

# Spirit & Sparklers

JULY/AUGUST 2011



The Congregational Church of Weston, UCC, 130 Newton Street, Weston, MA 02493  
www.congwestonucc.net 781-899-5417 781-647-1165-fax

## PASTOR & TEACHER'S REFLECTIONS FOR SUMMER

The “church year” is out, and we with it, save the quiet summer worship opportunities we share with our Unitarian friends and neighbors that you will find listed in this summer edition. More than one worshipper asked me for a copy of my sermon from last Sunday, and so the lazy thought occurred to me to offer it as an editorial. If you didn't make church, you can catch up! If you did, you don't even have to read it! But our less full newsletter allows a little more space for such, and hopefully you a little more time to read in these summer days.

That said, I wish you all a most restorative break from the frenzy of our September through June commitments, and God's blessings upon you and yours for the weeks to come!

### Putting Things in Order

*Matthew 28: 1-20*  
*II Corinthians 13: 11-13*

The lectionary has given us the gift of last words today; the very last words from the Gospel of Matthew as well as the very last words from Paul's last letter to the church at Corinth. Good, simple, solid faithful words for the last Sunday of the church year, this last Sunday for Bill as our Intern, as well as for Susan Dickie before the moving van pulls out.

Paul bids his beloved Christian sisters and brothers farewell, and then enjoins them with a list of what we call at the parsonage “honey do's,” the things that need urgent attention. Within Paul's list “put things in order” was the injunction that caught my eye. I look forward to summer so very much, not just for the respite it provides, but for the chance to get some things done that critically need my attention....things

I never quite get to during the frenetic pace of the church program year. That said, I don't think Paul had in mind cleaning out the cluttered garage and basement, making the long overdue visit with the dental hygienist, or catching up on domestic financial order.

And so I ask you what I ask myself: what things do you really need to put in order? What do you need to probe more deeply for your spiritual health and more healthy priorities? We talk about Lent as a time for self-reflection, but summer provides fuller opportunities for more soulful living, when we can come back into fuller harmony with ourselves by vacating routine commitments. The quiet walk along the beach or up a woodland trail, or the long porch sit with a good book, are not just recreational activities, they are re-creational. At long last we have the gift of time, God's greatest gift, which we most fully appreciate only when we are in Sabbath mode.

Just one year ago my darling daughter and I attended worship at Messiah Baptist Church in Brockton on Father's Day—the very first week of my sabbatical summer. Pastor Walker's wonderful sermon was entitled “Why Don't You Go Out and Play!” He spoke of his beloved grandmother, who would occasionally get her fill of too many grandkids swarming all over her house and getting on her nerves. At that point she would say “Why don't you go out and play?” Pastor Walker obviously has a very healthy relationship with his congregation, because he then confessed that there were a few of his parishioners to whom he felt like saying that! And when he talked about the summer liberation of school teachers, one woman up front in the choir loft, obviously a teacher, jumped up and did a spontaneous freedom dance around in circles, arms lifted to the

heavens. Now, the good news to you this morning is that I do NOT feel like telling any of you to “go out and play” because you are on MY nerves, but I do feel like telling myself just that! And I do feel like telling you to tell yourself that! For strangely, one of the ways we put ourselves back into order is by letting go of our overly ordered schedules, and just go out and play!

But not quite yet. The bell has not quite rung; the church is not yet dismissed! Paul does have that list, and the list is a double order of priority. “Put things in order.” You got that. But then “listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you.” Then he says to the Corinthians what he wrote also to the Romans: “Greet one another with a holy kiss.” We can swap that one for a holy hug, but I think he really meant “play well together.” And we do, don’t we?! But we can still use the reminder. And it is the right Sunday for saying our good-byes with holy hugs!

Ah, but then comes another sense of putting things in theological order: the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Grace comes first. Without the grace of Christ coming to us, can we Christian folk really get to the love of God? Isn’t it grace that frees us from our lesser selves, and lets us summer forth refreshed? Indeed, isn’t grace quite like the beautiful freedom of summer? By grace we best receive the love of God ourselves. This we each need if we are to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit together as a holy communing. Paul’s very last words put things into a different order of the trinity from the way we customarily invoke it, but it is a progression that makes real psychological, spiritual sense.

Finally, I have saved Matthew’s last words for the last of today’s last words: the holy charge of the Great Commission to take the Gospel into the world. Summer does not mean we leave the Gospel behind, but rather, we take it with us, this great glad good news of Jesus Christ that lives in us, and on a good day, through us. How evident the vitality of that good news was yesterday in the midst of five hundred UCC delegates when we listened to the pastors of our

Brimfield and Monson churches inspire us with the good news of their own church’s incredible mission to their greater communities in such crisis in the aftermath of the tornados. There were tears in hundreds of eyes when they spoke following a widescreen display of the devastation. What Saint Francis saith of old was invoked: “Preach the gospel, and if necessary, use words!” The witness of the church in a time of calamity was palpably present. And after the summer’s hiatus, clearly the word to us will be “Why don’t you come back in and work!” But when the work is in the right spirit, it does not feel like work. It can feel like a much loved grandmother at the door calling out “Y’all come back in for supper!” For us, that is always a Lord’s Supper, whether we are sharing the sacrament or feeding the Bristol Lodge folk or just “settin’ a spell” over good eats.

So, in the immortal words of Pastor Walker, “Why don’t you go out and play!” But likewise, when the evening descends upon the summer, “Come back in the house for dinner!” Yes, we will have to plan for it, and buy it, and prep, and serve it, and we will have to clean up after it. But we are called also to share it together in holy joy! Yes, we have some envisioning work to do when we come back together, but we can and must leave that for now so that we can pick it back up freshly. For now you and I need to go and make disciples of ourselves, refreshed in mind and body and spirit and strength!

Go then, and put things in order! But remember that one of the ways you will do that is to let go of so many things that keep your lives too tightly ordered throughout the year. “Live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you!” May your spirit be re-arranged by the graces of God that find you in these summer days to come, putting you back into order for the time to come again all too soon!

And may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you. Today, and every day of your lives!

*Rev. Joe Mayher,  
Pastor and Teacher*



## CCW'S SUMMER CALENDAR ON GOOGLE WEBSITE

This summer check out Google Calendar which allows you to see the latest church calendar any time from the comfort of your home or when you are on the go. Visit the church website, [www.congwestonucc.net](http://www.congwestonucc.net), click on Calendar, then click on Google Calendar to check out church happenings.

## PASTORAL CARE COVERAGE FOR JULY & AUGUST

As our summer newsletter goes to print we are arranging for emergency pastoral coverage for the month of July when Rev. Mayher will be on vacation. Except for the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend, he will not be outside of New England and can be contacted (for emergencies only, please) at his cell phone number – 781.752.5850 or you may leave a message at the parsonage at 781.647.3313. The Moderator (Robin Gunderson) and Senior Deacons (Priscilla Claman and Jeanne Weinzierl) will also know his itinerary.

## OUTREACH WRAPS UP

Rebekah Lord Gardiner

**A call out for volunteers to serve food at Bristol Lodge on Saturday, July 23!** The entrée has been cooked and frozen and the rest of the food will already be purchased. We need just servers who can reheat the entrée and take it along with the rest of the dinner to Bristol Lodge by 4:30pm. You serve at 5:00pm and are finished by 6:00 at the latest. Please contact Rebekah Lord Gardiner at [rlldordg16@gmail.com](mailto:rlldordg16@gmail.com). Thank you.

Thank you to everyone who was able to contribute to our Pentecost collection for Education Fights Aids (EFA.) We do not have a total at this time. It is not too late if you missed the opportunity to help.

Outreach has been notified of another way to help the people of western Massachusetts who have been displaced by the tornadoes; it is through the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts.

The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts is a superb organization which is strained for resources at the best of times. They've been working night and day to get food to victims of the tornadoes - much of it in ready-to-eat form since most still don't have

electricity. The Food Bank pairs with local organizations for effective delivery.



Because of its relationships with its providers, the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts can obtain \$13 worth of food for every dollar donated. That's real leverage. Please help if you can. The Whately Church has established a virtual food drive link at <http://vad.aidmatrix.org/vadxml.cfm?driveid=5223>, which not only saves you the cost of a stamp but allows you to pick the type of food that your contribution will provide. Alternatively, you can mail a check directly to the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, 97 N. Hatfield Road, PO Box 160, Hatfield, MA 01038.

We will be sharing other ways to help those affected by the tornadoes when we regroup in the fall.

Enjoy the summer.



# Faith Discovery for Children

Below, for all to see, is the list of all those who taught and assisted in the Faith Discovery for Children program this year. It's been another great year thanks to you. I might be the leader and organizer of this program, but YOU are the ones that make it what it is by volunteering to teach and to share your own faith with the next generation. You are the story-tellers in a long, long line of story-tellers that keep the story of Jesus alive; you are the ones who help our children make meaning of his life. Thank you doesn't even come close. Bless you! We KNOW you have enriched the lives of our children, and we hope your own faith journey was blessed in the process!

In **First Steps** we are grateful to have Sharon Kuhn and Dana Sullivan who provide such consistent, well-coordinated care. They had help from Monica Higgins, Jane Purser, Julie Townsend, and Becky Shelton

In **Pathfinders** we are grateful to Ruthanne Brown, Alison Earle, Robin Gunderson, Lynn Heuer, Ann-Marie Kreft, Candy Paquin, Jessica Schendel and Lisa von Lichtenberg.

In **Lighthouse Keepers** we are grateful to Ruthanne Brown, Art and Lisa Bull, Larry Carr, Bill Cordts, Alison Earle, Candy Paquin, Kristen Reeder, Jessica Schendel, Julie Townsend and Vin and Becky Shelton.

In **Explorers** we are grateful to Monica Higgins, Janet Mitchell, Candy Paquin, Kristen Reeder,

Mary-Ellen Sikes, Jessica Schendel and Julie Townsend.

We are grateful to Ron Eisenstein, Carol Cadogan and Kevin Cadogan, Rebekah Gardiner and Lisa von Lichtenberg who led workshops in our **Pentecost Workshop Rotation**.

And all those who helped around the edges! You all are the lubricant that keeps this program running smoothly: All of the aforementioned and Elsie Andersen, Julia Brown, Ann-Marie Kreft and Jean Valle. Last, but certainly not least, our Pastor and Teacher Joe Mayher. Without his gift for youth work, devotion to Christian Education, and willingness to listen and advise at a moment's notice, this program wouldn't be half of what it is.

May God be with you all until we meet again, refreshed, energized and with eyes and hearts wide open for the next faith discovery journey! YAY!!

**LOOKING FORWARD TO FALL -  
ALWAYS LOOKING FORWARD!**

May the Spirit move you all to teach again next year! First come - first serve. Reserve your dates NOW! Send an email to Catherine.

## SUMMER SCHEDULE FOR THE CHURCH OFFICES

In July, the church offices will be closed. In August, the offices will be open Wednesday mornings only. Regular church office hours of Tuesday through Friday mornings resume on August 30 at 8:00 am.

During July and August, phone messages and office emails will be checked periodically.

## BUILDINGS & GROUNDS DIRT

by Geoff Smith



We are grateful that the following families have signed up to water our beautiful plants during the summer months. A week prior to your turn you will receive an email reminder which will contain watering instructions. If you want to pluck some weeds while you are here, please do! Also if you have a key, please check to see if the indoor plants need a drink.

We are in dire need of a volunteer for July 24-30! If you can help, please contact the church office (781-899-5417 or skuhrccw@comcast.net) by Thursday, June 30.

WEEK OF	NAME
June 26-July 2	Cathy Liddell
July 3 - 9	Jean Valle
July 10- 16	Chuck Whitney
July 17- 23	Chuck Whitney
July 24- 30	<b>OPEN</b>
July 31 – August 6	Paquin
August 7- 13	Paquin
August 14- 20	Mayher
August 21- 27	Schendel
August 28- September 3	Schendel

The plants and lawn thank you!

## FAITH COMMUNITY NEWS

### *Birthdays:*

July 1	Susan Upham
July 7	Rebecca Higgins
July 17	Vin Shelton
July 23	Ruthanne Brown
July 24	Lauren Heuer
July 29	Gillian Reeder
July 30	Marge Giamo
July 31	Paul Barnes



August 1	William Paquin
August 5	Isabel Purser
August 9	Ward Carter
August 12	Lynn Heuer
	Maria Posa
	Katie Salerno
	Julie Salerno
August 16	Kevin Cadogan
August 19	Elsie Andersen
August 22	Jack Heuer
August 29	Chris Paquin
August 30	Annie Heuer
August 31	Susan Kuhr

## JEANNE W. IS LOOKING FOR SUMMER LODGING

Jeanne Weinzierl and Jaime are looking to rent a furnished place or house sit starting July 11, for up to 4 weeks, in Weston or nearby area. If a shorter time is available, that would be fine too.

If you can help, please contact Jeanne at [jeanne.weinzierl@analog.com](mailto:jeanne.weinzierl@analog.com).

