



First United Methodist Church of Marlboro

The Link - April 2008

Creating a "Most Joyous Space"

Most of us have special places where we can go when we need to restore feelings of safety, wholeness, contentment and happiness. Maybe one of these places is at home, in a comfy chair overlooking a cheerful place in the yard, next to a stack of favorite reading material and a steaming cup of tea, coffee or hot chocolate. Perhaps one of your special places is vacation spot that soothes your soul every year when you return to its delights.

Can you recall a day that was so happy that you never wanted it to end? Early Christians regarded the extravagantly joyful promise of the Resurrection as such a day. So, they declared an Easter season, the "great fifty days" between Easter Sunday and Pentecost, as a time of continuous feasting and welcoming new members into the Christian family. Tertullian, a second-century great thinker among our early Christian ancestors, called these fifty a "most joyous space."

Athanasius, an early Christian Bishop, wrote festive letters to all the churches each Easter much like pastors write to modern parishioners during Lent and Advent. In his letters, Bishop Athanasius encouraged all Christians to keep the "great fifty days" not as days of suffering but as days of a "time of joy and fulfillment." He called Christians to tap into the joy of Christ, in whose blessings "we are fed every day."

In the early Church, Christians everywhere made Easter Season worship experience into a special place where they could feel the Holy Spirit's gifts of comfort and safety, where they could feel restored and whole in the eternal salvation brought about by Jesus' resurrection, where they could find contentment and true happiness in the gift of life and unconditional love from the God who creates and sustains all life. Everywhere, Lenten fasts were replaced with lavish feasts, reflecting the abundance that God offers. Rather than kneeling for prayers, God's people would stand to pray and sing alleluias.

We have a wonderful legacy of enthusiastic delight in the Easter Season. How can we carry on this legacy and pass it along to the next generation in our church, so that the "great fifty days" we are in the midst of now can truly be one awesome, long feast? How can we Easter People make our church "a most joyous space," a special place where all who enter feel whole and happy?

One answer lies not just in how tidy and welcoming we keep our worship space, but in what we each bring to worship. What do you pack when you go to that favorite vacation spot? Chances are, you spend days choosing clothes, packing snacks, taking care of every detail so that the trip happens without a hitch. The day before you leave, chances are people would see a spring in your step, a broad smile on your face as they greet you. Chances are, you would delightedly and eagerly tell your friends and neighbors about your plans.

Thank you from the Auction Committee

If you weren't there, you missed the debut of auctioneer Sue Lodi. If you weren't there, you missed some incredible bargains, delicious food, music, trivia, and a whole lot of fun. We're talking, of course, about the 2nd Annual Faithlift Auction, which happened on March 29. Many thanks to all of those who donated cash and merchandise, and to those who cooked, served, set up, and cleaned up. A special note of thanks to DJ Dick Bushey who donated his time and talent for the benefit of our entertainment, and to Moose Lodge 1129 who donated their space. In the end, after a lot of hard work and many more laughs, the auction netted proceeds of \$2,737. Every dollar will go toward maintenance and building projects for our church home. Thank you, everyone, for making this evening a great success.

WHO plans missions for April

The ladies of WHO (Women Helping Others) will meet in the vestry on **Saturday, April 19 at 2:00** to prepare the monthly meal for Roland's House. This will replace our regular Wednesday evening meeting in April. All women, including newcomers, are very welcome to join us for fellowship and to help with this mission.

WHO is leading the Pillow Drive to benefit Roland's House this spring. We wish to collect at least 20 pillows and pillow cases during the month of April. We will present them to Roland's House in May. Please see Joan Parris or Lee Caissie, or speak to Pastor Linda, if you would like to help. Thank you.

News from worship Committee:

It's time for the "End of Winter Celebration". It will be held as a progressive dinner on Sat. April 5th 2008. That's this Sat. Meet @ the church @ 5:30p.m. with whatever course you choose to make & we will travel to different places for each course. We still need help for the following courses:

Appetizer	Pastor Linda	617-543-0623;
Salad	Joan	978-562-3632;
Dessert	Joyce	509-485-0815.

There is a sign up sheet in the vestry or you may call the chair you want to help. We will hold a Yankee swap @ the last course. Bring something old, or something new, wrap it up & you may go home with a treasure you can't live without!!! It's a chance to enjoy a meal & visit with your church neighbor!

If you are interested in Ushering some Sun. please sign up on the sheet in the vestry! We need two ushers for each Sun. If you do not know what to do & still want to usher call or talk with Ann, 508-485-5786. We need & would love to have you help!!

Thought for the day from the Upper Room, "Each of us can bring life to our church"
Worship chair: Ann Edelman

Thank you YOUTH GROUP

Thanks to the Youth Group for preparing, cooking and delivering the Homeless Shelter meal on March 15th!

Creating a “Most Joyous Space” (continued from page 01)

What do you pack before you adventure to church on Sundays? Do you get excited about what you will wear, who you will see? Are you so excited on Saturday that everyone you meet will notice your beaming face? Are you excited to tell everyone that you are going to a great feast on Sunday? Or, do you drag yourself out of bed at the last minute on Sunday morning, silently begrudging lost sleep and annoyed at the effort it takes to dress up and put a smile on your tired face? Is church on Sunday becoming just one more optional social scene?

This is the Easter Season for restoring ourselves to an attitude of joy that can only come from a quality of fellowship with other Christian believers together in God’s presence. You can’t get the same quality hug, deep concern, unity of prayer, feeling of eternal stability, with an online chat buddy, your boss, a stranger in the grocery line, a fix of caffeine or alcohol, or someone you know superficially in a social club or group. If you are trying to find restoration to a sense of wholeness in these places, you will always be disappointed. You will always, to some degree, go away feeling lacking, empty, hungry for something better in life.

We worship a God whose agenda is restoration. That was the whole point of Jesus’ life, persecution, crucifixion and resurrection: to give us a way to be fully and eternally restored to God. This Easter, God is waiting for you to surrender your personal agenda so that God’s agenda can take over our individual and congregational lives. God is waiting. It is up to us to meet God half way. So, if you unpack your personal agenda, what do you pack and bring with you to Church on the Lord’s Day? Please bring what matters. What matters most? Contemporary composer Darlene Zschech suggests that excellence in every detail matters. Offering anything less than your best to God would be demeaning.

Unity matters, so bring an attitude of generosity and forgiveness. We are bound to help build each other up. Unpack apathy and judgmental comments. God does not respond favorably to these barriers to unity. Friendship matters, so come with an attitude of “doing whatever it takes” (i.e., more than is expected of you, including getting out of your comfort zone) to extend gestures of friendship with EVERYONE present.

Discipline matters. Bring a sense of determination on Sunday. Without discipline, we end up quitting most of what we resolve to do. Most of us starve our minds for God’s truth all during the week. Bring your heart connected with your mind. Darlene tell us, “the heart is the engine room of our life.” Unpack your pride before leaving home, for thinking too highly of yourself blocks God’s agenda for renewal of your heart and mind.

Above all, bring a sense of expectation. It’s easy to settle for a dull, average experience. God doesn’t want us to settle for less than full restoration. So, pack all of your passion and enter God’s gates full of energy! The Holy Spirit will respond and multiply your enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is contagious!

As Darlene says in Extravagant Worship, ‘Worship is a divine privilege, and with that privilege comes great responsibility to show generosity to others in the body of Christ through all we do. We should never leave worship to the pastors and worship leaders. WE all need to learn to be excellent, extravagant worshipers, generous in our service to one another and generous in our expression of love toward one another—it will change the dynamics of the harvest.’

We are invited to benefit from a great feast: called to reap the great harvest of extravagant, saving love that Jesus cultivated in his ministry, death and resurrection. Let joy abound! Let feasting on God’s Word, Sacraments, and Christian fellowship continue! Let our feast become a “most joyous space” for this fifty days!

SPRING YARD SALE - May 17th, 9 am - 3 pm

The Youth Groups Annual Spring Yard Sale is happening soon. Start your Spring Cleaning all donations may be left in the storage room-right-hand side behind the stage Thanks in advance for all your help!!

Set-up will be Friday night, May 16th, 5 - 8 pm. All are welcome to help us set up and work the sale. Come early and get first look at fine treasures!

Trustees Plan Spring Cleaning Day

Show your church pride by joining the Trustees on Saturday, **May 10, 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM** as we undertake our annual spring cleaning day. We will have plenty of indoor cleaning projects. Weather permitting; we'll tackle some outdoor projects as well. Please bring your favorite rakes, tools, brooms, and gloves. The Trustees will provide cleaning materials and a pizza lunch.

**Mother's Day Carnations
For the Altar Sunday May 11th**

Name/From _____

Telephone Number _____

Payment enclosed _____ check _____ cash

QTY	COLOR	PRICE	AMOUNT PAID
	WHITE (In memory of)	\$1.00 ea	
	RED (In honor of)	\$1.00 ea	
		Total	

In Memory of (white): _____

In Honor of (red): _____

Place all orders in collection plate or send/mail to the church office. Orders must be in not later than 05/06/2007. Please take your carnation(s) following the service.

Church Calendar for April 2008

2	Wednesday	7:00 PM	Trustees, Meeting Room
3	Thursday	7:00 PM	Worship with Holy Communion, New Horizons
4	Friday	All Day	Pastor Linda in probationary exams, Rolling Ridge
5	Saturday	5:30 PM	Meet at church to carpool to Progressive Dinner hosted by the Worship Committee
6	Sunday	11:00 AM Noon	Sunday Worship with Holy Communion Coffee Hour Fellowship, Vestry
7	Monday	10:00 AM	Bible Study, home of Bess Cowan
10	Thursday	7:00 PM	Worship at New Horizons
13	Sunday	11:00 AM Noon 4:00 PM	Sunday Worship Coffee Hour Fellowship, Vestry Listening Session at Wesley UMC, Framingham
14	Monday	10:00 AM Noon	Sunday Worship Coffee Hour Fellowship, Vestry
16	Wednesday		NO W.H.O. Meeting (postponed to Saturday, April 19)
17	Thursday	7:00 PM	Worship at New Horizons
19	Saturday	1:00-6:00 PM 2:00 PM	Lay Speaker School, Education Wing W.H.O. meets to prepare homeless meal, kitchen
20	Sunday	11:00 AM Noon	Sunday Worship Coffee Hour Fellowship, Vestry
21	Monday		Annual Conference Registration Due! 10:00 AM Bible Study, home of Bess Cowan
22	Tuesday	3:30 PM	Marlborough Interfaith Clergy, Education Room
23	Thursday	7:00 PM	Worship at New Horizons
26	Saturday	1:00-6:00 PM	Lay Speaker School, Education Wing
27	Sunday	11:00 AM Noon 2:00 PM	Sunday Worship Coffee Hour Fellowship, Vestry Interfaith Dialogue: Christian and Muslim, hosted by Marlborough Interfaith Clergy at the Marlborough Congregational Church
28	Monday	10:00 AM 7:00 PM	Bible Study, home of Bess Cowan Administrative Board, Vestry or Pastor's Study

***Congratulations to our newly
confirmed members***

***Brittany
Zachary
Christopher
Kelsey
Laura
Michaela***



Special Invitations from Pastor Linda

All interested Laity are invited to attend a “Listening Session” hosted by our district ministry team at 4 PM on Sunday, April 13 at Wesley UMC, Framingham. Pastor Linda will attend, and we can carpool in her car. This will be an open forum to ask questions and voice comments or concerns about the direction in which our Conference is going or to suggest ways in which Conference and District could be of more assistance to local churches.

Saturday, April 19 at 6 PM is the last public church dinner for the year at the North Grafton Church! The menu is Chicken Kiev. Cost is \$8 for adults, \$4 for children, free for toddlers. Make your reservation by calling June Murray, who is cooking, at 508-839-2839 by Wednesday, April 16. This is a great way to share a fellowship meal with our sister church and to help them raise money for new sanctuary carpeting, which the Conference insurance carrier is requiring for safety reasons.

W.H.O. (Women Helping Others) is hot on the trail (as usual) in mission to our community. ALL women of all ages who attend our church, regardless of your membership status, are encouraged to join WHO for FUN and action. WHO will do a “double-header” mission on Saturday, April 19. Join us in the church kitchen at 2 PM, to finish preparing the monthly meal for the homeless shelter. Also, please bring a baby care or clothing item. We would like to give a basket of gifts for an expectant mother who is a client of Family Options, a local aid agency.

On Sunday, April 27 at 2 PM, we will gather at the Congregational Church on High Street for a two-hour program hosted by the Marlborough Interfaith Association. The topic is “Islam 101,” and the format will be a question-answer dialogue between a Christian moderator and a Muslim guest. With world political events churning away at a heated pace, we can hear almost anything about the Muslim faith. We all need to be informed citizens with first-hand knowledge. What better way to hear it in a church forum where truth and respect can prevail? Please plan on attending. If the public receives this program well, the Marlborough Interfaith Clergy Association plans on hosting a second session in the Fall. Hosted by Rabbi Sherri Kohler-Fox of Marlborough Temple Emmanuel, it will be in a different format and will go in more depth on similarities and differences among the three great world faiths: Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.

Calling all Methodist Cooks! We need to support this April 27 Interfaith dialogue by furnishing finger desserts for the reception following the meeting. Please let Pastor Linda know immediately if you can furnish goodies! They can be brought directly to the Congregational church just before the event, or they can be dropped off our own church kitchen by worship time on Sunday, April 27.

Looking ahead to May: Pastor Linda will be leading a “Service of Animal Companion Remembrance” on Saturday, May 10 at the North Grafton United Methodist Church, 10 Overlook Street, North Grafton, MA 01536. All in our community who have lost faithful animal companions are welcome to attend. We worship a God who loves good relationships among all parts of creation. So, we will celebrate and give thanks for the special bonds between the human and the animal world, and we will find God’s comfort and grace as we grieve the loss of relationships that have brought examples of unconditional animal love to our lives. Those attending are encouraged to bring photos or other small mementos of animal companions to place near the altar. A special collection will be taken to benefit the Pet Bereavement Hotline at Tufts/Cummings Veterinary School in North Grafton.

2008 FaithLift Donors

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Auction Volunteers

Mathew Alexander
 Philemon Chose
 Ken Cox
 Ann Edelman
 Sue Lodi
 Heather Parker
 Youth Group

Private Ann Bastian

Cindy Beals
 Marion Burgess
 Lee Caissie
 Cox Family
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 Karen Searles
 Joyce Swett
 Robin Zaia

Auction Committee

Ann Bastian
 Cindy Beals
 Lee Caissie
 Alyson Cox
 Zelda Garrison-Desaney
 Michele Rogers
 Joyce Swett

Special Note of Thanks to Moose Lodge 1129 and ‘DJ Dick’ Bushey



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Address Correction Requested



Pastor Linda Stetter

