



Sycamore News

The Newsletter of Sycamore United Methodist Church | July 2011



Sycamore United Methodist Church
9710 Old Stage Road
Prince George, VA 23875
Website - sycamoreumc.com

Office Phone: (804) 541-1181

Worship Services:

Sunday 8:45 AM---Traditional Service

Sunday 11:15 AM---New Leaf Contemporary Service

Sunday School:

10:15 AM



From the Pastor

Mowing Grass and Making Rain

by Pastor Bert Cloud (804.347.9567 or
pastorbert@sycamoreumc.com)

A pastor friend of mine, Pete Moon, often shares that his church has some wisdom about sermons. "If you heard a good sermon today," the saying goes, "then it's your fault." What? With a smile, Pete will explain that it is the attitude that we bring with us to worship, really to anything, that makes the difference. Indeed, two of our adult Sunday school classes have been studying this very thing as part of their weekly gatherings.

With that in mind, I wanted to offer some pastoral encouragement about our attitudes including our life together as a faith community at Sycamore. Here are a couple of thoughts.

Mow the Grass (or think it over). One of the things that I hear people say a lot is how much they enjoy being able to think while mowing the grass. This may explain the large size of some of our yards. Maybe you are not part of the lawn thinkers club, but you probably have some similar task that allows you to think things over.

Take some of this time to ask yourself about the attitudes you have about your life and the people around you. Consider the following:

- What is my attitude about _____? What are the other ways to look at this?
- What does my attitude say about me? Generous? Forgiving? Driven by pain or anger? Focused on fear?
- When have I been too quick to judge? How would I be judged?
- How have I carried bad attitudes to the point of hurting someone's feelings, reputation, work, body, soul? How has a good attitude helped?
- Is having a particular attitude going to get me what I want? Is it going to get what God wants? Have I even considered what God wants?
- What is the price to pay for my attitude?

Make it Rain (or be a person of Influence).

Rainmakers were first known in this country as people who seek to cause rain by various rituals and incantations. Recently we have used this term for people who influence the outcome of events. As novelist John Grisham points out in his 1995 book *The Rainmaker*, these folks are not always those that have a lot of what we typically call personal power. Christians know that the power that comes for lasting, life-giving happenings comes from God. As we add our hands, hearts, and minds to God's work, amazing things happen. The rain falls.

To be a rainmaker in our community, the best place to start is to keep your membership promises. You'll recognize these from times we baptize and take in new members, and these are profoundly powerful and seemingly simple ways for individuals to influence our community.

Pray. The Bible asks us to pray always. Pray for Sycamore, her leaders, her members, her community, and her ministries. If you don't like something and want a change, start by talking with God about this and asking for God's will to be done.

Show up. Really, your presence matters. We miss folks when they are absent. Summer is a particular time when people travel and recreate (this is good), but we also notice a decline in participation (this is not so good). Your presence in our community connects you to what is happening and can energize your faith.

Give. We need your financial support for ministries to continue and grow. We have been given the great gift of resources and a beautiful building to offer ministries, and your giving to God's work at Sycamore sustains his call for us to make disciples who make a difference. And just as we miss your presence in the summer, we ask that you also remember your giving commitments as well.

Serve. One of the things that we are doing well is working to making a difference in the lives of others. This is essential to what God is calling us to. Adding your hands to work either by direct service (e.g., teaching, mission work, etc.) or by supporting our ministries (e.g., administrative and committee work) is vital.

Tell people about the good that God is doing, including God's work at Sycamore. Instead of grumbling about what we think is wrong, let's deal with these and move forward. The stories we need to tell to each other and to the world are about what God is saying and doing, here and now. If all you hear is negative, then follow your instincts and find some different people to be around. This is poison to your faith. Instead, let faithful witness be about the creating God of hope, the saving power of Jesus, and the loving influence of the Spirit. God has been and continues to be at work at Sycamore. God has been so good here, but the stories we tell or choose to listen to don't always share this good news. May we be brave and trustworthy in dealing with our problems, but may we also tell the stories of faith, hope, and love in our life together.

So may you have a blessed July of grass mowing and rain making. May you experience the power of God to shape your attitude. And, may you grow in love with your God and your community at Sycamore.

Why do we give?

"Why do we give money to the church?" a child asks her mother, who is filling Sunday's offering envelope. How will the mother answer her daughter's question?

How do we answer this question for our children? How does the preacher answer this question for us? Do we say that we give to help pay the church's bills? Do we say that we give because of all the good things the church does—teaching children, standing for the best things in the community, fostering happiness and human welfare, providing help and friendship, and caring for people in need? How about answering by reciting a Bible verse or telling a Bible story? What verse would we choose? What story would we tell?

If we tell people to give in order to get, people might conclude that God is like a crooked politician whose favor we can purchase. That's what Simon the magician thought in Acts. "Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, saying, 'Give me also this power so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit'" (Acts 8:18–19).

If we tell people to give out of obedience to a divine command to tithe, God might become an angry judge who demands and enforces. We can find plenty of verses like this one that tell us to fear the Lord. "Set apart a tithe of all the yield of your seed that is brought in yearly from the field . . . so that you may learn to fear the Lord your God always" (Deut. 14:22–23).

If, however, we tell people to give out of gratitude, people might understand God to be the source of everything we are and all we have, and that God lovingly provides for us. We might truly take what Jesus said to heart: "Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. . . . Look at the birds of the air. . . . Are you not of more value than they? . . . Consider the lilies of the field . . . will [God] not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?'" (Matt. 6:25–31).

Adapted from [Preaching and Stewardship: Proclaiming God's Invitation to Grow](#) by Craig A. Satterlee, copyright © 2011 by the Alban Institute. Used with permission.

Choir News

We are looking to expand our Music Ministry, which currently includes the Traditional Service Choir for our first service and the New Leaf Worship Team for our contemporary service. Our



goal is to form a new Kids Choir that would enable our young people to have the opportunity to express themselves through song while building new friendships and having fun. For more information, please complete the form in the narthex stand and give to Pastor Bert or any usher. You may also e-mail Quinton Parker, Music Director, at quinton@sycamoreumc.com.

All are welcome each Tuesday evening at 5:30 p.m. (New Leaf praise team) and 6:30 p.m. (first service sanctuary choir) to help the choir praise God through song!

Evangelism



Thanks to everyone for your participation and help in making VBS a success! You can see pictures on our website, sycamoreumc.com

As a summer project for the Evangelism Committee, we are planning a "Love Our Neighbor Yard Sale". It will be held in our nice big fellowship hall on **Saturday, August 6th from 8 am – 1 pm**. We will be offering gently used items, such as clothing, household items, and any other miscellaneous things you might have laying around that you are not using. We are also collecting the following new items:



- School supplies** (staple items such as paper, crayons, glue, tissues, pencils, etc.)
- Personal items** (toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, deodorant, etc.)
- Paper products** (toilet paper, paper towels, napkins, etc.)
- Dish detergent**
- Laundry detergent**

Everyone is invited and everything will be priced at 50 cents. Help us spread the word! Coffee and sausage biscuits, too!

We are asking church members for donations and we can store everything in the Stew Room, **but please do not just drop it off in there**. See a member of the Evangelism Committee and they will show you where to place your items. We also need volunteers to help get everything set up and

organized. We are planning on setting up on Thursday, August 4th and we will announce the time later on. If you would be willing to help out, please let Lisa Williams or Susan Bishop know.

We are very excited about this and it is a great way to utilize our new space.

May God's Blessings Flow!

Susan Bishop & Lisa Williams

Make A Difference:

Toothbrush Goodness. Dental care is a vital part of the Red Bird Mission and you can make a difference by donating toothbrushes, toothpaste, and floss for our team to take with us in August. Please drop these off in the welcoming area (narthex) or at the mission table in the hallway. Please remember to pray for the mission team and the people they will work with in Kentucky.



Thanks to all who worked at Shalom Farms in their mission garden. This organic 'garden' produces food for people who live in areas of Central Virginia that do not have access to fresh fruit and vegetables and the essential nutrients they provide. Areas like this are called Food Deserts and are quietly heartbreaking. If you want to know more or join the next team to serve Shalom Farms, please contact Sycamore's mission coordinator Sarah Williams.



CHURCH HISTORY BOOKS are still available at a cost of \$5.00 each. Quantities are limited but this is an ideal way to see the growth not only of our church but other churches in Prince George. Complete with pictures, this is a real bargain. Please see Nancy Fine (541-3562) or Nancy Chesser (church secretary) to get your copy.

Bykota Women in Mission

Thanks to all who ordered flags. We made a profit of \$312 for mission work.

July 13 (evening) – There is an opportunity for us to serve dinner for the Youth Program graduation at Pathways in Petersburg. As soon we have the details, they will be put in the weekly announcements.

July 23rd - DINNER & A MOVIE – Mark your calendars! All are invited for dinner (5:30 p.m.) and a movie (7:00 p.m.): adult movie *Fireproof* and children's movie *Tangled*. Sign-up sheet is on the Missions Board in the hall. Freewill offering will be split 50/50 between mission work and building fund.

Grace & Peace,
Sherry

United Methodist Men (UMM)

Our next meeting is Wednesday, July 13th at 7:30 p.m.

United Methodist Women (UMW)

Sycamore **UMW will meet Tuesday, July 12th** at 7:30 PM. All are invited to attend.

District News

Stand with us and make a difference!

The Stand UMC Supporters - We want to invite you to pray for us as we serve in the new ministry outlined below this summer.

We also always welcome volunteers. Please be in touch with Gina if you'd like to volunteer to join us. Thanks for your continued support!

**Thursdays - With Kids in the Park -
Join us Thursdays @ 6:30pm!**

You are invited to make a difference this summer!

How? By joining The Stand UMC this summer, every other Thursday, at Country Aires Trailer Park in Prince George (about 10 minutes from The STAND School) as we offer support, fun and the love of God to kids and youth there. This is an area of our community where there is a great need for activities and mentors for kids.

When? We had a great start 2 weeks ago, and we are on schedule to be back **Thursday, July 21st**, from **6:30 to 8 pm**. We'll be there for about an hour and a half providing games, craft activities, snacks and music. There is also a plan to offer Vacation Bible School there, which is a theme-based, fun Bible program for kids in August. The community is located across from Clements Middle School in Prince George. Go down Browning Street to the end. You will come to a tree and we'll be there with the street blocked.

What can you do? The most important thing is to show up and be present. Community leaders there say the kids need to just know people care. You can pitch in and help with something, playing a game, serving snacks, talking to kids or parents.

Do you have to come every time? No. Come when you can. We realize this is vacation time.

Can you bring someone new to help? Sure! This mission-focused project is a great way to introduce friends to what we are about at The Stand.

Who are our partners in this project? We are partnered with The Neighborhood Watch for this park which is also a partner to The Prince George County Police Department. We are excited about this grassroots partnership and the trust that these organizations already have in this community.

Got questions? Email either Pastor Gina or Paige. pastorgina@thestandumc.com or paige@thestandumc.com

What can you do if you just can't wait to be a part of this? Email Gina or Paige, and they will get you plugged in!

Check out more at:

www.thestandumc.com
or on [Facebook at The Stand UMC](#)

Voices of Youth: Awaking the UMC to Mission, will begin its 26th summer mission experience this year. Following a time of orientation at Shenandoah University, we will be traveling to the Dominican Republic to work at Renewed Hope Missions. Projects that we will be working on include a water pump & filtration system, a missionary house & school, and Vacation Bible School for the

children in the village. Upon returning to Virginia we will begin a 12 day tour of the Virginia Conference, sharing our story through music and testimony.

Locally, Voices will perform at Chester UMC on July 27th at 7 pm. We hope you will be able to bring your friends and family, and children and youth of your church to hear about our experience and begin thinking about what you can do in your local community and in the world. Check out our website, www.voyva.org, for addresses of the churches and for any updates and changes.

Acolytes Serving in July



- July 3rd – Daniel Blackmon
- July 10th – Riley Shank
- July 17th – Logan Powers
- July 24th – Alyssa Williams
- July 31st – Michaela Williams

July Birthdays

- 4th Katherine Chiarolanzio
- 6th Marcia Stuart
- 12th Joey Taylor
- 16th Evelyn Woodfin
- 18th Lawrence Brockwell
- 19th Frank Williams
- 21st Sarah Williams & Danielle Perry
- 22nd Faith Longfield
- 24th Gary Baker
- 25th Butch Cole
- 27th Axel Martinez
- 30th Alexander Rey
- 31st Jean Kanak

July Anniversaries

- 3rd Bob & Pat Clark
- 10th John & Jeri Harlow
- 15th Rick & Laura Denny
- 19th Ted & Mary Frances Smith
- 27th Bill & Betty Dodson

Remember to e-mail items for the next newsletter to Nancy Chesser at secretary@sycamoreumc.com by August 2nd.

July Calendar

- 7/9 – 7 am – 1 pm Shalom Farms service day
- 7/10 – 4:30 pm Healing & Wholeness service
- 7:00 pm Red Bird team meeting
- 7/12 – 7:30 pm UMW
- 7/13 – 7:30 pm UMM
- 7/18 – 6:00 pm Burrowsville Ruritans
- 7/20 – noon Seniors' lunch
- 7/23 – 5:30 pm Dinner & a Movie night
- 7/31 – 10:15 am 5th Sunday brunch
- 8/2 – Newsletter deadline

REVERENDFUN.COM COPYRIGHT BIBLE GATEWAY



IT WAS OBVIOUS HE WAS GOING TO HAVE TO STEP IT UP

Coming Soon:

New Classes, Sycamore Town Hall Meetings, Disaster Response Team Formation, Fall Prayer Breakfast, New T-Shirts and Hats, and much more.



Sycamore United Methodist Church
9710 Old Stage Rd.
Prince George, VA 23875

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



