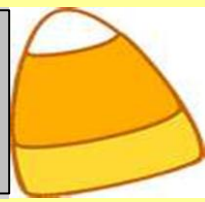




Sycamore News



The Newsletter of Sycamore United Methodist Church | October 2011

FALL Festival of Faith Offers Encouragement and Fun

Make plans to come to the Fall Festival & Revival! October 16th – 18th. The Fall Festival will be held on Sunday night at 4:00 with games, pumpkin decorating, cake walk, etc.; dinner is at 6:00. The evangelism committee will provide the hot dogs/hamburgers and we ask the congregation to bring a covered dish & dessert to share.



At 7:00 pm, our worship series on **Turning to God in Difficult Times** will kick off with special music and guest speaker Norman Ramsey. The revival continues Monday and Tuesday evenings at 7:00 p.m., each night with different musical offerings.

There will be a special program for the children during the Sunday evening services and a nursery will be provided. *Please take a look at the sign up sheets posted and let us know where you can help out. We need your help.*



Our revival preacher, Norman Ramsey, is a unique pastor, performer, author, and songwriter. His most recent book is *Moving at the Speed of Grace: Discovering the Way God Works* (Tate, 2010). Norman has three

musical recordings; "Near to the Heart of God," "Apprentice," and "The Colors of Grace." These will be available to purchase each night.

NY Times Bestselling author Dave Ramsey described Norman's ministry as "incredible", going on to say that "his mixing of song, wisdom, and humor really had an impact," Norman and his wife, Karen, have four children and live in Virginia. You can learn more at normanramsey.com.

Here are the focus themes for worship this fall



October: Connecting with God- A Series on Holy Communion

November: Thankful for My Family- A Celebration of Baptismal Connections.

Church Conference is Wednesday, November 9th at 7:30.

It will be here before you know it. Unlike last year, we will NOT have a joint conference with another church. This will offer an opportunity for our new District Superintendent, Dr. Vest to get to know us. Conference gives us an opportunity to celebrate, learn from the past year, renew our connections and work on plans for the future. Ministry area leaders are encouraged to be working with your groups to put together the necessary reports and planning for the 2011 year. All reports are due on Wednesday, November 2nd at noon. You can find links to reports and other CC information on our webpage, sycamoreumc.com.

Sycamore United Methodist Church

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Prince George, VA 23875
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Office Phone: 804. 541.1181

Rev. Bert Cloud, Pastor
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notesalongtheway.com

Worship Services:

Sunday 8:45 AM---Traditional
Sunday 11:15 AM--- Contemporary

Sunday School:

10:15 am

Aspirations

By Pastor Bert Cloud

A little over ten years ago, the United Methodist Church invested in developing a media campaign to invite people through our doors. It was called Igniting Ministry and resulted in the advertisements declaring our “open hearts, open minds, and open doors.”

Immediately, many recognized that although this was a very appealing thought, the actual ‘minds, hearts and doors’ were not always that open. Where is truth in advertising? In very little time, some folks wisely re-understood ‘open heart, minds, and doors’ as something that we hope for and sometimes get right. It is a goal. It is an aspiration.

Now, we are in the territory of Matthew 5:48.

A phrase I often use when talking about Sycamore is “growing disciples who make a difference.” You can find this on our website, our publications and other places. It is biblically rooted in the great commission (Matthew 28:19-20), and restates our denomination’s claim that “The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” (Book of Discipline, 2008). There is no need for meetings to come up with a mission statement. We already have it.



Yet, I also know that this statement is more of a goal than a consistent reality. Still there are often times that we get it right through the grace of God.

To see where we are, take a moment to honestly reflect on these questions: How are we doing in growing followers and friends of Jesus Christ? Do we have a plan? How are we in living out our own personal discipleship? What do people see when they look at our actions or listen to our words? Do we offer compassion or pass judgments? How are we making a difference in the lives of other people? Where are making a difference and where are we missing opportunities? What is breaking your heart for others?

In this season of preparing for Charge Conference and planning our ministry in 2012, please join with me in dealing honestly with these questions and considering how we might best focus our energy. Are we living out the Gospel or are we missing the mark with idols, habits, and petty distractions? Life is short, and we need to stick with the things that matter.

Christ is counting on us to be faithful to what he has called us to as his followers, including ‘growing disciples who make a difference.’ Let’s refuse to let this become a marketing gimmick or religious cliché. Rather, with the Spirit’s help, let’s invest our time and energy in fostering real growth and actually transforming the world. This would be time and energy well spent.

Join in the conversation by visiting Pastor Bert’s blog, notesalongtheway.com. You can also contact Pastor Bert at 804.347.9567, or by email at pastorbert@sycamoreumc.com,

Growing Disciples...

GPS Points The Way

This fall, Pastor Bert will begin offering two Grow, Pray, & Serve workshops (GPS for short); one at 7pm on Wednesday nights and the other at 10 am on Thursdays. These are free (you can buy related materials if you want), open to everyone at any time, and rewarding (read that as spiritually and occasional door prizes). Workshops will focus on different topics connecting daily life with faith, and will include Bible study and conversation.



Participants will explore ways to pray and ways to serve others, and we just may find ourselves working on optional projects and taking field trips. Requirements are open heart and mind, your Bible and notebook.

Fall/ Winter 2011 GPS Offerings

Thursday Morning (10 a.m. & we often go out for lunch afterward):

October- November – Living Fully, Dying Well: Our best decisions about life’s most important

events are seldom made in a time of crisis. *Living Fully, Dying Well* is designed to assist us in making careful, wise and prayerful preparation for meeting life's most important moments.

December – *A Life-giving Christmas*, Hope, peace, joy and love are not just candles to be lit around an advent wreath – they are facets of a living Christ to be ignited in our lives and our communities. Christmas can be that time of refueling for the new year ahead, if we carefully invest ourselves and engage life-giving principles.

Wednesday Night (7 p.m. & we might try potluck fellowship dinners before)

November – Exploring God's Call, more info TBA

December – *A Life-giving Christmas*, Hope, peace, joy and love are not just candles to be lit around an advent wreath – they are facets of a living Christ to be ignited in our lives and our communities. Christmas can be that time of refueling for the new year ahead, if we carefully invest ourselves and engage life-giving principles.

Pastor Bert to Teach Special Elementary Age Class.

For the months of October and November, Pastor Bert will offer a very special experience for the children in our elementary class. Called Touch the water, Taste the Bread, Bert will help our kids learn about Baptism and Communion. The lessons on baptism will introduce children to the sacraments and to the Bible story about Jesus' baptism. The lessons on Communion will introduce children to the sacraments and to the Bible story about the Last Supper. Children will understand the Bible story in terms of the meal, the love of friends, and the memories that were made. All early school age kids are welcome.

Making A Difference...

Farewell Celebration

Everyone is invited to a going-away party for Mary Cummings next Sunday from 1-3 pm. This reception is sponsored by the UMW; Mary is a charter member of the UMW and has been a member for 63 years! Cake and punch will be served as we say good-bye to Mary as she moves away from our area.

Sycamore Hosts Training to Make a Difference in the Aftermath of A Disaster

One-day event to be ERT certified puts "Christian Love in Action"

An UMCOR Early Response Team (ERT) certification training course will be held at Sycamore United Methodist Church, 9710 Old Stage Road, Prince George, 23875 on **Saturday, November 5th, from 9 a.m.- 5 p.m.**

The course will be taught by an authorized UMCOR trainer. Topics at training include the who, what, where, when, and how of disaster response ministry, as well as hands-on experience with specific tasks of early responders. The mission of an Early Response Team is to provide a caring presence in the aftermath of a disaster. Teams work within very specific guidelines to be productive and caring while causing no further harm or being a burden to the affected community.

Registration fee is \$55, which covers the cost of a mandatory background check, class materials, snacks, drinks, and lunch. Payment is due on the day of training. You may register by emailing Becky Paxton at JamesRiverDistrict@vaumc.org. When e-mailing please include all of the following: name, address, home phone number, cell phone number, and the name of your home church and district.

This training will also be offered at Trinity United Methodist Church (903 Forest Ave, Richmond, 23229) on **Saturday, Nov. 12**, from 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

An **ERT**:

- Is NOT a "first responder;" therefore it does not perform search and rescue, nor does it provide emergency medical treatment
- Responds to a local, state, or regional disaster (usually a natural disaster such as a tornado, earthquake, or hurricane)
- Provides a Christian presence to survivors by helping them through the initial phase of their grief and loss
- Is a mission outreach of UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief) and UMVIM (United Methodist Volunteers in Mission). The United Methodist Church has a long history of

assisting persons affected by disaster. The ERT ministry helps provide organization, certification, and support at the local level, as well as providing a standard protocol for teams to be prepared and ready to deploy.

- Enters an area after it has been reopened to homeowners. Teams stay only three days.

What does an ERT do?

For example, the team can:

- tarp a damaged roof to prevent further damage to a home.
- help a family clean up debris and ruined belongings and move them to the curb
- remove drywall that has been soaked and mildewed to the point where it can be repaired.
- provides a caring presence in the aftermath of a disaster. However, it does NO "repair" work. That is for later UMVIM or others teams to do.

Who can participate?

Anyone physically capable, male or female, 18 years old and older. There are needs for various types and levels of skills.

Trained persons receive an ERT badge as evidence of training which authorizes them to enter a disaster area and help survivors as part of a team but only after United Methodist leaders in an affected area call for help. (ERTs do not self-deploy.)

Laity Sunday Mission Celebration is 10/16

October 16th is Laity Sunday, and Sycamore will mark it with a special celebration of Mission at both services. Share in the pictures, stories and meanings of Mission as offered by the people of our church.

Speaker Shares about Wounded Warrior Program

The next **Bykota** meeting is **October 12th @ 6:30 p.m.** We will have a guest speaker from the Wounded Warrior program and a covered dish supper. *Please bring your favorite dish and join us for an informative evening.* Bykota will also have a Oct 22, 2:00 – 4:00 – Bake Sale (in conjunction with the UMM pork butt sale)



In recognition of **Breast Cancer Awareness Month**, join Southside from the Heart on one or several dates to **knit and/or crochet for cancer patients**. We make chemo caps, blankets, shawls, and lots of other items and distribute them throughout our community to those in need. No experience necessary! Beginners and all ages welcome. Hopewell Library, 209 E Cawson St. Hopewell, VA 23860

Thursday, October 6 & 20 from 6-8 pm

Wednesday, October 12 & 28 from 10am-12noon

Crater Community Hospice is holding the **3rd Annual 5 K Angel Walk** on **Saturday, Nov 12** at 10 a.m. at Petersburg National Battlefield Park. T-shirts are available for \$15 if you register before Nov 2. Register at www.cratercommunityhospice.org.

Evangelism Team

Wow, it's fall already!!! Just can't believe how quickly the summer has gone by and there are lots of exciting things going on at Sycamore.

- Don't forget the fall festival & revival October 16-18.
- 5th Sunday Brunch is scheduled for October 30th during the Sunday school hour. Please bring your favorite breakfast or lunch dish to share. Evangelism will provide drinks. Please bring a picture of a saint and those pictures will be used the following Sunday.

We are always open to suggestions; please feel free to let us know of any great ideas you may have or if you would like to join us.

- Susan Bishop & Lisa Williams

United Methodist Women (UMW)

The UMW served a meal for the PG Ruritans on Thursday, September 8th and will serve them again on November 10th. The Burrowsville Ruritans will be served on the 17th. The UMW will also help with the ERT training meal on October 29th.

We helped the church feed the seniors on September 21st, and they were very appreciative, as always. We helped at the

Mission Ministries food bank last month and served 71 families that day.

All women are invited to our monthly meetings, which are the first Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m.

United Methodist Men (UMM)

Mark your calendar! *October 22nd* is the next pork butt sale of the UMM. The price is staying the same - \$20. each. Make plans to stock the freezer! For pre-orders call 452-0048.



Don't forget to order your fresh, homemade coleslaw to go with the pork butt you are ordering from the UMM; only \$3.00 per pint. A sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board in the hall. There will also be a bake sale from 2:00-4:00 p.m. that day, sponsored by Bykota.

Choir News

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!

Community Opportunities

FREE Resume Building & Jobs Search Workshop! Come learn how to use our new FREE online tool, Career Transitions, to build your resume, take a job compatibility assessment, and search for employment opportunities. You'll create an account that you can access from any computer anywhere and at any time.

Tuesday, October 18 from 7-8:30 pm

Tuesday, October 25 from 10-11:30 am

Classes are at Hopewell Library, 209 E Cawson St., Hopewell, VA 23860. Event is free but space is limited. Call 804-458-6329 X 1005 to register.

Crater Community Hospice is offering a **6-week support group for adults coping with the loss of a child**. The confidential support group is free and opened to the public starting Wednesday, **October 19** from 7 - 8:30 p.m. at New Life United Methodist Church, 900 Old Hundred Rd., Midlothian, VA 23114. Call Patti Cox at (804) 840-6454 to reserve space.

Free Class offers Healing for Women. The James

House Intervention/Prevention Services is offering a FREE 8-week support group for adult women who experienced childhood sexual abuse or incest. The group will meet on Monday evenings from 6:00 to 7:00 pm at a location in the Tri-Cities beginning October 24. Please contact Jane Clayborne, 458-2704 to learn more.



Sycamore hosts Prince George Scrapbooking class taught by our very own Sassy Scrapbooking mom, Sherry Taylor. This class will be on

Thursday, Oct. 27 from 6:30 – 8:30. Look in the paper for more details.

Around the James River District & Virginia Conference.

Bert offers Communion Workshop in VA Beach.

Pastor Bert will lead a workshop on communion called, "This Holy Mystery", October 14th and 15th, 2011 at Community United Methodist Church, Virginia Beach. Rooted in United Methodist teachings about communion, we explore the what, why and practical how-tos for this sacrament and our lives. We also explore United Methodist understandings about grace, forgiveness, and spiritual growth as part of this meal. Previous participants describe this experience as deepening their experience of communion and their connection with Christ and each other. This class is open to everyone, but also meets the advanced training requirements for Lay Speakers. Additional class offerings include introduction to lay speaking, preaching, spiritual gifts, apologetics, and our United Methodist heritage. More information and registration can be found at Bert's blog, notesalongtheway.com.

Tennessee Mission Trip 2012

As many know, this past spring the Mississippi had a record flood year. We can help with the relief and rebuild! Rev. Nathan Decker will be leading a UMVIM team the week after Easter, April 8-13, 2012, to Dyersburg, TN. This trip is open to everyone, including families with children ages 7+. All children must be accompanied by a parent. The cost for this trip is \$100. This includes lodging, registration, insurance, breakfast and lunch. All funds and forms are due by March 5, 2012. Please note that there are extra forms for those under 18 that must be notarized. The team is limited to no more than 40 people, and we will have a team meeting on March 5, 2012, at 7 pm

(location to be determined) at which any concerns will be addressed and transportation determined. If you would like to go down to the river, pray and help others, please contact Rev. Nathan Decker at pastorndecker@gmail.com or call 804-898-1258.

Acolytes Serving in October



October 9th – Trae Cloud
October 16th – Danielle Cloud
October 23rd – Angelica Martinez
October 30th – Amanda Newman

October Birthdays

2nd Janice Kinch
4th Janice Martinez
5th Gina Anderson-Cloud & Caitlyn Elder
6th Terri Swindell
11th Martha King
16th Courtney Brockwell
20th Teri Williams
26th Matthew Mulkey
29th Jim Williams
30th Alex Martinez & Quinton Parker
31st Danielle Cloud

October Anniversaries

15th Tyree & Lynne Nichols
18th Bob & Nancy Phillips
21st Nick & Sarah Williams
22nd Robb & Martha Horne
25th Mike & Terri Swindel

Prevent Conflicts!

Get it On The Calendar

If you would like to schedule a meeting or other event at the church, please make sure to



check the church calendar (bulletin board and online), and call the church secretary, Nancy, to ensure it is put on the calendars.

Upcoming Events

10/9 – 5:30 pm Finance Committee mtg.
7:00 pm Lay Leadersh./Nominations
10/12 – 6:30 pm Bykota
10/16 – Laity Sunday Mission Celebration
1pm Mary Cumming Celebration
4:00 – 8:00 pm Fall Festival & Revival
10/17 – 6:00 pm B.ville Ruritan dinner & meeting
10/17-18 – 7:00 pm Revival continues
10/22 – UMM pork butt sale & bake sale
10/27 – 6:30 pm Scrapbooking class
10/30 – 5th Sunday brunch between church & SS
11/2 – Conference forms due to Nancy by noon.
11/5 – 9 a.m.-5 p.m. ERT training @ Sycamore
11/9 – Church Conference, 7:30 pm
11/20 – Community Thanksgiving Service @ Trinity UMC, 6:30 pm
11/27 – Sycamore Town Hall Meeting, 7 pm

Other meetings are being arranged related to charge conference. Look to bulletins and our calendar for these.

Remember to e-mail items for the next newsletter to Nancy Chesser at secretary@sycamoreumc.com by Nov. 1st.

Charge Conference Reports are Due November 2nd by noon.

October 16th is Laity Sunday, and Sycamore will mark it with a special celebration of Mission at both services. Share in the pictures, stories and meanings of Mission as offered by the people of our church.

