



Sycamore News



The Newsletter of Sycamore United Methodist Church | September 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

Prayer, Work and Study

By Pastor Bert, 804.347.9567,
pastorbert@sycamoreumc.com

Recently, when Hurricane Irene came calling, most experienced the impact of her visit. As with most unwanted houseguests, there was a mess to clean up afterward.

Nevertheless, Irene also brought on some remarkable blessings. Neighbors opened their doors, water and electricity were shared, grace was extended to friends and strangers, lots of trees were cut, and repairs were initiated. Many of the stories about this time include folks from Sycamore, and I thank God for each person who loved God and neighbor in such a time.

Being a follower and friend of Jesus means putting faith in action. James writes, "But if you look closely into the perfect law that sets people free, and keep on paying attention to it and do not simply listen and then forget it, but put it into practice—you will be blessed by God in what you do." (James 1:25, Good News Translation).

Sometimes we get to organize and plan faithful service (e.g. Redbird, Seniors' lunch, food bank, Mission Ministries, missionary support, etc.), but other times a need or problem just shows up and we are called to respond. But, we never do these things alone. The one who calls us to 'love our neighbor'

has already been at work in their life when he calls. He will be there long after we are gone.

An early follower and friend of Jesus, a man named Benedict, said that Christian communities should organize life around 'prayer, work, and study'. I like this way of thinking. It is simple, straightforward, easy to remember, but most of all it is rooted on what God calls us to be as Christians. Fall is a season of transition, but it in many ways it is a time of renewal. It is a season of returning to study. For many it is a time for renewal in work, and there are different opportunities and needs for prayer, including the need for our church to plan and staff ministries for the coming year via charge conference.

I hope you will join me in focusing on prayer, work, and study as we continue our ministry and life together as a community. May God bless us with calm peace inside as storms come and go. May we discover hope and mercy is a much richer way of life than worry and contention. And, may we be on a first-name basis with the creator of the universe and lover of all souls.

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



Church in the Park – Sunday
October 2nd; Location: Scott Park @
11AM. Please bring a covered dish
to share, something to drink, and a
lawn chair or two. There will be no
Sunday school classes that day.



T-shirts are here!! There are two different
shades of green to choose from and we are
now taking orders. See a member of the
Evangelism Committee if you are interested in
purchasing one or several. Prices are:

Youth: \$10, Adult: \$12, 1XL & up: \$14

Everyone that orders and pays for their t-shirt will be
entered into a drawing to receive theirs free! Get
those orders in to either Lisa Williams or Susan
Bishop. The cutoff date is September 25 for ordering
and we would like to have the t-shirts for everyone to
wear to the Festival of Faith (Fall Festival and
Revival).



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.; 6:00 dinner (the evangelism
committee will provide the hot dogs/hamburgers and
we ask the congregation to bring a covered
dish/dessert to share); and 7:00 revival with guest
speaker Norman Ramsey.* The revival continues
Monday and Tuesday evenings at 7:00 p.m., each
night with special music.

** Norman Ramsey is a unique pastor, performer,
author, and songwriter His desire to make the grace
and Joy of Jesus as unavoidable as possible has led
him to minister throughout the United States, Brazil,
and Kenya. He is founder and president of Norman
Ramsey Ministries, Inc. and the pastor of Laurel Hill
United Methodist Church on the Richmond district.
Norman has three musical recordings; "Near to the
Heart of God," "Apprentice," and "The Colors of
Grace." 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.*

I hope everyone is enjoying the 5th Sunday
Brunch. We plan to make this a Sycamore tradition!



We are always interested in new or different ways to
spread the good news of Jesus and our church to
the community. Please share any ideas that you
may have.

May God Bless You!
Susan Bishop
Lisa Williams

Make A Difference:

Reminded of Faith

There are so many different things in the world that
you can look at and be reminded of your faith in God,
including many beautiful things that he has created
for us to enjoy but also to cherish and take care of.
Every day that we are blessed to be a part of this
planet and to live the life of a Christian is a battle,
and sometimes even a struggle, to do the simplest of
things the way that we are supposed to do them
according to the Bible without letting human emotion
or just plain outright human weakness get in the way.
A little over one year ago we had vacation Bible
school at Sycamore and it was the first one that I had
the privilege of being a part of. The week went by as
planned and when things did not go the way we
expected we did as the Marines say "We improvised,
adapted, and overcame" any obstacles that were set
before us. The children all had a great time and
everyone who had participated and helped out felt
like we had accomplished something great, which we
had. It has been a few weeks now since this year's
vacation Bible school at Sycamore, and during that
time I was reminded of my faith because of
something that happened on the last day of the
previous year while helping perform skits in the old
trailer out back. On that last day I was helping
perform skits and working with Faith Longfield, and
we were down to our last group of kids. Both of us
were tired and ready to go home but as we finished
up we were handing out little swaps and gifts to the
kids. Right before we left, Faith handed me a purple
silly band that was in the shape of an angel. Not

thinking twice about it, I placed it on my left arm and walked out the trailer to gather up the kids and headed home. For over one year and give or take a month or two I have had that silly band on my arm, and every time I look down at it I am reminded of the time I spent with Faith and working with the kids. I think most important of all is the fact that every time I see it on my arm it also reminds me to watch my language, to think of others above myself, and most importantly it is a reminder of my faith and helps me to try and better myself on a daily basis. I am sure that when Faith handed the silly band to me it did not cross either of our minds that I would be wearing that thing for over a year later or that it would even have any kind of significance, but I can tell you that I have had more people comment on how silly it looks for a 6 foot 6 man to be wearing a purple bracelet. I have had many grown men make rude comments and say things that I cannot repeat in this letter; but when it is all said and done and I take the band off my arm, revealing the angel shape, and explain to them that a woman of great faith and love that attends my church gave the band to me while attending and helping with the kids, it almost looks as if God himself slaps them across the face and makes them ashamed of what they have said. I will keep wearing the silly band until the day that it breaks or that it is lost, and when that day comes I am sure that something else will take its place in reminding and helping me to be a better person. This is just another example of how every day we can make a difference in someone's life and may not even know that we have done anything; but sometimes it is just the little things that remind us of our FAITH. Grace, Love, and Peace to Gene and Faith Longfield..... Get well and know that you are Loved and Missed!

Nick Williams

Mission

A Note from our Honduras Missionary Courtney Harris

Hi Pastor Bert!

Great to hear from you. The 2nd graders are adorable, but I have to admit first-year teaching is

stressful. Especially at this school, but your email couldn't have come at a better time. Your line to "Keep believing in what called me" was just what I needed to hear/read, so thank you. And thank you for holding me in thought and prayer. We just received internet yesterday, but don't have the wireless router yet so we're sharing plug-in time. I have two other roommates, but we get along great so sharing is no problem.

The financial support! Thanks again for passing the plates around. That was so unexpected and thoughtful.

As for the prayer, I no longer have the exact translation I used at church. It was my personal translation, so I would be happy to translate it again, but some of the wording might vary slightly from what I said during worship. Would that be ok? It is such a powerful prayer. I'll include it below, and have attached a couple pictures.

They have a holiday Dia de los Ninos (Children's Day-- sort of like Mother's Day, but for the kids!) and our school celebrated it at a water park of sorts. There is a picture of me with one of my students, Alan David, playing in the water. I was on lifeguard duty, but ended up in the pool a lot of the day.



The other picture is a panoramic I took (my first successful panoramic, by the way!) from this crazy bridge by the water. I'm no engineer, but I'd describe the bridge as mostly metal cording and some wooden planks--it sways with your steps and while we're sure it's very secure, as soon as more people looked like they were going to walk across we booked it off!



I have two classes for a total of 49 students, so your prayers for patience, serenity, and energy would be greatly appreciated!

Bendiciones,
Courtney

**Oración de la Mañana
(Prayer for the Beginning of the Day)**

Lord, in the silence at the start of this new day, I come to you for peace, wisdom, strength. Today I hope to look at the world with eyes filled with love, to be patient, understanding, sweet, and wise. I hope to look past appearances and see your children as You see them, and in that see no more than the good in every one of them. Close my ears to all slander, guard my tongue from all that is evil, so that only charitable thoughts remain in my spirit, so that I may be benevolent and joyful, so that all who are near me feel your presence. Clothe me in You, Lord, so that I may radiate You throughout this day. Amen.



Would you like to **make a difference** in someone's life? Would you like to feel appreciated more for what you do? Come and join Sycamore as we make a difference on **Saturday, September 24th**. We will be packing and distributing food at the **Mission Ministries** outreach center in Waverly. This can make a difference in your life as well as the receivers. Waverly is among the poorest communities in the United States per capita. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board. The church van will go and others are driving. **We need help to do this** and nothing you can do will be more rewarding personally. If you have questions, please see Nancy Fine (541-3562) or Mary Jane Murphy (452-0048). Thank you for your consideration.



Bykota Women in Mission

Our next meeting will be September 21st at 6:30 p.m. We will be discussing new projects and opportunities. Come on out and join us - we would love to have you!

Peace & Grace,
Sherry Taylor

United Methodist Women (UMW)

Cookbooks: A decision was made by the UMW and Cookbook Committee to reconsider the time limit for recipes. Since there are other churches who are also compiling a cookbook at this time...our cookbooks will be ready for Mothers' Day. Please continue to give us your recipes and thanks to all who have contributed already.

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!



District News

The James House Intervention/Prevention Services will be offering a training program for prospective volunteers at no cost. The program begins on Saturday, September 17, 2011 and continues through December 2011. Sessions will be held in the agency's main business office located at 1016 Maplewood Ave., Hopewell, 23860. Pre-registration and an interview are required.

The James House is a fully accredited, award-winning, local non-profit organization providing cost-free, confidential services for people affected by domestic violence, sexual violence, and stalking to empower them to become healthy, safe, and self-sufficient. Volunteers participate in rigorous training and are held to high ethical standards. Volunteer opportunities include hotline advocate, support group co-facilitator, and hospital accompaniment. Volunteers are expected to make a minimum 12-month commitment upon completion of training.

If you would like to have a significant impact on those affected by interpersonal violence and your community, contact Lori Kalish at lori@thejameshouse.org for a volunteer application. Persons traditionally marginalized are encouraged to apply. Spanish-speaking volunteers needed. To learn more about The James House visit www.thejameshouse.org or view us on facebook.

James River Haiti teams to the island of La Gonave

We are sending two ten-member teams January 11-18 or January 18-25. Total cost will be in the neighborhood of \$1200 per team member. A \$200 deposit is due September 24th. All those interested in going please contact Pastor Nathan Decker at [804.898.1258](tel:804.898.1258).

Conference News

States, towns, churches assess Irene’s damage

From North Carolina, where the hurricane made landfall on Aug. 27, to New England, where sections of Vermont experienced the worst flooding in a century, Irene sparked evacuations by hundreds of thousands, swamped shoreline communities and inland towns, cut electric power to nearly 6 million people and caused at least 38 deaths.

Virginia came out better than first feared. “We’re not out of the woods, yet,” Gov. Bob McDonnell said this week with an eye toward the rising Blackwater and Nansemond rivers and another storm headed toward the Caribbean. “While this was a lower category storm than we expected, and the initial reports indicate less damage, our hearts and prayers go out to those families that suffer because of this storm,” he added.

The Rev. Robert Pihlcrantz, conference Disaster Response coordinator, said Irene caused “significant wind damage in areas around James City County, Williamsburg and Richmond. There are lots of trees down and there have been requests for chain saw work and debris removal. There was significant flooding in the Willoughby Spit/Pretty Lake area of Norfolk and we are awaiting assessments before proceeding with assistance. The majority of reports of damaged churches came from Arlington and Alexandria districts and they were reporting damage from the earthquake, not the hurricane.” Mineral UMC’s sanctuary is currently closed because of structural damage, for example.

Pihlcrantz added that conference Emergency Response Teams are on standby and equipment has

been strategically pre-positioned in support of the ERTs and possibly United Methodist Volunteers In Mission support later. Also, the Tennessee Conference is sending two truck-loads of drinking water to support Virginia Emergency Management requests.

Meanwhile the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) is already processing grant requests from the New York, Eastern Pennsylvania and Greater New Jersey conferences. The Rev. Tom Hazelwood of UMCOR noted that “the extremes” of Irene were represented by the damage around Morehead City, N.C., where it first came ashore, and the inland flooding in Vermont.

Online Advocate premiers with September issue: Beginning Sept. 1, the Virginia United Methodist Advocate monthly newsmagazine is now available online to those with paid subscriptions. For \$20 a year, you can receive a printed copy of the magazine each month plus full online access. Those who just want to read the digital version of the magazine can purchase an “online only” subscription for \$10 a year. The “print only” subscription will remain just \$15 per year. The September issue looks at the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. To subscribe to the *Advocate* – print version, digital version or both – call [\(804\) 521-1110](tel:804.521.1110) or [1-800-768-6040](tel:1-800-768-6040), ext. 110; or e-mail Advocate@vaumc.org.

Acolytes Serving in September



- September 4th – Daniel Blackmon
- September 11th – Riley Shank
- September 18th – Logan Powers
- September 25th – Alyssa Williams

September Birthdays

- 2nd Dot Hussey
- 3rd Mary Ann White
- 4th Virginia Kendall
- 6th Betty Dodson & Sandra Garr
- 7th Hayden Gregory
- 9th Jean Elder
- 10th Lisa Rusnak
- 11th Marcus Crawford & Homer Garr
- 16th Erika Hahn

18th Angelica Martinez & Alice Wootten
22nd Bob Clark & Jeri Ann Taylor
26th Harrison Hayes
28th Barry Smith
29th Denise Duesing, James Philyaw, &
James Rhodes
30th Betty Lucy

September Anniversaries

2nd James & Karey Lynn Kanak
3rd Lawrence & Kathy Brockwell
5th Tommy & Carolyn Cregar
12th Ronald & Loretta Moneymaker
20th Clif & Nancy Fine

Upcoming Events

9/21 – noon Seniors' lunch
7:30 pm Bykota
9/24 – noon – 3:30 pm Mission Ministries,
Waverly

Remember to e-mail items for the next newsletter
to Nancy Chesser at
secretary@sycamoreumc.com by Oct. 5th.

Sycamore United Methodist Church **Growing Disciples Who Make a Difference**

We all know how helpful it is to stay in touch, and we want to give you every opportunity to do so. We are providing a sheet listing ways for you to stay in touch with what's going on at Sycamore:

- Phone Outreach (occasional phone calls with information and alerts) sent to your phone.
- Sycamore Community Email (occasional information and weekly devotion by Pastor Bert) sent to your e-mail address.
- Sycamore Prayer List (prayer requested submitted by community members) sent to your e-mail address.
- Print subscription to newsletter (available monthly in welcoming area/narthex). Note: Beginning in October, newsletters will be mailed to identified shut-ins only.
- Online Subscription to newsletter. Email with a link to the PDF sent to your e-mail address.

Also, be sure to check out our webpage, SycamoreUMC.com and our Facebook Page along with the weekly bulletins.

