



SPIRIT SONG

September 2008

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“Keeping Awake”

Dear Members and Friends,

November 17, 2008

I couldn't help noticing as I was preparing for my next week's sermon that the first Sunday in Advent is November 30th. That is at the end of this month. And Christmas is only three Sundays after that! It doesn't seem possible. But we all know it will be here before we know it.

In our adult Sunday School class which meets on Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m. in the choir room, the curriculum asked the question, "What were we willing to give up to focus more on Jesus Christ?" As usual, no one talked. Whenever we ask those hard questions, we have to think a little bit. Then we talked. I didn't think that I had given anything up, as usual. But, after the class, and during the day, I realized that I had given something up. That was falling asleep in my chair as I watched TV at night. However, there are side effects.

For one thing, I feel like a zombie, and probably look like one, too. My youngest son Jonathan tells me that my body is not used to getting so much sleep. So, I appear more tired than I might be if I fell asleep, woke up, and then went to bed. And I know it's not a good time to do anything different that will impact Sunday morning. Hopefully, if I don't relapse and resort to my old ways, I will be in better shape next Sunday.

One of the key themes of Advent is Keeping Awake. It has to do with being ready for Jesus when he returns in the Second Coming of Christ. As United Methodists, we haven't done a lot with the Second Coming, but it is a reality, and we may be closer to the Second Coming this year, especially with all of the economic developments that we have been seeing on the news and even experiencing ourselves.

Another element of keeping awake has to do with being awake to what really matters. This means that we should live each day with faith, love, and a spirit of service to others. We should make time for spiritual disciplines along with spending time with family, especially ones who are ill and becoming increasingly frail. Telling them you love them is not a bad thing. It is even a good thing, and you will be so glad you did if they ever pass away unexpectedly. We have a great way of denying death.

So, in this season of Thanksgiving and Advent, Keep Awake! Be open to the possibilities of new beginnings and the hope and expectations that come with the new Christian Year and all the preparations involved in welcoming the Christ Child into our hearts and homes once again this year!

Sincerely in Christ,

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



Mission

It's Easy to Help

\$10 to buy, distribute and educate... so little to save a life, and you can help!

This little girl in the pink dress who was showing her blue pinky nail to all the other little children around her. **Every child had blue marks on their pinkies, but that did not stop this little girl from being proud of hers.**



And proud she should be, for after being so patient on a hot November day, she was able to be vaccinated for measles, get a Vitamin A supplement and de-worming medicine (however unpleasant they may have tasted), **and receive a life-saving insecticide-treated bed net.** It was a big day for such a little person.

News Flash!!!

NOTHING BUT NETS fundraising is going strong at CCUMC sponsored by the 5th and 6th grade Sunday School class. This industrious group of entrepreneurs is raising money for missions to prevent families in Africa from dying from malaria. \$10 buys one mosquito net to protect a family of four from this dreaded and frequently fatal disease that is totally preventable. We will be selling crafts made from "nets" to raise enough money for 100 nets by June. Look for our crafts and funky orange box to make your contributions. We may be small in number but we are mighty for missions! There are only four children in this class but they are powerful with "can do attitudes"! See Sadie, Rachel, Lance or Kyle for more information.

Note from Outreach

Wow!! Did you see all those gaily wrapped Shoe boxes November 16th? There were over 100 and more coming! Another GREAT mission at CCUMC! Thank you Youth group for all your kind acts and strong arms to carry these colorful presents to needy children world wide.



In addition to great community mission opportunities such as *SIHN* at *Grace House*, we are looking for persons to form home visitation teams to visit our home bound elders and persons with illness or other trials that may be keeping them from worship.

We will be promoting all the great mission projects that are going on here in our local church and also globally. There is a terrific magazine "New World Outlook" that the Methodist church publishes that promotes "Good News" and all the wonderful mission activities that our mission apportionments fund. It is a welcome relief from all the bad news and sensationalism we are exposed to every day. And it is also pretty neat to see where your money goes!

Stayed tuned for more news about missions. And tune up for **Christmas caroling December 14th or 21st** Local mission work, no money needed, just a willing heart and smile! Announcements will be coming.

Outreach/Mission Chair,

Marilyn Gerrard

Mission

There is a lot of mission work going on in the Sunday School right now. Thank you to everyone who donated their leftover Halloween candy for Friendly House, we collected just over 25 pounds of candy. They are much appreciative of the donation.

I would like to thank our 3rd & 4th grade class for hosting coffee hour this past Sunday. There were lots of delectable treats. With the way the economy is and such a great need we are going to try to revitalize our food pantry.

The 4th Sunday has been designated Food collection Sunday. Each class will help collect food at the 10:30 service. Notices were given out to the congregation this past Sunday with reminder stickers.

We never know when it may be us or a church family member in need.

Operation Christmas Child

Wow! You, the church, donated over 110 shoeboxes to Samaritans Purse. What a great effort by everyone. The holidays can be a hard time for many, but for children it may be the hardest. Just think, you brightened the lives of over 100 children and more than likely their families too. Thank you to everyone who donated boxes.

Pet Food Drive to benefit Second Chance Animal Shelter and Food Pantries in elderly complexes.

Second Chance Animal Shelter in E. Brookfield is in dire need of pet food. Would you consider donating to this worthy cause. The wish list is first and foremost kitten food, in order to start the many kittens at the shelter off to a nutritious start Purina or Iams dry kitten food is preferred also adult cat food, dry and canned needed and of course dog food, dry and canned.



Second Chance shares its pet food with Food Pantries located in elderly complexes thus allowing the residents to have access to the pet food and not worry about how they can afford to feed their pets.

A "Pet Pantry" cabinet will be located right next to our food pantry on the landing leading to downstairs where you can leave your donations. For those that would rather give a monetary donation which will be greatly appreciated you can see Joan, Bruce Guardiani or Marion, Al Sergel.



This is a season of Thanks and Giving and what better way to share our many blessings than with God's creatures. Let's get behind these deserving pets and give them their Second Chance.

Thank you so very much. *Joan Guardiani*

Needed



Hats, scarves and mittens during the month of December to give to the people living at Grace House in Southbridge



Thank You

Thank you:

- Norm Ellis for printing the Annual Report, Directories and church letterhead.
- for all the clothes everyone brought in for the Maine mission.
- our neighbor who brought "meals in a jar" for thanksgiving baskets.
- For giving over 100 shoeboxes
- For over \$90,000 in pledges, so far.
- For giving of yourself to SIHN
- To all the apple pie bakers
- To all who bring in canned food on the fourth Sunday of the month
- For the candy for Friendly House

All our musicians and singers have been working hard to prepare for Advent and the celebration of the birth of Christ. Please join us in worship and get into the spirit of this holy season.

As this year draws to a close, I want thank all who have contributed to our music program. The choirs, soloists and the children have been such a blessing. I thank each and every one of you for your dedication. Most of all I thank God for your talent! We look forward to next year to do the things we wish we had done this past year.

I wish you and your families a blessed Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

Joyfully,
Marion Sergel



APPLE PIES

The apple pie committee would like to thank everyone for their donations, hard work and salesmen skills. We made a total of 446 pies with 444 to sell. Wow! What will next year bring? Fun was had by all, there was something to do for everyone, from slicing to packaging to cleaning.

We do have some pies left if you did not put your order in yet. Please see one of us. We will be baking pies for November 23rd and December 6th for the craft fair. Please let us know if you want a baked pie either of those days ahead of time. Hope to see you next year at this fun event.

Again thank you

Priscilla Walker, Lynne Ellis, Karenlee Hickey

From the Secretary's Desk

- The Church Address List is available in the office.
- If you use office supplies please leave a note on the desk. We have run out of toner cartridges because someone used the last cartridge without letting anyone know. The same goes for paper, envelopes, etc. Supplies in the office are for church use but let me know if you use anything that looks as if it is running low.
- If you have an insert for the Sunday bulletin please send me an email or leave a note on the desk. Items are being duplicated and other notices are being shortened or omitted.

Thanks, *Hannah Darling*



Holiday Fair



The All Church Holiday Fair is coming up on Dec. 6, 2008 from 9am to 3 pm. White Elephant items can be dropped off by special arrangement with Cindy @248-4676, or on Sundays when the church is open for services.

Set up for the Fair will be on Thursday, Dec. 4th, from 4 to 7pm, and any items for the fair can be dropped off then. We will also have drop-off on Friday Dec. 5th from 4 to 7pm.

Please don't forget to make cookies for the Sunday School cookie table, and baked items for the bake table (please remember to include a list of ingredients per order of Board of Health for our allergy sensitive friends).

Also, our Silent Auction will feature many area donations from local banks and stores. Don't forget to come and shop for homemade Christmas gifts, and stay for the men's delicious luncheon of homemade soups and sandwiches and our famous homemade apple pie for dessert.

There will be something for everyone! Hope to see you there! This is a great way to support the church and get your holiday shopping done, all in one place!

The Brimfield Area Master Singers

DECEMBER 9TH - 7:00 P.M.

We are delighted to welcome back the Brimfield Area Singers for their Christmas Concert "Gifts" on December 9th at 7:00 p.m. Please mark your calendars and join us for a joyous celebration of the season of Christmas. We are looking at ways to utilize our beautiful church and open it up to the community.

We need your support to make the performers feel they are really welcome here. There is no charge, but a free will offering will be taken. Light refreshments will be served in Fellowship Hall after the concert..



Dates to Remember

Clean-Up Day
Saturday, November 28

All working together can accomplish a lot!

Worship Times

The Christmas season will soon be here and the December Sunday Church Services are as follows:

- **December 7th** two services at 8:00 and 10:30
- **December 14th** one service at 10:30
- **December 21st** one service at 10:30
- **December 24th** Christmas Eve Service at 5:00
- **December 28th** only one service at 10:30

- **November 26th** Thanksgiving Eve Service
- **December 14th** Christmas Pageant
- **December 19th** Men's Group Christmas dinner
- **December 24th** Christmas Eve Service
- **4th Sunday of every month** Can Sunday
- **December** Mitton, Hats and Scarfs
- **January 28th** United Methodist Women



Men's Fellowship

Our suppers have been a great success; thanks to all who attended, and especially to those who worked and others who stepped up to the plate when we were shorthanded. With these successful suppers, we have been able to make some large donations to people in need. We have also given 10% of the profit from the suppers to Pastor Paul for the Discretionary Fund so he can assist others who he has knowledge of are in need.

We donated a new apple corer-slicer to the Church and built a draft wall for Fellowship Hall.

The Men have agreed to host coffee hour on the first Sunday of the month and will continue to _try_ to sing on the third Sunday of each month.

We look forward to a relaxing winter and our Christmas Party which will be held at the Spencer Country Inn on December 19th at 6:30 p.m.

We are eager to serve our Brothers and Sisters in Christ in the coming year.

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

A big thank you to all the women who helped to make apple pies. This was a really big project to make over 400 pies and we did it. Thank you to Priscilla, Lynne and Karenlee for being co-chairs.

Our winter clothing drive ended on November 16th and we will be delivering the clothes to Epworth Methodist Church on November 22nd, where a truck will be waiting to take them to Salem, Maine. Thank you to all who donated such a variety of warm and clean items. You filled two cars and a truck with your generosity.

We will be collecting hats, scarves and mittens during the month of December to give to the people living at Grace House in Southbridge.

We elected officers at our last meeting with Claudia Blauvelt as treasurer and Judy Crowley as secretary. We do not currently have a president, but we will continue to meet monthly. If there is anyone who would like to serve as president please see Jean Anderson.

We have successfully completed the Bronze Mission Giving Program of the Central District of United Methodist Women, which is a step up from last year. Who knows, maybe next year we can go for gold.

I wish to thank everyone who supported me so wonderfully this past year and once again I want to thank God for the healing He has given to Marilyn Gerrard, may she continue to work for His kingdom.

Jean Anderson

Christmas Pageant

The Christmas Pageant is under way. We have been practicing during Sunday school and I hope those that have tapes have been practicing at home. The pageant will be December 14th with a snow date of December 21st.

There will be Sunday School on December 21st if there is no pageant. Also, there is no Sunday School on December 28th (vacation week).

Remember please ask your child's teacher if there are any notices or news you need to know.

CMA District Workshop

Worship in a New Day

St. Matthew's: Acton, MA., December 1, 2008.

The Conference staff is conducting a variety of practical workshops to give local churches more information and resources to help enhance worship experiences in the local church.

6:30 pm	Gathering
6:45 pm	Worship
7:00 – 8:00 pm	Workshops
8:15 – 9:15 pm	Workshops

There are 7 workshops*, each exploring a different aspect of "Worship in a New Day". Each workshop will be offered twice during each session, so participants can choose two of the offerings

- **Sweet & Sour: Hitting the Right Note in Worship Music.**
- *Curtis Brown, Director of Congregational Development.*
- **Creativity and Worship.** - *Alexx Wood, Director of Communications.*
- **Worship: It's Not Just For Sunday.** - *Wanda Stahl, Director of Spiritual Formation.*
- **Worship for People Who Aren't Here.** - *James McPhee, Director of Connectional Ministries*
- **Worship in a World at War: Finding Space for Peace with Justice on Sunday Mornings.**
- *Mike Clark, New England Conference Peace and Justice Coordinator.**
- **Engaging Today's Youth in Worship.** - *Jennifer Carpenter, Director of Camp. Aldersgate**
- **Ushered into the Presence of God: Worship as a Powerful, Key Spiritual Formation Practice*.**
- *Larry Peacock, Director of Rolling Ridge Retreat and Conference. Center**

All clergy and laity are invited to attend! Registration is **FREE**. As a courtesy, please contact the local church to let them know how many are coming from your church.

COOKIES, COOKIES, COOKIES!!!!



The Sunday School will once again be sponsoring a cookie table at the church fair on December 6th. Patrons are able to purchase a decorated coffee can for either \$2 or \$5. They get to fill their can with an assortment of cookies from the table. This is always a popular table.

Would you please consider donating cookies for the table, there is a sign up sheet in the narthex. They may be your favorite kind, a family secret, one that has been passed down through the generations or maybe one you saw in a magazine that you want to try. Start a tradition with your son or daughter, granddaughter or grandson, niece or nephew or if old enough let your child bake some themselves. Please bring them Friday night, December 5th or Saturday, December 6th.

You need to include a list of ingredients (for allergies and diet restrictions). Also please label your container if you wish to have it returned to you. We are also looking for clean coffee cans. If you have any there is a box under the sign up table for collection.


Thank you

The Sunday School



Next Newsletter Deadline—December 17th

November 26th	7:30 pm	Thanksgiving Eve Service
November 28 th	9 am	Clean Up Day
November 30th		First Sunday of Advent
December 1 st		District Workshops* - /*Worship in a New Day
December 4 th		Help set up Fair. Bring in your items for the Holiday Fair
December 5 th		Bring in items for Holiday Fair
December 6 th	9—3 pm	Holiday Fair
December 9th		Collecting hats, scarves and mittens for Grace House in Southbridge
December 9 th	7 pm	Brimfield Area Singers Christmas Concert "Gifts"
December 14 th	10:30 am	Pageant
December 17th		January Newsletter Deadline
December 19 th		Men's Fellowship Christmas Dinner
December 21 st	10:30 am	Snow date for Pageant
December 28 th		No Sunday School
January 28 th	7 pm	UMW


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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