

KEEPING Current

With The Union Church in Waban

SEPTEMBER 2012

FROM THE PASTOR

Like perhaps many of you, I was entranced by the Olympic Games this year. I was entranced by the beauty, power and resilience of the human body. As I watched one athlete after another, I marveled at the commitment and dedication of these individuals. How many hundreds of hours of practice did it take to perfect that dive? How many hundreds of hours of pushing through limits did it take to perfect that speed? How many hundreds of stumbles did it take before perfecting that landing? "Practice makes perfect" the old adage goes and we certainly saw perfection in these Olympic Games.

But as is my tendency, I also found myself reflecting on that old adage and Olympic perfection in light of church life.

I began reflecting on the distortions that perfection may have had for us in our past experience of church. You see, we have Jesus, this Olympic Champion of the Good and Perfect life, so to speak, as our personal

trainer. We have been told that our job is to practice what he preaches so that someday, with the grace of God, we may be good enough to make God's team.

Isn't that what some of us have heard repeatedly in our previous church lives? "You are seriously flawed. The purpose of religious practice is to correct what is wrong in you so that you may someday be acceptable if not perfect in God's sight." As if the purpose of church is a spiritual boot camp to make us worthy of the welcome we receive.

I hope that this kind of religious messaging has not been seeded inside of you, but if it has -- please hear me — that is not what you will hear here. The Union Church in Waban is not about perfection. We are not about getting it right, about proving worthiness, or making the team. Instead, the heart beat and animating presence in our life together is not about striving for perfection but about opening to authenticity.

We practice showing up each Sunday morning, praying and singing and

sighing together, not to strive for some idea of perfection, of achieving what a "really good and holy person really ought to be." Instead we show up each Sunday morning and at the many other opportunities we have to be together to practice being our truest most authentic selves and how to trust our most authentic selves with each other.

That means: you do not need to check doubt at the door; you do not need to stuff disbelief into your pocket; you do not need to paste a smile on your face when all you want to do is wail. Honestly, if church cannot be the place where we are loved for who we are, not for who we wished we were, then why in the world would we give up Sunday morning with the *Globe* and a good cup of coffee?

We are used to pretending. It is the mode in much of our lives. But church is the one place, I pray, where pretence can drop away and we can come crawling, dancing,

(continued on page 2)

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COMMUNICATING WITH THE UNION CHURCH

Keeping Current is the monthly newsletter covering the activities within and surrounding The Union Church in Waban. Submissions are due on the 20th of each month. The preferred method of submission is via email to the Church Office. All articles should include the author's name and phone number and should be submitted in their entirety.

Items for the church's Sunday Bulletin may also be submitted in the same fashion as *Keeping Current*. The deadline for the weekly bulletin is Wednesday morning at 10 am.

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A Note from Your Moderators

The last vestiges of the summer were evident in Buzzards Bay in the beautiful harbor of Mattapoisett a few weeks ago. My family and I were walking on the various sandbars that had revealed themselves with the low tide in the shadow of the large lighthouse guarding the bay. As we were catching up with a college friend, hermit crabs scurried about for shelter with some looking for new shells to occupy. It was a glorious day.

In my mind, I knew summer was waning and autumn would be upon us. While parting summer activities is such sweet sorrow, the excitement of autumn in New England gives rise to new experiences and opportunities. Therefore, it is with some trepidation but much joy that I join Molly Owen Kiritsy in the role of co-moderator this year. I am humbled to have been considered and hope to execute the role to the best of my abilities. As a new co-moderator, it is only fitting to thank Nancy Zollers for her efforts as co-moderator the last two years. We have seen many new initiatives and a rich dedication to the church during her tenure, for which we are deeply grateful. It is my hope to be as dedicated to the role as she has been.

We have been so blessed as a church community to have Stacy Swain as our pastor the last few years. I look forward to working with Stacy and Molly to continue the good work and to engender thinking about how our community can grow deeper in our relationships with one another and our faith. In addition, I hope the legacy of Stu Laughlin, as committed Ambassador, reaching out to the broader community to shout the good news of the church, will live on in all of us. I hope to listen intently to the congregation as we look forward to another great year together.

Peace, Kent Wittler

From the Pastor (continued from cover)

weeping, singing, sighing, praising through these doors together equally loved, equally valued, not in our perfection, but in the rawness of the truth of who we really, really are.

Monthly at our worship at the Waban Health Center, I ask the residents who have gathered "Does God ask that we be perfect?" And they say resoundingly, "No!" Then I ask "Well then, what does God ask?" And they say: "that we love;" "that we do our best;" "that we try;" "that we are not afraid;" "that we do what we can." And as they speak from their hearts, I have this feeling that God is so well pleased.

May we enter this year not measuring ourselves against what it is we should or ought to do, but honestly offering just who it is we are, trusting in God's love for us and in our care and compassion for each other. I trust with every ounce of my being, that perfection is not asked of us, only authenticity.

I delight in each and every one of you and in what this year will bring for us together.

Peace,

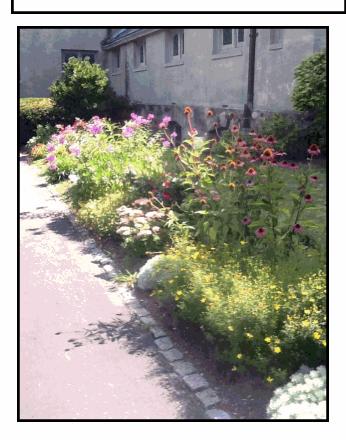
Stacy

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From the Deacons

<u>Prayers of the people:</u> Every Sunday we take time to lift up to God and to each other the celebrations and the concerns that are on our hearts. This time of communal prayer is the heart beat of our community. While some of us do not hesitate speaking our prayer requests out loud during this time, others of us — while wanting to ask for prayers, may not feel able to give them voice. For this reason, we have begun the practice of having a prayer book at the back of the sanctuary every Sunday. Please feel free to write down in the book the prayer request you have. The deacons will bring the book forward during the passing of the peace for our worship leaders to incorporate into our time of prayer. All prayer requests on Sunday (those spoken and those written) will also be brought to our Monday morning prayer group, "Living Waters" to be prayerfully held throughout the week.

Prayers are asked for the Weisgerber/Brown family as they mourn the sudden and unexpected death of Alex's father. May our care and love and God's peace give them strength and comfort as they move through this difficult time.



Summer Sabbath

During our June 17^{th} worship service, we anticipated moments of blessing that summer would bring. We hoped for moments of rest when perhaps we could catch a glimmer of the goodness seeded in creation.

As we gather again in the fall, I wonder if you could share with us a Sabbath moment or two that you may have experienced this summer. Were there moments of transcendent beauty that filled you? Were there moments of boundless joy that surprised you? Were there times when you felt deeply at peace?

If so, could you take a moment and jot down your Sabbath moments and either email them to me or bring them in on the 9th when we gather? These could take whatever form – word, picture, image, sculpture.... These Sabbath moments will be the substance of our Advent booklet of reflections.

Peace,

Stacy

stacy@ucw.org.

Many thanks to Judy Nagle and members of the Prudential Committee for planning, planting, and caring for our gardens this summer. Their hard work is evident in our beautiful outdoor spaces.

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Christian Education and Formation for Adults

From the Lunch Bunch

September's meeting of Lunch Bunch will be on Tuesday, September 11th, at noon.

Please consider joining us for Lunch Bunch. Each month we catch up on the happenings in our lives, and then discuss a topic of interest. If you need a ride, please give Stacy a call at 617-965-3893.



The Waban Health Nursing and Rehabilitation Center: Taking Worship Beyond Our Sanctuary's Walls

On the third Thursday of the month at 10:30 a.m., Stacy is joined by others in the church to lead a monthly protestant worship service for our neighbors, the residents of the Waban Health, the nursing and rehabilitation center located in Waban Square just behind the Waban Market. Waban Health provides short-term rehabilitation, long-term dementia and respite care to 90 residents. Hearing God's word and sharing communion with people who we may not have any other opportunity to know is tremendously enriching. If you are interested in sharing in this ministry, please let Stacy know by either emailing her at Stacy@ucw.org or by calling at 617-965-3893. This month's visit will be on September 20th.

Java Gents

Java Gents is an informal monthly breakfast hour for the men of the UCW congregation. It provides friendly fellowship and mutual support to the men. Java Gents meet the third Friday of each month in the church reception room at 7:00 a.m. Buz Bedford cooks up a full, hot



breakfast of sausage, eggs, bagels, fresh fruit salad, and hot coffee. Jay O'Beirne usually hosts the lively discussion of timely topics, and personal goings on among the men. As we begin the second year of Java Gents, we would like to extend a warm invitation to all the men in our church to please come and join us starting this month on Friday, September 21st at 7:00 a.m.

Bible Study

Bible Study resumes in September, when we will begin reading through the book of Genesis.

We will be meeting again on Sunday mornings, beginning on September 16 at 8:00 a.m. We meet in Stacy's office.

Bible Study is a great way to not only help us grow in our own understanding of who God is for each of us personally, but it also enlivens our experience of worship and helps us to be more curious and engaged in our faith throughout the week.

Please join us, the study is open to everyone.

Biblical literacy or previous study is not needed.

Come when you can,
there is no commitment to attend every Sunday.

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Wellspring Women's Group

Reception Room

Women's Wellspring resumes September 19 at 6:30 p.m. and will meet throughout the year on the third Wednesday of the month. Mark your calendars for this monthly gathering time when you are invited out of the demands of your days and into a place of peace. You are invited to set down that which burdens you and pick up laughter, love and learning. You are invited to fill places of hunger with good food and fellowship. Women of the church, you are invited.

Come every month or come when you can. It will be good to be together!

Living Waters Prayer Group

Living Waters Prayer Group resumes on Monday morning September 10, and meets regularly each Monday morning in the side chapel from 7:30 to 8:15 a.m. You are invited to gather with others in the chapel off the sanctuary for a time of silent contemplation, meditation on scripture, and prayer. Steeping ourselves in the peace and presence of God in the quiet of prayer makes a qualitative difference in how we experience what the week brings. Again, if you are interested in this time of prayer, but mornings just are not convenient for your schedule, please see Stacy about exploring a weekday evening offering. Stacy@ucw.org

Introducing "Conversations along the Way" starting September 30th

On the **last Sunday of every month**, grab your coffee and curiosity and enter the conversation. We will gather right **after worship** for whatever time we need, to continue the conversation that was begun over two thousand years ago on that road to Emmaus (Luke 21:13). We will



join those two disciples in frank and honest conversation as we engage our questions, our doubts and skepticism about what exactly this Christian faith is all about. We will talk candidly about how and if the ancient story of Scripture has relevance for our living today and how we are to understand what it means to "love kindness, do justice and walk humbly with our God" (Micah 6:8) in this time and place. The agenda for this time is not to try to get each other to believe in a certain way or to try to rid us of our questions. Quite the opposite is true! The agenda for this time which is consistent with the spirit of the Union Church community is to simply welcome all, wherever we may be on our spiritual journeys and to engage our questions honestly and openly, without judgment and with love.

If Sunday after church is a busy time, perhaps you would like to drop in to Starbucks in Waban Square **between 9:00 and 10:00 a.m. on the first Wednesday** of the month. Stacy will be there enjoying a cup and ready to engage our continued conversations.

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Christian Education News for Children and Youth

by Kathy Malone

Welcome Back Dinner

Friday, September 7, 6:00-7:30 p.m.

The Christian Education committee invites kids and their parents to gather together for dinner. We'll eat pizza, catch up with each other and learn about Christian Education plans for the year ahead.

RSVP to Kathy

Youth Group News

6th - 12th graders

Youth Group begins again this Fall! Buz, Soo and Kathy are back. We look forward to welcoming our rising sixth graders to our group. In addition, we invite all of our teens to bring their friends. We'll continue to meet about twice a month at the church from 4:30-6:00 p.m. See the schedule below. Youth Group will provide an accepting, comfortable and fun environment where kids will have opportunities to experience God in conversations, games, sports, service, food, music and worship.

9/30

10/14

10/28

11/4

11/18



First Fridays for Disciples (this year's 4th and 5th graders and their friends)

New Faith and Fellowship Group

This year, the Disciples class is invited to come to church from 6:00-8:00 p.m. on the first Friday of each month. We'll begin with pizza (donations are welcome to cover the cost), then have time for community building, leadership development and faith sharing. Action and games will be a big part of our time together. Kids are encouraged to bring their friends. Kathy will be looking for another parent to assist at each gathering, so if you are interested please let her know what month you are available. This fall, we will meet on:

10/5

11/2

12/7

Apple Picking

Following worship, Sunday, September 23

After church we're going apple picking at the beautiful Nagog Hill Orchards in Littleton, MA. Bring a picnic blanket and a bag lunch. The Mission and CE Committees will provide drinks and snacks. The orchard takes cash only and there are no ATM machines around, so come prepared. We'll donate some of our apples to the Newton Food Pantry. Let Kathy know if you plan to come, if you can drive (how many), or if you need a ride (how many). We should have rides available even for kids who come without parents. Permission slips and directions will be available at church come September. Friends are welcome!



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Christian Education News (continued)



The Giving Factory

Cradles to Crayons

Clothing Drive and Service Event on September 26

Cradles to Crayons (C2C) strives to provide children up to age 12 living in homeless and low-income situations with the essentials they need to feel safe, warm, ready to learn, and valued. Join us from 10:00 a.m. - noon on Wednesday, September 26 working at the Giving Factory, C2C's large, bright, welcoming warehouse in Brighton. We'll be organizing donated clothes, toys or supplies for needy kids. Anyone aged 5 years or older is eligible to join us. September 26 is Yom Kippur so it is a school holiday in Newton. We'll leave Newton by 9:30 a.m. and return by 1:00 p.m. If you'd like to go, need a ride, or can give a ride, let Kathy Malone know. Permission slips for those under 18 attending without parents will be available in September.

Between now and our service day, we are sponsoring a 'back to school' and winter clothing supplies drive, especially focusing on clothing. Please bring in your new and gently used clothing items to the collection box at church. Donation guidelines for clothes are below. For a full list of items needed, visit the C2C website:

www.cradlestocrayons.org.

*Winter Clothing (kids' sizes 0-20 & Adult S,M,L)

*Winter Coats

*Winter Shoes & Boots (infant child sizes 0-13 & youth/adult sizes 1-10)

*Socks and underwear (new only)

*Hats, gloves, scarves and mittens



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Christian Education News (continued)

Sunday School Classes

Sunday School kicks off September 9 with a One Room Church School following the Time for Children in worship. Children will return to worship for Communion on this day. Our regular classes begin September 16. On days with regular Sunday School classes, children and youth begin in worship and leave for classes following the Time for Children.

With the exception of our rising sixth graders, the CE Committee has decided to keep the same cohorts of kids together as last year. Our rising sixth graders will join the other middle schoolers in the Faith Seekers class. See below for a description of each Sunday School class.

For children in K-5th grades, we'll continue using the Whole People of God curriculum, which, because it follows the lectionary schedule for scripture readings, introduces children to the same Bible story being heard by parents in worship.

Communion Sundays

The first Sunday of each month is Communion. So that our children and youth may join us for Communion, on these Sundays we will have an all-ages One Room Church School following the Time for Children. Children will return to the sanctuary at the start of Communion.

Nursery - Rainbow Room

Nursery care is available from 9:45 a.m. until the end of worship. Lisa Woloski Barry continues to provide care for our youngest members. In addition to lots of play time with Lisa, this year a volunteer will join Lisa in the nursery for the first 20 minutes to share a short story, a song and a craft focusing on how God loves us and our world.

Noah's Ark (K-1st Grade) - Muse Room

Our Noah's Ark class has a new room this year. Having outgrown the furniture in the Turtle Room, these children will now meet in the Muse Room (across from Littlehale, the room where the middle schoolers used to meet). This room has been redecorated just for them including tables that are just their size.

Faithful Friends (2nd-3rd Grade) - Littlehale Room

Faithful Friends continues to meet in Littlehale, but this year all those little wooden chairs and small tables have been moved out to make room for furniture more appropriate for our kids' growing size. In response to parent feedback and in an effort to provide more continuity for this class, the teaching of Faithful Friends will be coordinated by a team of 5 -6 teachers who will each teach 3-4 Sundays throughout the year. In addition to sharing the teaching schedule, the team will meet at least twice throughout the year to plan class time. If you are able to join this team, let Kathy know. Team members thus far include Sue Hadley, Sally DiLoreto, Liz Caronna, and Kathy Malone.

Disciples (4th - 5th Grade) - Meeting Room/The Stage

The Disciples class will alternate between meeting in the Meeting Room and using the Stage as the activities planned for their class time may require different settings at times. As we build upon the Biblical literacy we started last year, we encourage the Disciples to bring their Adventure Bibles with them to class each Sunday.

Faith Seekers (middle school) - CE Office

The couches have been moved out of the Muse Room and into Kathy's office for our middle school class. As a basis for our classes, we'll continue to use "Connect: Life and Faith for Young Teens." This is a topical, activity based program with short units of 3 to 5 weeks. Topics are a mix of current events, junior high life issues and faith questions. We'll take the kids' lives and concerns as a starting point and help them make connections to faith.

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Christian Education News (continued)

Ways to Help

Volunteers Needed

Lots of classes and activities are planned for our children, but none of them are possible without the help of committed adults, both those with school-aged children and those without. The Christian Education Committee has worked hard over the past year to create volunteer opportunities which require only one to a few hours of time. But this means we will need more helpers, not fewer. Please consider helping in any of the following ways and let Kathy Malone know where you are able to assist:

Sunday School

- Teach a Sunday School class for one 3-4 week session.
- Substitute in a Sunday School class (with advanced notice).
- Be a teacher's assistant for one Sunday (or more!).
- Be a Shepherd: leave worship twice to sweep the halls for stray Sunday School sheep and check in with the classroom teachers.
- Be an assistant at an all-ages One Room Church School

Other Events

- Assist at one of our First Friday social gatherings for our 4th & 5th graders
- Provide the snack for a Youth Group meeting.
- Attend a youth group meeting (or more than one!)
- Help with the Christmas pageant

Mark Your Calendar



September 7

Welcome Back Sunday School Dinner, 6:00-7:30 p.m.

September 23

Apple Picking following worship

September 26

Cradles to Crayons, 10:00 a.m. - noon

September 30

Youth Group (6th-12th), 4:30-6:00 p.m.

October 5

First Friday (4th-5th), 6:00-8:00 p.m.

October 14

Youth Group (6th-12th), 4:30-6:00 p.m.

October 28

Youth Group (6th-12th), 4:30-6:00 p.m.

November 2

First Friday (4th-5th), 6:00-8:00 p.m.

November 4

Youth Group (6th-12th), 4:30-6:00 p.m.

November 18

Youth Group (6th-12th), 4:30-6:00 p.m.

December 6

Cookie Decorating for Food Pantry (early release day)

December 15

Pageant Rehearsal, 9:00-11:00 a.m.

December 16

Pageant during Worship

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For our friends in M'tendere, Zambia

Most fundraisers cajole us into buying low quality stuff that we don't need or want - not this one! When you order from Close Buy in support of educating orphans in Zambia, you are also supporting New England artisans and crafts people. Here's how it works: shop the online (<u>www.closebuycatalog.org</u>) or print catalog that will be available at church, print and fill out the order form and give/send a check to Communities Without Borders, 842 Chest-Waban, MA 02468. 30% of your purchase will go directly to educating children in M'tendere. Get your Christmas shopping done early - this is only available for the month of September. Thank you for your support!





The Yard Sale You've Been Waiting For!

Union Church will be holding its yard sale on Saturday morning September 29th, from 9:00 a.m. to noon. We will have sign-up for tables and folks can bring what they would like to sell that morning. Set up will begin by 7:30 a.m. No clothing please. Details to follow.

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A Letter from Student Intern Kathryn Henderson

Hello Friends,

Thank you for inviting me to be your student intern this year! I am honored to be learning with you all, and am excited to get to know you. To give you a head start about me -- I am a lifelong student of the world, and love being in nature, reading, walking, listening to music, talking with people, and traveling. I love sharing people's stories, the sacred threads that weave lives and communities together in God.

In May 2011, I graduated from Andover Newton Theological School with a Master of Divinity, and this year am completing a Master of Theology at Boston College, focusing on pastoral theology and biblical literature. I am also fortunate to be working part-time with a nonprofit hospice in Attleboro. My work as a chaplain there has deepened my faith and spiritual practice, and I have discovered the blessings of accompanying people during this part of their life journey.

My home church is The United Parish in Brookline, where I've enjoyed singing in the choir and working on various projects since 2009. Through United Parish I am a member in discernment with the Metropolitan Boston Association of the United Church of Christ.

Although I have only begun living my love for God as a formal vocation during the past four years, most of my professional life has been an expression of that devotion. I was an environmental policy director, nonprofit social services executive director, and most recently, founder of a nonprofit bookstore and community arts center, all in North Carolina. I went to college there, then came to Tufts University for a master's in environmental policy. After graduating in 1983, I returned to Chapel Hill, and lived there and in Durham, where I was married and helped raise two beautiful stepdaughters, now 32 and 36.

An only child, I also cared for my parents in their final years, and after my father died in 2007, I applied to Andover Newton and began school in 2008. I am still close to my friends, cousins, and former husband and his family, and visit when I can. However, I am a New Englander at heart, so plan to remain here after graduation in May. It works out well for my family and friends -- they enjoy visiting this beautiful place, but not shoveling snow!

As the next part of my journey begins, I am deeply grateful that it will be with your community which is so welcoming and connected in Spirit. I pray to be of service, to integrate your reflections and guidance, and to enjoy studying, worshiping, and laughing with you all. I look forward to discovering your stories as we grow in faith and fellowship together!

Blessings,

Kathryn

SEPTEMBER 2012

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Labor Day	6:00 pm Deacons mtg.		7:30 pm choir rehearsal	6:00 pm CE Welcome Back Dinner	
9 Gathering	10	11	12	13	14	15
Sunday 10:00 Worship and Communion	7:30 am Prayer Group	12 noon Lunch Bunch		7:30 pm choir rehearsal		
16 8:00 am Bible study 10: 00 Worship and Sunday School 11:30 am Zambia meeting	17 7:30 am Prayer Group	18 1:00-3:00 pm Cradles to Crayons	19 6:30 pm Wellspring	20 10:30 am Waban Health 7:30 pm choir rehearsal	21 7:00 am Java Gents	22
23 8:00 am	24	25	26	27	28	29
Bible study 10: 00 Worship and Sunday School	7:30 am Prayer Group	7:30 pm Book Group		7:30 pm choir rehearsal		9:00 am —noon yard sale
11:30-2:30 apple picking						
30 8:00 am Bible study			1			

10: 00 Worship and Sunday School

11:30 am Conversations Along the Way

4:30-6:30 pm Youth Group

OCTOBER 2012

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	1 7:30 am Prayer Group	6:00 pm Deacons mtg.	9:00 am Conversations Along the Way	4 7:30 pm choir rehearsal	5 6:00-8:00 pm First Friday (4th-5th graders)	6
7 8:00 am Bible study 10: 00 Worship and Sunday School 11:30 Council World Com- munion Sunday	8 7:30 am Prayer Group	9 12 noon Lunch Bunch	10	11 7:30 pm choir rehearsal	12	13
14 8:00 am Bible study 10: 00 Worship and Sunday School 4:30-6:00 pm Youth Group	7:30 am Prayer Group	16	17 6:30 pm Wellspring	18 10:30 am Waban Health 7:30 pmchoir rehearsal	7:00 am Java Gents	20
21 8:00 am Bible study 10: 00 Worship and Sunday School 11:30-3:00 Common Cathedral	7:30 am Prayer Group	23 7:30 pm Book Group	24	25 7:30 pm choir rehearsal	26	27
28 8:00 am Bible study 10: 00 Worship and Sunday School 11:30 am Conversations Along the Way 4:30-6:30 pm Youth Group	29 7:30 am Prayer Group	30	31			

Gathering Sunday September 9, 2012 10:00 a.m.

Join the Union Church Family!