



SPIRIT SONG

Natural Church Development and the Holy Spirit

Dear Members and Friends,

April 21, 2009

With Easter being over for another year, we are now in the season of Easter and in the fifty days to Pentecost. Pentecost is at the end of this month, and it celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit on the church and actually creating the church.

While other churches may be thinking about winding down and coasting to summer when everyone in New England takes the summer off from church, we are embarking upon a new program. We are starting Natural Church Development which is a program of church growth based upon, all by itself growth, the way God intended it. We have had a couple of false starts before, but now, it seems like we are on the right track.

We have met with our new coach, Pete Schilling, and he has been introduced to the congregation. The church health team has met a couple of times and has other meetings scheduled. We have been learning about Natural Church Development by reading and discussing the book, *Color Your World with Natural Church Development*. We have been organizing our campaign, setting dates, ordering surveys, and communicating with you. You will be hearing more about this in this newsletter and in church in the next few Sundays. You've already heard a little bit these past Sundays.

In the past, churches have tried to grow on their own. They have adopted this or that plan which might have worked in other areas, but may or may not work in ours. Natural Church Development takes the gifts that God has given the church and puts them together with the basic characteristics of any church, and then miraculously, the church grows, according to God's plan. In the books, there is a cartoon of a wagon with square wheels on it with round wheels in the box. It shows two people, working hard to push and pull the wagon. The wagon is likened to the church, which all too often uses programs and resources that are hard to use and may be outdated and have lost their usefulness. The sad part is that there are resources in the bed of the wagon that could be used to make the wagon go easier, if the men would just change the wheels, from the square ones to the round ones.

One of the resources is the Holy Spirit, which is alive and active in each local church. It never ceases to amaze me that the Holy Spirit shows up at church and connects things. Just last Sunday, our member who is in charge of PowerPoint showed me a slide about being happy before the worship service. I looked at it, and then went on to something else. During the sermon, I made mention of a young woman who had been shot by a classmate while in high school, leaving her paralyzed and wheelchair bound for the rest of her life. Instead of being bitter and miserable, she chose to forgive her assailant and even visit him in prison. She credits her faith for helping her to be able to do this. And she even wrote a book, which was entitled, *I Choose to Be Happy*.

After the service, our member came up to me and asked, "What was that all about?" He was referring to his including the slide on happiness in his power point show and my mention of the woman who chose to be happy and forgive the person who shot her. I said, "It was the Holy Spirit at work, showing up, and making the connection, and He so often does."

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On May 31st, we will celebrate Pentecost in our church. Pentecost is the coming of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian Church. As I have already said earlier, the Holy Spirit is always present in each local church. May we continue to recognize the presence of the Holy Spirit in our church as we continue our Natural Church Growth Process, and as we grow in our discipleship and our church grows as a result of our yielding to God's power and we become more than we have ever thought we could become, because of His Love, His Presence, and His Grace!

Sincerely in Christ,

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

Church Health Team

NCD Health Team members include Pastor Paul, Lori Pickering, Jean Anderson, Lynn Ellis, Jim Hall, John Hunt and Diane Samuelson. We have had one meeting with our "Coach" Pete Schilling and our first meeting on our own.

We have organized ...team leader, Jean., strategic thinker, Lori, communicator, Diane (with lots of help from Lori), and intercessor-Prayer team, John. We need some "Prayer Warriors" to help us along the journey, so don't be surprised if John gives you a call. Communication updates will start within the next two weeks..

Color Your World With Natural Church Development

The eight quality characteristics of growing churches....

Empowering Leadership

Passionate Spirituality

Inspiring Worship Service

Need-Oriented Evangelism

Gift-based Ministry

Effective Structures

Holistic Small Groups

Loving Relationships...

These eight characteristics cannot be missing from churches that are growing. They are set before you in no particular order, but are each so important to our church life. As individuals, you might find that one or two or more stick out in your mind as "special" (Please No Church Lady jokes)!!!

As part of this program 30 members of our congregation will be asked to stay after church on Sunday, May 3rd, to complete a survey. Our team chose the "first" 30 to participate in the survey under the guidance of our coach, Pete Schilling. I say the first 30 because we must repeat the survey within a year. This will take about 30 minutes of your time, plus a few minutes of instruction and answering questions. Each of the survey takers will receive a little booklet to read "The ABC's of Natural Church Development", prior to taking the survey. We followed the guidelines trying to include a broad cross section of lay people.

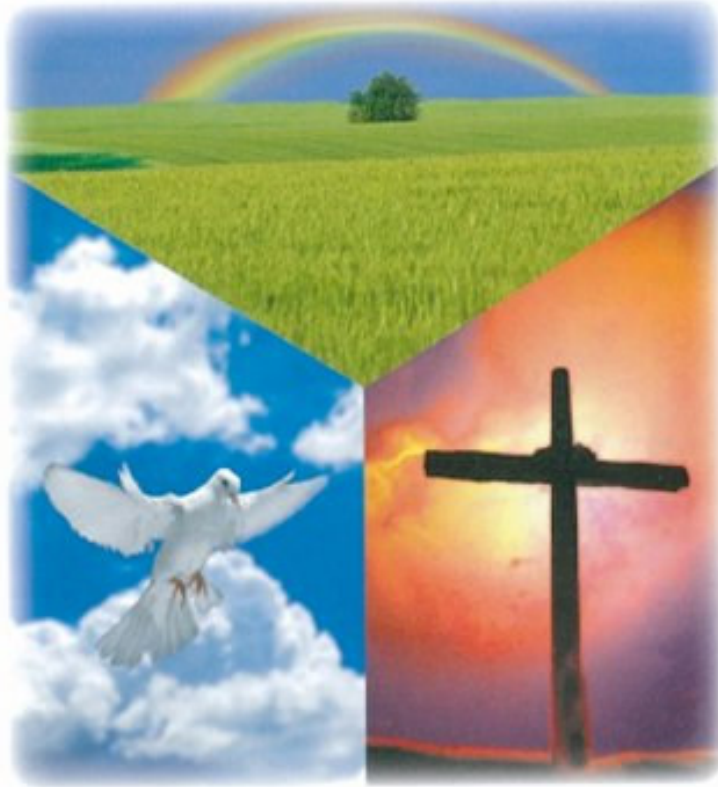
The surveys will be sent off to ChurchSmart Resources for evaluation. The return time should be within 2 weeks and discussion and explanation of the results will follow.

The 30 lay people will receive a call from a team member asking them to take the survey. Please consider the importance of giving 30 to 45 minutes of your time to help us with our NCD process.

Thank-you.. Remember God Loves YOU...Diane

The Trinitarian Compass: a way of seeing the one God, three persons (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) and of seeing where you can grow in your relationship with God. It provides a way for individuals and churches to identify strengths, limitations, and opportunities for spiritual development. When our church receives the results of our Color Profile, we will begin by celebrating our strengths! Then we will begin to look for creative ways to move deeper into the more opposite color zones (our minimum factors) resulting in actions that cultivate healthy growth.

WHAT DO THE COLORS STAND FOR?



RED represents **JESUS** and stands for the focus on Evangelism and Discipleship. It is the Proactive side.

BLUE represents **THE HOLY SPIRIT** and stands for the focus on Emotional Health and Spiritual Power. It is the Affective side.

GREEN represents **THE CREATOR** and stands for the focus on Tolerance and Social Justice. It is the Reflective side.

Thank You

A very special thank you to young people of the Charlton Methodist Church for a great job done at the home of Kern Julien in Sturbridge. A \$200 gift was given to the Youth Fellowship for their service.

Thank you,
Ken Julien

Outreach/Mission News for May



Wow has this place been hopping with missionaries of all ages! The children have raised over \$500 for **Heifer Project**-breaking all previous records, **CROP Walk** raised \$834 from our church alone despite the rainy dismal weather, and "**The Famine**" had 28 teenagers starving for 30 hours to raise big bucks and awareness about the poorest in Africa and Latin America. In addition the youth during "The Famine" participated in a scavenger hunt and turned in 700 pounds of food for **Food Share** in Southbridge. Thank you all who sponsored youth for the 30 Hour Famine, CROP Walkers and paid Heifer Project laborers. And a special thanks to all who put themselves on the front lines for Jesus. What we do does make a difference.



On April 4th a large number of folks from our church went to the training for Southbridge Interfaith Hospitality Network (**SIHN**). We met the new director Laura Kaplan and had an updated, "snapshot" of what our responsibilities are, the restructuring of policies and a chance to discuss joys and concerns church folks have experienced. Grace House is now full and we will be hosting again in May, so see Lori Pickering or Vicki Foskett when the new hosting schedule becomes available.

Reasons to Receive Newsletter by E-Mail

- Receive newsletter faster
- Read it in color
- Save a tree
- Save postage

If you are not receiving this by email send us an email or note with your email address.

Send it to CharltonCityUMC@verizon.net

Yard Sale—May 2

9—3 pm

Items can be dropped off:

Saturday morning April 25th 9-12pm

Sunday afternoon, April 26th, after church till 5pm and 6 to 7:30pm

(April 29th - May 1st) WED, THURS, and FRi evenings from from 5-8pm.

Large items should be dropped down at March Hall.

If you need help call Jim Hall on his cell. 508 450-8465. Jim will assemble a team to pick up and transport items too heavy for you to move.

Please Spread the Word

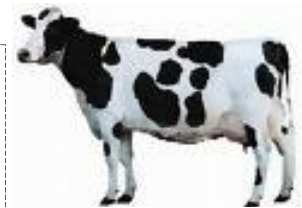
Sunday School News

Wow!!! We did it!!! Thank you to everyone that helped us raise enough money to send a heifer to a well deserving family and in turn help a village.

Practice is under way for our children's play "Donkey

Vacation Bible School

Keep July 28th, 29th and 30th open for VBS this summer. *



Tales". Please join us on Sunday, June 14th at 10:30 and learn how a lowly donkey helped spread God's message. Afterwards there will be an all church picnic with hamburgers and hot dogs and many, many complimentary dishes. There is a sign up on the Narthex table if you would like to bring something.

More details to follow.

Hope to see everyone on the **14th of June** for some laughs and then to socialize with the church family afterwards.

Karenlee Hickey

Strawberry Supper

Mark your calendars!! It is almost that time to think "summer" and with it, the scrumptious Strawberry Supper put on by the UMW. The date is set for **June 20th**, the day after school lets out. What a great way to celebrate the end of the school year by taking the family out to an unforgettable dinner, finished with luscious strawberry shortcake. Hope to see you all there



Men's Fellowship



The United Methodist Men continue to meet on the second Thursday of the month usually followed by the Men's supper on Saturday. Our meeting attendance has not been as strong as it should be, but we have been blessed with willing and able hands to help with our suppers. We enjoy working together to put on these suppers and appreciate the strong support and compliments by the community. It is just another way of keeping our Church active and visible.

We've been able to help in many areas of the Church and beyond in missions.

With money from the Ralph Reinhold Memorial Fund, we were able to purchase 48 additional place settings of dishes including silverware. We also purchased additional serving bowls as they were needed for a wedding dinner that we prepared for Linda and Nathan White. We have also been asked to prepare another one or more wedding dinners this year.

As many of you know, the balance of the Ralph Reinhold Memorial Fund will be used to buy a fir tree to be planted out front of the Church in Ralph's memory. Thank you to Yvonne, Ruth, and Linda for your support.

Finally, we'd be glad to buy a red bow tie for those men who would like to support us at our meetings or join us for singing on the third Sunday of the month!

Thanks and God Bless,
John Hunt
President

From the Lay Leader

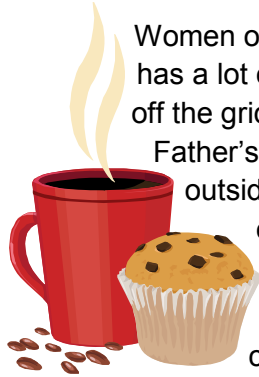
I don't have much to report as I have been busy in many other aspects of the Church; however, I have been able to visit several people in our Church. If you are aware of anyone who needs some help or would appreciate a visit, please let me know.

I believe you will all agree that we have a wonderful and beautiful Church, with great people with much love for each other. It takes all of us to keep our Church strong and growing which we are trying to do. Some may think that it just "happens" on a Sunday morning, but there are many people working behind the scenes; many for no compensation, and others for less than they deserve. I won't name names, but you know who you are. Here are just a few of the jobs that get done thanks to you: secretarial work; financial work; building maintenance; cooking; flowers and gardens (inside and out); wall hangings; improvements in our sanctuary (book racks); sight and sound; teachers and leaders; greeters; etc. In addition, we need You with a friendly smile or a warm handshake or both! It takes ALL of us!

Please continue your efforts to keep our Church strong and growing, and, please pray for your Church, and despite all the negative news we hear, pray for the wonderful world we live in.

Love to you all,
John Hunt

Calling All Women



Women of all ages participated in a breakfast meeting celebrating Earth Day April 18th. Our church has a lot of awesome cooks and several brought food to share, we even had fresh pancakes hot off the griddle! Sandy Dam put together a great program to raise awareness about caring for our Father's creation and we had a lot of aha moments as well as humorous ones. Sandy thinks outside the box and inspired a lot of us to look at our daily habits to become better stewards of our planet.

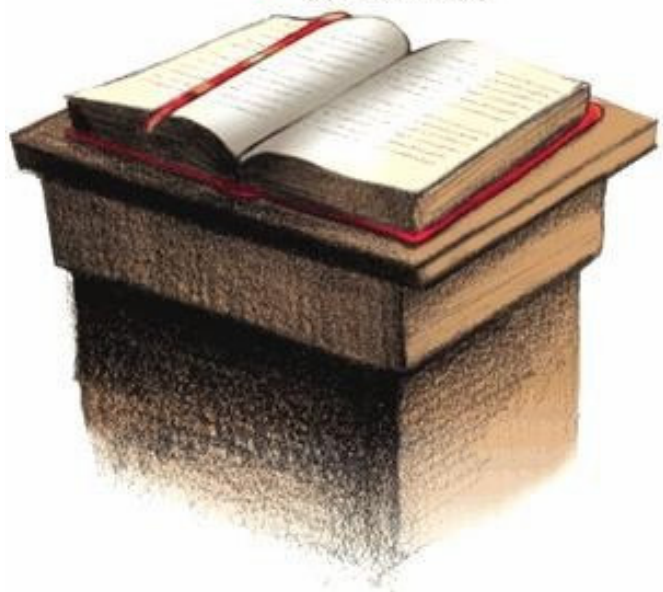
Our next meeting will focus on food; we will meet May 27th for a cooking demonstration. Bring your appetites. Stay tuned for more details. Women of all ages are welcome and child care can be provided with a little advance planning. Call Marilyn at 248-7818 or Sandy at 248-7110. Or email mgerrard@charter.net or smdam@charter.net.

Women's Bible Study Group

We are excited to announce the formation of a new study group. One of the needs expressed on a recent survey done with the women in our church was to have a spiritual growth group. Women have always been the guiding lights to seeking a closer relationship with God. In the busy world we live in sometimes this can only be accomplished by setting aside a time to prayerfully study the words God has given us to grow in our relationship with Him.

We will be doing a six week study on the book of James. A big thank you to Martha Blodgett for sharing her home with us for this time of fellowship. Our first meeting will be on Wednesday, April 29th at 10:00 for a general overview of what we hope to accomplish. The following meetings will be on Thursday's beginning May 7th at 10:00. In this world where everything seems to be turning upside down and our Christian values are losing ground, we need time to refocus on the things that are important to us and our families. For further information and directions to Martha Blodgett's home call Jean Anderson at 508 248 7423.

Study ^{the} Bible
with us



Next Newsletter Deadline—May 27th

DATES TO REMEMBER

4/27/2009	7:00 pm	Outreach/Mission
4/29/2009	10:00 am	Bible Study @ Marsha Blodgett's home
4/29/2009	6:30 pm	Natural Church Development
5/2/2009	9:00 – 3pm	Yard Sale
5/7/2009	10:00 am	Bible Study @ Marsha Blodgett's home
	12:00 pm	Prayers on Sturbridge Common
5/8/2009	6:30 pm	Wedding Rehearsal
5/9/2009	5:00 pm	Wedding
5/13/2009	6:30 pm	Natural Church Development
5/14/2009	7:00 pm	Men's Fellowship
5/16/2009	5:30 pm	Men's Fellowship Supper
5/18/2009	7:00 pm	Administrative Council
5/21/2009	10:00 am	Bible Study @ Marsha Blodgett's home
5/24/2009	12:00 pm	Worship with American Legion
5/27/2009	6:00 pm	UMW Cooking demo
5/28/2009	10:00 am	Bible Study @ Marsha Blodgett's home
5/30/2009	8:30 am	Pre Conference Orientation
5/30/2009	9:00 am	Music Comm.
5/30/2009	10:00 am	Worship Comm.
6/3 – 6/7	All Day	SIHN
6/20	5:30 pm	Strawberry Supper
7/28 –7/30		Vacation Bible School

9:00 a.m. Adult Bible Class
 9:00 a.m. Sunday School
 8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Worship

Sundays



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

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