

SPIRIT SONG

“THE CALL TO MINISTRY”

Dear Members and Friends,

January 21, 2009

This article finds us in the middle of winter, with snow piled up all around us, ice beneath us (be careful), cold in the air, and many of us ticking off the days until spring. It is about 59 days 'til spring, by the way. But who's counting?

We now have a new president who will do his best to handle all of the problems which have piled up. The two wars and the economy seem to be top priorities, but I am sure there are other things that will be pressing. It seems like there will always be a need for the church and the faith that it proclaims.

I ended up spending more time at the post office than usual today. That is after I was able to get a parking place. It seemed that everybody parked crazy today. They parked kitty corner and in the middle of two places. Getting a parking place at the post office is a lot like the weather. If you wait a minute, you get one, just like if you don't like it, it will change. The downside is that if you like the weather, it will change, too. But we have heard that it has been cold in Florida, too, but it will get warmer a lot sooner in Florida than here.

However, in the middle of winter, we are still called to ministry. We are called to be here in church regardless of the weather. When the postmistress asked how things were going in church this afternoon, I said that we were struggling to stay opened. What I meant by that was that we were struggling to stay here during all of the snowstorms on Sunday. She thought we were having other problems. She thought that since things were so bad in the economy, people would be flocking to church. That still may happen, although it has not taken place yet.

As Christians, we are all called to ministry. We are called to the ministry of the laity in our baptisms as we believe in the priesthood of all believers. Each of us can have a valid ministry with others. Some may be in work, school, community functions, and even among family members and in families. It may be among the strangers we meet at the post office, grocery store, bank, or any other place that we do business in. It may be among the strangers who appear at our door and want to warm up and get their car going again.

Pastors are called to a special ordained ministry in which they are set aside for word, order and sacrament, in the United Methodist Church. Some may fight their call for as long as forty years, while others accept their call at an earlier age through a variety of different circumstances. Not many people answer their call as quick as Simon Peter and Andrew. It takes a while, because we like to think that it is our idea that we accept God's call when it is really God's. The sooner we realize that, the better.

While we continue to go through the season of Epiphany and seek to reach out to the world with the light of Christ, we know that God needs disciples to carry out his mission. We do so through missions, social concerns, and outreach to the entire world. We know that we will not convert the world in one year or one Epiphany Season. It will be an ongoing process. The important thing is that we try to be in mission and to fill some of the world's needs. We know that we will be able to grow in our discipleship in the next season of the Christian Year which is Lent.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, which this year is on February 25th. Lent is symbolic of the 40 days that Jesus spent in the wilderness being tempted by the devil and preparing for his ministry. May our ministries be strengthened by the Spirit which is with us now helping us get through this time and enabling us to reach new heights and new avenues for God in the days ahead.

Sincerely in Christ,

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

CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

Old Man Winter has surely played havoc on the Sunday School this season. I don't remember a year that we cancelled twice and almost a third time. We hope everyone had a nice holiday. Thank you to all for coming to the Christmas Pageant despite the snow that was falling that morning. I thank everyone for helping out and participating. A special thank you goes to Kris Gerrard who stepped in as "Old Joseph" that morning. He did a remarkable job.

All these snow days, including this past Sunday, January 18th will not count against the perfect attendance policy. We will try to contact everyone if there is to be no Sunday school, as well as Lisa Westwell will have it posted on the church website, but if you do not get a call, please use your judgment, we do not want anyone hurt during this snowy season.

Please keep these dates on your calendar:

March 1st: Pretzel Sunday and beginning of Heifer Project. The kids will be making pretzels instead of class, please dress casual, they will get dirty.

March 1st – April 19th: The children will be earning money for Heifer Project. They are to do extra chores for you or someone to earn extra money to donate towards an animal for Heifer Project. Each week we will learn more about this exciting cause.

April 12th: 'EASTER' No Sunday School

June 14th: Children's Sunday. A play and picnic will be the activities of the day.

Thank you to the teachers for all your hard work And to the congregation for all of your support.

God's Servant

Karenlee Hickey

THANK YOU

- The Ashton family would like to thank everyone for their cards and prayers with Mom's death two weeks ago. Sincerely, Steve & Janice
- Thank you to all for your gift at Christmas. Time marches on and it's hard to believe another year has come and gone. We have enjoyed serving you and are very appreciative of your generosity to us. Marion and Al
- Thank you to Kris Gerrard who stepped in as "Old Joseph" during the Christmas Pageant

PUBLICITY & ANNOUNCEMENTS

As many of you know we would like to eliminate announcements during the Sunday worship.

Publicity is very important so we are asking you to:

- Contact Kris Gerrard—He will publicize your event in the local newspapers, radio and web page as well as on the PowerPoint presentation before worship.(kgerrard@charter.net or phone 774 230-3377)
- Email or leave announcements in the church office for inclusion in the Sunday bulletin.
- If you want an insert in the bulletin, please leave it on the desk as well as sending a copy by email if possible. The office may need to reduce the size of the announcement so that people don't have to shuffle all this paper in the Sunday bulletin. This will save wear and tear on the copier as well as saving paper.
- Make a poster for the Narthex and Fellowship Hall.

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

The Men's Fellowship has slowed down for the winter months. Our Christmas Party, which was postponed from December 19th, was held at the Spencer Country Inn on January 16th. We enjoyed a good meal and a fun evening with our Yankee Swap.

We are donating \$100.00 to Jeremiah's Inn. Some of the Ralph Reinhold memorial funds will be used to buy a living memorial fir tree to be planted out front of the Church and hopefully, lighted for years to come. This idea came from memories of Ralph selling Christmas trees at our old Church. Also, some monies will be used to purchase additional dishes as we are running short of place settings for our suppers.

Joe and Celeste Couture were going to speak on one of their recent trips at our February meeting; however, we were asked to prepare a wedding dinner for Nathan White and Linda Francis on February 14th, which we are looking forward to doing. Hopefully Joe and Celeste can schedule another date.

March is just around the corner and we will be in full swing again as we start our new year with our corned beef and cabbage dinner. We hope to see you there as we continue our work for the Church and missions.

We are always looking for new members so don't be shy! We meet on the second Thursday of each month and would love to have you there!

John R. Hunt, President

WE ARE SO EXCITED TO HAVE A WONDERFUL EVENING OF MUSIC PLANNED FOR MARCH 14TH AT 7:00 P.M.

Some of us have heard the group Shiloh before, but if you haven't you are in for a special treat. They are a five piece acoustic band that plays Southern Gospel, Folk and Bluegrass. They were part of our Grand Opening Celebration at church and we are so lucky to finally have them back again.



Plan to come for dinner prepared by our awesome cooks and stay for a high spirited, hand clapping, Jesus loving concert.

There is no charge only a free will offering will be accepted.

LENTEN STUDY

This Lent there will be a study entitled *Three Simple Rules* by Ruenben Job. It will consist of a book and a DVD, which we discuss. The meetings times will on Wednesday nights at 7:00 p.m. beginning March 4th and continuing for the next four weeks. We will move off of Wednesdays to Thursdays for the last two meetings.

We will also have a meeting on Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. beginning on March 5th and continuing for the next four Thursdays.

Please sign up on the table in the Narthex. Books are \$5.00 each.

Any questions, please see Pastor Paul.

WORSHIP TEAM

Recently a survey was done by a sampling of our membership. Thank you for your honesty in answering some tough questions. We will try to address some of your comments that can be done quickly. Others will need time and a positive response from our congregation.

We feel that the introduction of media into our worship experience is a very positive one. Please be patient with us as we feel our way through the process of adapting it for our congregation. We are working on creating a permanent space off the altar area. This will take money to purchase the equipment which will work best in our sanctuary. Kris Gerrard is working on a proposal with Andrew Anderson to find the best fit and still be cost effective. In the meantime we will be changing the format of the presentation to gradually lead us into a time of meditation and personal prayer prior to the start of our worship service.

We believe the announcement section in our Sunday Bulletin disrupts the flow of our total worship experience and will be removing that time slot from the bulletin. All announcements should be given to Hannah Darling and Kris Gerrard to be included in the Sunday Bulletin and in the power point presentation at the beginning of the service. They can also be given as hand outs on Sunday morning in the Narthex area and printed in the monthly newsletter.

We will be planning several months ahead for liturgists, ushers, and acolytes. We would like everyone in our congregation to participate in some manner during our Sunday services, so please say yes when you are asked.

We would like to implement drama, dance and different styles of music into our worship time. We can't do these things without the use of your gifts and talents. If anyone feels this may be an area in which they could serve, please contact Jean Anderson.

The next Worship Team meeting will be on February 28th at 10:00 a.m., and the Music Team will meet at 9:00 a.m.

WANAKEE UNITED METHODIST CENTER—MAINE

Two Great Events are coming up and there's still room for participants—call 603-279-7950 or email mail@wanakee.org to register.

Wild Wanakee Women: Need that break from the family and job? Need to be rejuvenated? Come be a Wild Wanakee Women and enjoy a different side of Wanakee! Be a couch potato without guilt or enjoy the snow with your skis or snowshoes. Come and enjoy Wanakee as Spring is breaking forth. Hike in the woods or down to the lake. No matter the season, you'll enjoy the company of other women to grow in faith and friendship.

Two dates: February 6-8 2009 and May 1-3, 2009

\$75 (For Women ages 18+)

Maple Sugar Weekend: Spend time with a special someone as you learn the art of Backyard Sugaring. For the third year, participants will spend the weekend making maple syrup and friends. We'll start by tapping trees around camp and then spend time 'sugaring off' before enjoying a pancake breakfast with your homemade syrup. A great event for a parent and child that wants to spend some time together making sweet memories.

March 27-29 \$160 for adult and child grades 4-7

CHURCH CALENDAR

Please send the office dates for the calendar. EVERYONE needs to place dates on the church calendar. If you are using the church for any meetings, project or other purpose, we need to have that on the calendar.

Remember the church calendar is on our website and also at <http://calendar.yahoo.com/ccumc74>

NURTURE COMMITTEE

The Nurture Committee is responsible for education, worship, Christian formation, membership care, small groups and stewardship. Its purpose is to nurture faith and build a Christian community.

We will be updating the church Prayer Chain, to involve more of our members. Look for a sign up sheet in your Sunday Bulletin.

We are initiating a Mentoring and Welcoming Committee. If anyone would like to become part of this program please see a member of the Nurture Team.

Spiritual Retreat - We will be looking into ways to help our congregation become more committed to their spiritual growth process.

Pastor Paul will be planning a Lenten Study, more information to follow.

Our next meeting will be on April 4th at 9:00 a.m.

Nurture Committee members: Jean Anderson, , Kris Gerrard, Susan Gunnell, Karenlee Hickey, John Hunt, John Kelley, Pastor Paul Samuelson, Marion Sergel, and Shellie Wilson.

SIHN

Mission: Provide overnight supervision and meals to guests residing at "Grace House", in Southbridge.

When: February 25 - March 1
June 3 - 7

Serve: If you would like to learn more about supporting this important mission please contact any of our coordinators, Vicki Foskett, Lori Pickering and John Hunt

CAN YOU HELP ON SUNDAY'S?

REFRESHMENTS: We have volunteers to provide refreshments on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 5th Sundays. We need your help on the 4th Sunday of each month. The sign-up sheets are in the narthex. Please fill in the blanks.

Nursery: After the Children's Sermon we need adult help in the Nursery. We have youth to help but we also need adult supervision. The sign-up sheets are in the narthex. Select your favorite week.



MEET JORDAN JOYCE RUSSELL

Here is Pastor Paul introducing Jordan to the congregation after her baptism. Jordan is the infant daughter of Ken and Robin (Best) Russell of Charlton. God parents are Mike and Donna Kenney.

WELCOME TO THE PARKINSON'S

Welcome Jeff and Wendy Parkinson and their children Evan and Ashley Lane from Sturbridge.

MISSION/OUTREACH COMMITTEE NEWS



- Love to eat fabulous food? Join us for our Valentines Italian Buffet, Saturday **February 7**, Fellowship Hall, 5:50 to 6:30, sign ups close 2-1-09, see Marilyn Gerrard or call 248-7818. Bring your families favorite Italian meal to share. Bring a neighbor, friend or family member, who usually doesn't come to church. It is a great way to spend a cold winter night with friends and delicious food.
- Home visitation teams are being formed to visit elders and those folks on our prayer list. See Marilyn Gerrard or Denise Renaud for information.
- Our next hosting week for Grace House-SIHN is the last week of **February 2-25** to 3-1-09. Lori Pickering, Vicki Foskett and John Hunt are eagerly looking forward to signing up volunteers for this vital mission work in our backyard with women, children and families at risk. SIHN-Southbridge Interfaith Hospitality Network is an organization of 14 local churches doing God's work to save families from very serious situations. See Lori, Vicki or John to volunteer or the sign up sheet in the Narthex.
- Get your walking shoes ready for CROP Walk on **March 29**, 2009 Sunday, registration 12:30 at Central Baptist Church in Southbridge. This is a great International Mission project; our church has been a strong sponsoring church for many years. This is a great family walk and there are 3 levels to choose. "Walking Papers" will be available as the time gets closer.
- Speaking of great missions...the youth group is planning their 30 Hour Famine **April 10 & 11**. Cindy Ertsgard and Marilyn Gerrard are looking for help. There will be approximately 30 wonderful teenagers to keep occupied for those 30 hours and we would love some adult helpers. I promise you, you will get warm fuzzy feelings working with these great youth.

CHOLERA IN ZIMBABWE

On top of everything that Zimbabwe is going through; the current economic crisis, lack of essential services such as electricity, refuse collection; medicine for public hospitals and clinics; this country had been hit with a serious water crisis that has brought about a devastating cholera epidemic that threatens to kill many people at a scale that has never been seen before in Zimbabwe. This is an added threat to the AIDS/HIV and the malaria epidemic and food crisis that has already crippled the country. This is an issue that affects everyone in the country at every level and it affects the infrastructure of the country. A lot has been done in the country and is being done about the AIDS/HIV, malaria and food shortage. Still a lot more remains to be done.

All things are depended on water; be it agriculture, manufacturing, mining, tertiary and even households, they all need water on a daily basis. Water is the fountain of life. The present situation in Zimbabwe and particularly in Harare, the capital city is that there is no adequate clean and safe water available for both domestic and commercial use. There are rivers and lakes available but the water is not suitable for human consumption before it is chemically treated. The necessary chemicals to treat the water for human consumption are scarce. As a result, a water supply in the urban homes is rationed by being turned off at irregular intervals (by the authorities), which varies from a day to a period of more than three weeks. Because of the unavailability of tape water for long intervals, residences have resorted to unprotected water sources such as streams, ponds, rivers and lakes. People are fetching water from these sources for household chores including bathing, for washing their clothes and flushing toilets. Some are even using that contaminated water for consumption. These sources are contaminated with industrial wastes and chemicals. Some have dug shallow wells to get their water from and have dug shallow pits to use as latrines. This in its self is a healthy hazard. This has created an outbreak of cholera in the high-density areas, which is spreading at an alarming rate. So far it has killed almost 700 people in less than 2

(Cholera—continued. from previous page) months. In the low-density areas the situation is better because some who stay in these low-density areas have sunk boreholes at their own cost and some are selling this borehole water to their neighborhoods and community.

In Zimbabwe, the common person do not use cutlery for eating, but their hands. For greeting people shake hands. With not enough water to wash hands with, this will certainly spread the diseases. People are no longer able to observe basic hygiene practices such as washing hands after visiting the toilet or washing hands before and after eating.

The situation is worse in high-density areas where the majority of the population resides and there are no individuals who can afford to sink boreholes. Hence, the biggest concern is the high-density dwellers. They have nowhere to turn. They cannot afford to buy basic foodstuffs and the idea of sinking a borehole is as good as daydreaming. Their only way out is to fetch water from whatever source available regardless of whether it is safe or not. Due to the persistent electricity power cuts they have no way of boiling the water before using it. Firewood is scarce and expensive such that the little firewood that they can get they reserve it for cooking. With the raining season approaching these shallow wells will feed into each other and this will definitely accelerate the spread of cholera.

Drilling boreholes is the best way to assist the people in the high-density areas and this will provide them with clean water sources to care for their families that are close to their homes. One borehole can assist more than 100 families. There is abundant ground water in most parts of Harare. One borehole, which will cost \$4 850 - \$5000 will go a long way.

In response to the current devastating catastrophe being faced by the Zimbabwean people, the Rev Tsitsi Moyo invites you to participate with the South Walpole UMC in the Zimbabwe mission project to fight against cholera and the prevailing water situation in Zimbabwe. Contributions are being sought to help to eradicate the problem of cholera in Zimbabwe.

Tsitsi's dream is to drill boreholes at church sites starting with St Andrews UMC, were she was pastor before she came to the States. This will be a great service to the most silent, invisible, and poorest members of the society; who when in such situations suffer most: children who are most at risk of dying from cholera, diarrhea and all the water bone diseases, for they do not know how to protect themselves and women and the girls who have to walk for miles to fetch water and carry it on their heads.

Mothers will be saved from burying their children, and taking care of their families will be made easier. This will save those who have weak immune system for they are at high risk and cholera could be a death sentence for them. The aged will benefit since the water will be nearer to them. Thus, this is a project will benefit everybody in the Zimbabwe society.

Your involvement as a church, or as an organization, or as an individual will be greatly appreciated and will significantly contribute to the eradication of the deadly cholera disease, which is now wrecking havoc in Zimbabwe. This Christmas, as you receive God's greatest gift of love that God gave through God's son; For the Bible tells us: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life". As you will be receiving this precious gift given to you by God Almighty, as you will be opening presents from family members, loved ones and friends; please remember the mothers of Zimbabwe and their children. Remember the people of Zimbabwe. The gift they need at this time is water. Give a glass of water. May the LORD Almighty bless y ou.

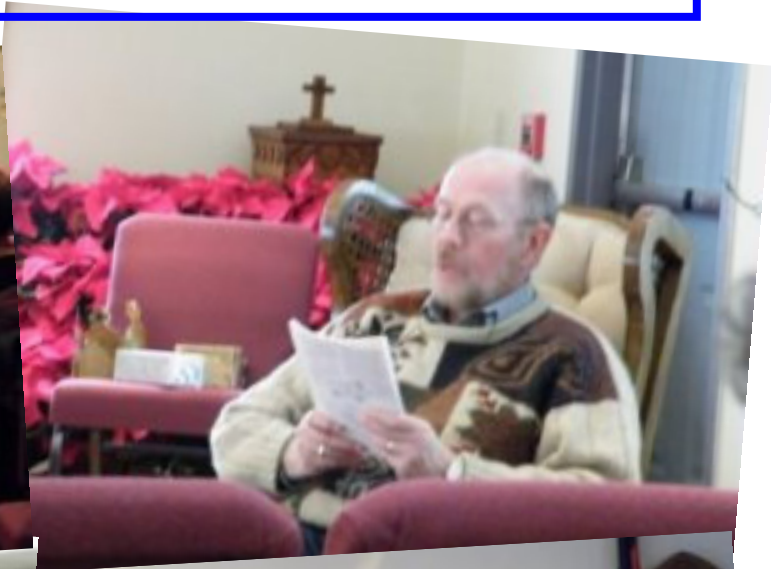
Donations can be send to South Walpole United Methodist church and should be clearly marked "Mission Zimbabwe". Also things like hand sanitizers; bacterial soaps; anti-cholera tablets (over the counter); water purifying tablets; diarrhea medication and disposable cutlery are desperately needed. These can brought to the church office or can be mailed to :

Rev Tsitsi Moyo
South Walpole United Methodist Church
1886 Washington Street P.O. Box 144
South Walpole MA 02071.

Next Newsletter Deadline—February 18th

.DATES TO REMEMBER

Wed	Jan 28	7 pm	UMW
Sat	Jan 31	9 am.....	Music Committee
		10 am.....	Worship Committee
Sun	Feb 1	Souper Bowl Sunday
		9 am.....	8 am Worship Service meeting
Sat`	Feb 7	Valentine Italian Buffet
Thur	Feb 12	7 pm	Men's Fellowship
Sat	Feb 14	12 pm	Wedding
	Feb 21—Mar 1	SIHN
Sun	Mar 1	Pretzel Sale for Heifer
Wed	Mar 4	7 pm	Lenten Study
Thur	Mar 5	10 am.....	Lenten Study
Sat	Mar 14	5:30 pm.....	Men's Corned Beef Supper
		7 pm	Shiloh Concert



Upper Left: Christmas Eve—Upper Right: KRIS as Joseph—Lower Right: Crowd—Lower Left: Karen Lee—Director