

SEPTEMBER



The Epistle

The Official Newsletter of United Methodist Church of Hartford

Be Rooted in God's Love

Grow in Grace

Bear Fruit of
Justice and Peace

2015

Pastor's Corner

THE TIME IS NOW!

It was one year ago, July 2015, when I began my journey with UMC Hartford. It has certainly been an enjoyable year getting to know the people of UMC Hartford and the community. As we approach the fall season, it is my hope that I will continue to develop relationships with the beloved people of UMC Hartford whom God has called me to serve and with the people of the greater Hartford area.

There is a gushing wind of new energy and excitement that is undoubtedly present at UMC Hartford. God is up to something! While we are indeed thankful for this new wave of the Holy Spirit's presence, we must also realize that everyone at UMC Hartford has a responsibility to do God's work in excellence. As ministers of the gospel (and we are all ministers of the gospel, not just the Pastor), God has commissioned us to share the love of Jesus Christ and to move beyond ourselves and live fruitful lives as humble stewards for God.

Our stewardship comprises the time we give to God and to God's people. It encompasses our monetary gifts so that when people who have real physical and financial needs look to us for assistance, Jesus can use UMC Hartford as a beacon of light and hope. What an honor! God has also given us talents that He wants to use for His glory and Kingdom. Each of us is blessed with unique talents that God created in us long before we were ever born. What a blessing to know that we are all special and loved by God!

God wants to melt us, mold us, fill us, and use us.¹ A friend once shared with me that her cousin often says, "I want to leave this earth with no potential." This young man wants to leave this earth with having used all of his time and talent for the Kingdom of God. Deep within my heart, I want the same for myself and for you.

I believe people want to serve God and be used by Him. However, often times I hear people say, "I don't know what I am good at or I don't know what God wants from me", or "I don't have a clue as to what are my spiritual gifts".

As a new church calendar year approaches, the vision for UMC Hartford is to help encourage people to remain rooted in God's love as they discover their spiritual gifts, provide tools to help people grow in grace and in their relationship with Christ, and to empower people to serve in a more excellent and fruitful way. We will begin this visioning process by inviting all of you to participate in a sermon series on spiritual gifts. We will journey with God and with one another and together grow in Christ.

Yes, the time is now! It is time to say yes to God and to His will, to be what He wants us to be, to love as God loves, to go where God wants us to go, and to do what God has commissioned us to do.

Peace, Pastor Rhonda

¹ Hymn No. 393 "Spirit of the Living God" arr. Daniel Iverson, 1926 (Acts 11:15)



COMING SOON!

Dates: To Be Announced

Lay Servant Six-Session Bible Study Series:

A Walk with John Wesley

Lectionary Readings for the Month of September

September 6 - 15th Sunday after Pentecost (Color: Green)
Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23 † Psalm 125 † James 2:1-10 (11-13), 14-17 † Mark 7:24-37
Liturgist: Mensimah Shabbaz

September 13 - 16th Sunday after Pentecost (Color: Green)
Proverbs 1:20-33 † Psalm 19 (UM 750) † James 3:1-12 † Mark 8:27-38
Liturgist: John Brubaker

September 20 - 17th Sunday after Pentecost (Color: Green)
Proverbs 31:10-31 † Psalm 1 (UM738) † James 3:13-4:3, 7-8 † Mark 9:30-37
Liturgists: Marcia & Elle Ramos

September 27 - 18th Sunday after Pentecost (Color: Green)
Esther 7:1-6, 9-10, 9:20-22 † Psalm 124 (UM846) † James 5:13-20 † Mark 9:38-50
Liturgist: Tim Smith



The Starting Point: God is Love - September 6

Before you can discover your spiritual gifts, you must first believe that God exists and that He loves you unconditionally. Who is God? What does it mean to be loved by God? Why is it important to have a relationship with Jesus Christ?

You are a Spiritual Gift from God - September 20

Discovering your spiritual gifts will help you live out God's purpose in the world. During worship service on September 20, you will be invited to take a spiritual gifts survey. This assessment will help you discern your spiritual gifts.

Now What? What Does God Require of Me? - September 27

God saves and redeems us for a purpose. God gives us gifts for a purpose. What are we called to do with the gifts God gives us? The Bible and John Wesley offer some helpful tips.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR MUSIC DIRECTOR

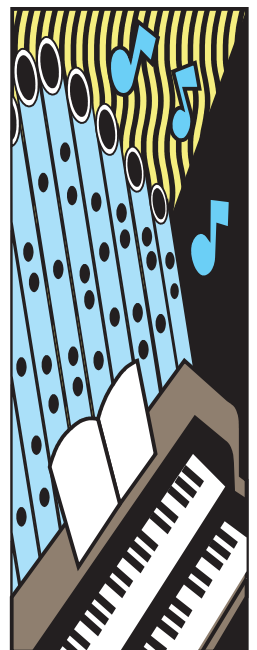
I hope everyone has had a relaxing and renewing summer. It's hard to believe it's almost over, but there is much to be excited about when we return to our sanctuary on September 13th.

First of all, an enormous thank you to everyone who has contributed their musical gifts during our summer services. Summer choir was a great success, and the musical offerings made by individuals and small groups throughout the season have been a real blessing to our worship. I hope that you all will be able to share your gifts with us during the regular church year, either as a member of the choir, or through solo and small ensemble performances. And remember, Summer Choir will have our last meeting on August 30th at 9:15 am. Hope to see you there!

Because we are focused on preparing 5,000 packaged meals on Rally Day, our service will be a bit shorter than usual. Thus, Chancel Choir will simply kick off its season with a rehearsal before the Rally Day service on September 13th. If you are interested in joining us, please arrive at 9:15 that day. Regular rehearsals will resume on Thursday, September 17th, from 7:30-9pm, and we will sing our first anthem on September 20th. Come join us in praise and fellowship.

This year will also see the rebirth of a concert series at our church. Our first concert, on Sunday, October 18th at 4pm, will feature music from the baroque on instruments appropriate to the period. An advent concert is also planned for Sunday, December 6th, at 4pm. Both concerts will last approximately an hour, and will have receptions after. Both concerts will be "pay what you can," and will benefit the music ministry at UMCoh. More information will be released soon regarding programming, but please save these dates! They should both prove to be entertaining evenings of great music.

Yours in worship and music, Stephen





FEEDING CHILDREN EVERYWHERE – THE RALLY HUNGER PROJECT

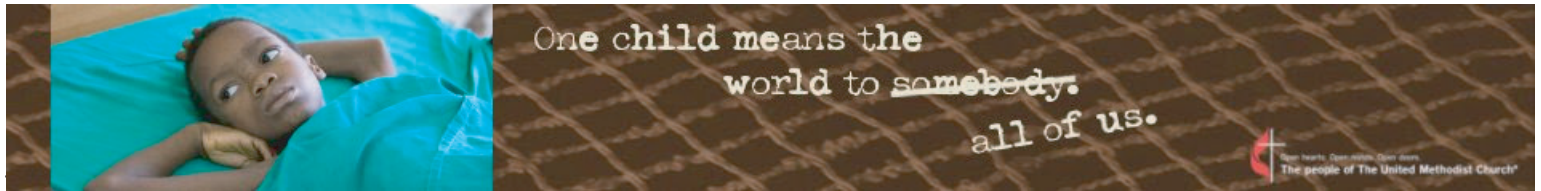
We are just weeks away from Rally Day, September 13th! Following the worship service join in our exciting Feeding Children Everywhere event. It will take everyone's help to make this day memorable for our church. Assembling 5000 hand-packaged healthy lentil casserole meals in about an hour will be the task.

The money to pay for these meals should be in by September 6th. Remember to submit collected funds and donations with checks made out to UMC of Hartford with Rally Hunger Project in the memo line.

After the lentil casserole meals are packaged, we will share a pot-luck lunch together. Please bring a salad, dessert or main dish to the Wesley Hall kitchen on your way to church. Laughter, music, and lots of fun await! And some dancing around and a piñata will add to the festivities. Yes, we can make a difference!

CHURCH WORD OF THE MONTH - SACRISTY

Definition: a room attached to a church or chapel where the communion set, vestments, altar coverings, etc., are kept and where clergy and others prepare for the service. The sacristy here is located through the door on the right at the end of the corridor outside the parlor. The room can also be entered through the door on the front right side of the sanctuary....Over the years, our sacristy has been used as the pastor's study/office, the church office and a Sunday School classroom.



Dear UMC of Hartford, CT,

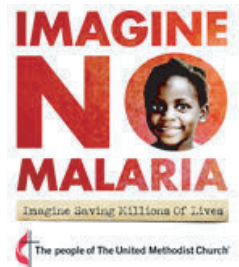
Thank you for your gift of \$ 140.00 to Imagine No Malaria supporting the United Methodist Church's commitment to eliminate malaria as a major source of death and suffering in Africa by 2015. Your support serves as an example of how we are living Christ's call to heal the sick and help those in need.

Imagine No Malaria includes continued bed net distributions, community education programs with medical outreach training, radio communications programs reaching remote areas with vital information, and programs that strengthen clinics and hospitals to better diagnose and treat malaria.

Thank you for your generosity. Please continue to pray for our work and those we serve.

Peace and Joy!

Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton
Chair, UMC Global Health Initiative



CHECK OUT OUR CHURCH WEBSITE

What's happening at United Methodist Church of Hartford? Timely updates can be found at our very own church website (www.umcofhartford.org). There you will find announcements of upcoming events, the official up-to-date church calendar, contact information and pictures, as well as other information about both our church and the United Methodist church generally. If you have internet access, this is a great way to keep up to date.

☀ ☀ ☀ ☀ SEPTEMBER CELEBRATIONS ☀ ☀ ☀ ☀			
BIRTHDAYS		ANNIVERSARIES	
1 - Amarialys Villegas (Connor) (c)	7 - Ann Harper	20 - Beth Ann Sennett	Deanna & John Swanson - 9/9/00
2 - Terri DePaolis	9 - Nicholas Bacon	22 - Adam Peterson	Doris & Bob Drayton - 9/12/42
4 - Jacqueline Berg	12 - Brian Loveland	Pauline Wood	Sharon & Roger Kirton - 9/18/81
5 - Ruth Sweeney	13 - Deanna Swanson	29 - Nathan Atkinson (c)	Maryann & Kevin Loveland - 9/19/81
6 - Jim Tresner	17 - Carol Hartz	Colin Craig	