaque. "Pastor, what is this?"

The pastor said, "Well son, it's a memorial to all the young men and women who died in the service." Soberly, they just stood together, staring at the large plaque. Finally, little Alex's voice, barely audible and trembling with fear asked, "Which service...the 8:30 or the 10:30?"

A wife invited some people to dinner.

At the table, she turned to their six-year-old daughter and said, "Would you like to say the blessing?"

"I don't know what to say," the girl replied.

"Just say what you hear Mommy say," the wife answered.

The daughter bowed her head and said,

"Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner?"

## Next Newsletter Deadline—April 22nd

### DATES TO REMEMBER


Sun	Mar 29	12:30 pm	Crop Walk
		7:00 pm	Natural Church Dev. Comm.
Thur	Apr 2	10 am	Lenten Study
		7 pm	Lenten Study
Sun	Apr 5	7 pm	Natural Church Dev. Comm.
Mon	Apr 6	7 pm	Trustees
Thu	Apr 9	7:30	Maundy Thursday Service
Fri	Apr 10	9 am	Cross Walk
		12 noon	Begin 30 hour Fast
		7:30 pm	Good Friday Service at Federated
Sun	Apr 12	7 am	Easter Sunrise Service
			No Church School or 8:30 am service
Tue	Apr 14	7:00 pm	Girl Scouts
Thur	Apr 16	7:00 pm	Men's Fellowship
Sat	Apr 18	5:30 pm	Men's Fellowship Supper
		8:00 am	UMW Breakfast (tentative)
Sun	Apr 19	7:00 pm	Natural Church Dev. Comm.
Wed	Apr 22	5:30 pm	G.S. Meeting
Sat	April 25	9:00 am	Music Committee
		10:00 am	Nurture Committee

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The Rev. Dr. (Pastor) Paul E. Samuelson



**Sundays**  
8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Worship  
9:00 a.m. Sunday School  
9:00 a.m. Adult Bible Class  
6:00 p.m. Youth Group