

# HILLTOPPER

September 2011 Edition

## *On Revitalizing ASUMC*

Bruce Bradshaw

Several people have asked Mary and me about our adjustments to New Hampshire and ASUMC. Our answers employ that often misquoted statement from the Wizard of Oz: "We are not in Kansas, anymore," which raises the question of whether NH is like the Land of Oz. Yes, it is, except for flying monkeys, wicked witches and yellow brick roads.

Let me express my joys and concerns about ASUMC. My primary joy has been visiting many of you, which I intend to do with all of you. Listening to the stories of your lives and your commitments to the church has been inspiring. You have affirmed my belief that this congregation has great potential.

However, I have a major concern. Many people are committed to this congregation, but they are not attending it, which causes me to ask: "How can they be committed to a congregation that they are not attending?"

My temptation is to conclude that people prefer not to tell the new pastor that they have minimal interest in the congregation so they are expressing a commitment that they do not have, but I want to avoid the temptation. I am convinced that people are committed to this congregation as they say they are, whether or not they attend it.

My question is: "Why are people not acting on their commitments?" Let me suggest that the gap between our commitments and attendance shows that we have a conflict between our values and our behaviors. We do not always do the things that we think are best; we do what we think we have to do, whether we believe we are doing what is right or best. We value worship, but we do not attend church as often as we think is best.

This gap between our values and behaviors characterizes many aspects of our lives. Many of us have had the experience of attending the graduations or weddings of our children and wondering: "Where was I when they were growing up?" I was deeply committed to them, but I was too busy to spend much time with them during the formative years of their lives. Where did the time go? I don't remember getting older, when did they?

When people tell me that they are committed to church, but they are busy to attend, I want to tell them that church is like golf and fishing. When we are too busy to do any one of the three, we are too busy. Our challenge is to act on our commitments, making our values consistent with our behavior. We have to do the things that we believe are important, like attending church.



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Church attendance is important; now, I want to say that ASUMC is in a critical point in its life, we are in a stage of revitalization.

The following diagram shows the stages of congregational decline and revitalization. I have dedicated the past few sermons to exploring these stages of decline and revitalization, but they are worth addressing again. A congregation begins with a mission; as it grows, it becomes a movement. Churches should continue as movements, but they often become machines. They turn into machines when they are operating after they lose their mission. Everyone does everything that has to be done to keep them operating, often for the sake of keeping them operating. Machines don't last forever; they eventually run out of energy and they become monuments to the past. When churches become monuments, they turn into museums.

ASUMC has the momentum to prevent itself from becoming a museum, but we need to understand the situation we are in if we are going to build our future. We need to revitalizing our mission. There is much to say about revitalizing our mission. I will address this task in future editions of this newsletter. Let me say now that revitalization means that we are rooted in Christ, reconciled in the church, and making disciples of all people by inviting them to church.

See you on Sunday, preferably with a friend or a neighbor who you have been thinking about inviting to church.



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## *Satellite Ministries of ASUMC*

**Bruce Bradshaw**

The New England Conference of the United Methodist Church is encouraging congregations to explore and take risks with new forms of ministry. We certainly want to do that, and we are attempting to develop what I am calling "Satellite Ministries;" Satellite Ministries are ministries of the church that are not held in the church building. For a variety of reasons, ministries apart from the church building can be more effective in reaching people than ministries in the church building. A major reason is that our society is moving toward a "post-church culture."

I want to share some thoughts on our hopes for some Satellite ministries with you, and encourage you to participate in them, and/or invite your friends to participate in them. I hope they will make significant contributions to the revitalization of ASUMC.

### *A House Church Ministry on Sunday Evenings*

House churches have become effective supplements to the "institutional church," offering opportunities to worship that are more personal and relational. I would like to start a house church ministry that will provide an alternative to our formal worship on Sunday mornings for people who might not attend worship on Sunday mornings or want a supplement to Sunday morning worship. Typical house church services begin at 6:00 PM and include a meal, and a worship service that includes prayer, music, sacraments, and readings and reflections of scripture. House churches have a long history in Christian worship; the Christians of the first century usually met in houses.

As I shared the idea of this ministry with ASUMC, several people said they could not attend it every Sunday, but they would like to attend it periodically. Periodic support is good. We will get the critical mass of people we need to make this ministry viable, which is about 12 people each Sunday, if a significant number of people can commit themselves to attending it only one Sunday per month.

If you have an interest in participating in a house church, please advise Mary or me.

### *Food with Friends on Fridays (FFF).*

This ministry is an effort to express hospitality to people who do not participate in a church. It involves inviting people, who might be your relatives, friends or neighbors, to a meal in the parsonage on Friday evenings.

When I asked some people what they think about this ministry, they tell me: "This is New England; you have not lived here for a long time; we don't invite people to our homes---and people do not want to come to our homes."

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Maybe the time has come for the Gospel of Jesus Christ to transform this aspect of New England culture. The New Testament makes several references that encourage Christians to practice hospitality. The Greek word of hospitality is comprised of the words *ōloveō* and *ōforeigner.ō* It means *ōlove for the foreigner.ō*

As more people become foreign to the church, we need to make intentional efforts to love them. They might not feel comfortable in our sanctuary on Sunday morning; many of them have never read any portion of the Bible, and some of them will feel uncomfortable with church leaders. They might even feel uncomfortable in a parsonage, but we have to start somewhere.

People might wonder: *ōWhat do you talk about during FFF?ō* We talk about many things, but we often tell jokes. The jokes are funny, but if you want hear them, you will have to invite your friends to FFF.

### ***Ministries to explore the meaning of the Christian Faith.***

Since I arrived at ASUMC, I have become concerned about the number of people who have become disconnected from the church because they have serious questions about the meaning of our faith in Jesus Christ. While many of these people are men, there are several women who also struggle to believe. My desire is to form a group for people to explore the central issues of faith and life. An initial proposal is to read *Theology for a Troubled Believer: An Introduction to the Christian Faith* by Diogenes Allen. I would like the group to meet in the parsonage every week on Wednesday or Thursday evenings at 7:00 PM and start at the beginning of September. It will probably continue for 8 weeks and then explore the interest to continue.

These are some initial ideas to build the ministries of ASUMC. Please talk to Bruce or Mary Bradshaw about participating in the satellite ministries. We are moving forward in faith, trusting that we are rooted in Christ, built up in the church, and flourishing with thanksgiving for abundant and eternal life in our Lord, Jesus Christ.

### ***How should you contact the Pastor?***

The telephone number in the parsonage, 603-882-0596, has been replaced by the pastor's cell phone, which is 603-546-8294. If you want to call Mary Bradshaw, her number is 603-521-0138. The pastor's church email address is [brucebradshawasumc@comcast.net](mailto:brucebradshawasumc@comcast.net). You can also send a message to either Bruce or Mary at [bbradshaw@att.net](mailto:bbradshaw@att.net).

The church telephone continues to be 882-4663. Kelley will answer calls to that number during her work hours, which are usually Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 9:30 AM to 12:30 AM.

If you want to contact the pastor at any time, please use his cell phone number or his church email address.



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## *Mornings at ASUMC*

Bruce Bradshaw

The Administrative Council met on August 23 to make a decision about our Sunday morning schedule. The challenge was to fit worship, Sunday School, sermon reflections, nursery care and the coffee time into the Sunday morning schedule. In a previous letter, I compared this challenge to the task of pouring five gallons of water into a four-gallon bottle. It requires effective leadership, negotiations and compromise, which the council provided. The people who attended the meeting created a schedule that should offer something for everyone.

The plan is to have the Sunday School for children begin at 9:30 and end at 10:30, which will give the children one hour of Sunday School.

The worship service will begin at 10:00 and continue until 11:00, give or take a few minutes. The children will enter the service at approximately 10:30, and we will design the order of worship to put the aspects of worship that are of more interest to children at the end of the service. These aspects of worship include the children's stories, the time of sharing and prayer, the offering, hymns, etc. The time of the sermon will be moved closer to the beginning of the service. (We are assuming that the children can enter the sanctuary during a hymn or in a manner that will be minimally disruptive. We have wonderful children who seem capable of doing this.)

There are few details that we need to address to make this plan effective, but the Administrative Council and the people who participated in the meeting agreed that it was a creative compromise to having a full hour of Sunday School in addition to the worship service.

We are working to provide nursery care, and to organize teachers to teach Sunday School on a rotating basis, probably one month at a time. We do not want teachers to miss the complete worship service on a long term basis.

The worship/sermon reflections will continue after the service; it will serve as a Sunday School forum for adults. It will also give the SS teachers an opportunity to participate in the sermon discussions. I will give them notes on the major points of the sermon.

The coffee hour will also continue after the service; food will be served during the coffee hour on one Sunday per month. We will probably not have sermon/worship reflections during that time, unless people want to bring their food to the conference room and reflect while they eat. Also, some people have asked whether the coffee time can be held before the worship service, perhaps at 9:30. We will make a decision about that request, and communicate it to you.

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We are trying to manage limited resources creatively, striving to serve God and you effectively. If you do not believe this schedule is effective after we have tried it for a few months, we can change it.

This new schedule will begin on September 11. I also want to emphasize that "Rally Sunday" is also on September 11, an effort to have everyone who is associated with this church attend it on that day.

We value you, and we value your commitment to this church. We also believe this church in experiencing a new beginning, and we need you to participate in it.

During the past few weeks, I have been reflecting on Bible verses that characterize us. Today, I want to offer a commentary on Colossians 2:7: We want ASUMC to be where we are: rooted in Christ; built up in the church, and flourishing in faith.

***Worship Volunteers for September & October***

<b><u>Sunday</u></b>	<b><u>Liturgist</u></b>	<b><u>Ushers</u></b>	<b><u>Communion Steward</u></b>
September 4	Dot Sienkiewicz	Scott & Matt	
September 11	Debbie Sherwood	James	Leeanne Roystan
September 18	Heather Davis	Debbe & Nancy	
September 25	Bob Larmouth	James & Charlie	
October 2	Sue Viens	Matt & Roger	Sue Labrie
October 9	Debbie Sherwood	Scott & James	
October 16	Dot Sienkiewicz	Debbe & Nancy	
October 23	Bob Larmouth	James & Charlie	
October 30	Heather Davis	Matt & Scott	

*If you are unable to volunteer at the scheduled time, please contact another to substitute for you and let Kelley know. Thank you!*

## *September 11 is Rally Day*

Bruce Bradshaw

September 11, 2011 is the tenth anniversary of 9/11/01, a date that has multiple meanings in our society. It is also the date when ASUMC will rally for your attendance at our worship service.

I want to encourage everyone who has any relationship to ASUMC to be with us on that day. We have a gap between our actual attendance and potential attendance. Our actual attendance is the number of people who attend on any particular Sunday; it ranges from 35 to 40. Our potential attendance is the number of different people who have attended our services in recent months. That figure is about 55.

The gap between our actual attendance and our potential attendance averages 47 percent, which means we can increase our attendance by an average of 47 percent if everyone who attends occasionally attends more regularly. Our goal for September 11 is to close that gap, having at least 55 people attend on September 11. The goal is modest, but we cannot achieve it without you.

My temptation is to give you several reasons to persuade you to believe that attending church each Sunday is to your benefit. However, I want to resist that temptation by encouraging you to consider that we worship God because God is worthy of our worship. Of course, there are many ways in which we benefit from worship, but we receive those benefits by the grace of God, through our Lord, Jesus Christ, under the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Let us consider the benefits of worship as blessings. We do not worship to receive blessings, as if we can earn God's favor. We worship because God has blessed us. Worship is our gift to God in response to God's blessings in our lives. Apart from worship, what else can we offer God?

We would love to have you join us on Sunday, September 11.

### *Rally Sunday*

September 11, 2011

**Children** remind your parents you need to be at church at **9:30 AM**. Games, refreshments, craft, and fun are on the schedule for that day. **Come** and bring a friend too. We want to **Rally** together on this special day to get our Sunday School year started with a **Joyful** start.



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## *A Wise Investment*

With the recent volatility in the stock market and the global economic situation overall, many of us are leery about making any type of investments. One of the reasons we are hesitant to invest is that we feel we have no control over the markets or organizations in which we would invest.

Well folks, I have some excellent advice for you regarding an investment that you can help to control ó invest in your church!! ASUMC has been here to serve the Lord and His followers for over 100 years, thanks to the investments made by the parishioners over the years. With your investment, we can keep this church going for another 100 years, but just like any entity, it needs steady, faithful support.

Right now, just like the stock market, ASUMC is experiencing a downturn in its financial health. But unlike the stock market, we can steer out of this quickly if everyone in the ASUMC family pitches in. Please consider helping in one or more of the following ways:

if you have not made a pledge ó please consider it now, no matter the amount  
if you are pledging, please make sure that your pledge is up to date  
please consider öpaying it forwardö, that is, ahead of your normal pledge rate  
discuss the church as an investment with your friends and family

Most importantly, please support your church with an investment of your time and talents. There is an air of optimism, love, hope and respect that we have not seen in a while ó attend the worship service and you will experience this firsthand. Pastor Bruce Bradshaw is energized and willing to leverage your investments to grow the ministry of this church in ways that we have not seen before.

But ó time is of the essence!! Please reflect on what ASUMC means to you and yours and help to build on an investment that is over 100 years young! Consider the spiritual value that the church brings on a continuous basis. If you have any questions about the financial health of the church, please do not hesitate to contact any member of the Finance Committee.

Respectfully,

Bob Larmouth, Finance Chairperson

## ***Sunday School Program***

Dear Parents,

You send your children to school, help them with homework, and save for their college years - all in the hope they will grow to be smart and successful adults. But as recent studies have shown, a child's intelligence quotient (IQ) is just part of the equation necessary for a fulfilling life. Equally important is your child's SQ, or spiritual quotient. But how do you build an SQ? Sunday School is our effort to share in process of developing your child's spirituality (SQ). Activities as simple as modeling godly behavior, joining your child in prayer, and encouraging your child to understand the Lord's Supper are more deeply explained during Sunday morning gatherings. Growing a soul (or increasing your child's SQ) is our goal. Please make it a priority to come to church at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday mornings. We are looking forward to it!

### **Children Sunday School Schedule:**

**9:30- 10:30 AM: Children, Nursery, Preschool-Gr. 12**

**10:00 Worship service begins. Children remain in Sunday School during the sermon.**

10:30-11:00 (approximately)

Children join the adults in the sanctuary and participate in the worship service.

### **Sunday School Curriculum:**

Goals:

- To know the Bible and our faith traditions by hearing simple clear Bible stories
- To learn prayers such as the Lord's Prayer and the Doxology
- To experience wonder and awe at God's world
- To develop a sense of belonging at church and as a child of God
- To express their identity as unique children of God

#### **Class #1 Early Elementary**

#### **Bible Topics: People of the Old Testament**

Course description: The weekly lessons will introduce children to God and His people.

- God calls a people (Abraham, Lot, Isaac, Rebekah)
- God's family grows: Jacob and Esau, cheating, Jacob's ladder, Rachel, Jacob and Esau are reunited
- Hope for God's people: Joseph, his brothers, Egypt, hope

#### **Class #2 Older Elementary/Tween**

- Graduate students to reading the Bible as a whole (even when whole is narrowed to a whole book of the Bible.)
- To recognize the historical particularities
- To recognize the character of God as seen through the stories.





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*from the Board of Trustees*

The Trustees have been very busy doing the necessary work at the Parsonage before, during, and after the arrival of our new Pastor. I wish to thank everyone who turned out to help us with the work. A lot was accomplished in a timely fashion.

Respectfully yours,

Bill Smith

### *E-mail Addresses*

We are updating our e-mail circulation. You are encouraged to be connected to know what is going on in the church. Your e-mail will be used for church business only.

Please take a moment to fill in this information and place it in the offering place or leave in the church office.

Thank you!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### *New Address of Rev Ed & Norma Brown*

17404 N 99th Ave, Unit 112  
Sun City, AZ 85373  
623-215-8164

Ed's cell number is 603-828-2556  
Norma's cell number is 623-728-8982

### *Nashua Soup Kitchen Volunteer Work*

4th Friday of each month, 2-3 volunteers needed  
3:45-6:30pm  
Coordinator: Heather Davis 603-429-0496

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### *Fellow Missionaries for Christ*

The Commission on Missions has been working quietly in the background this summer. Heather Davis continues to sign up volunteers to visit the Soup Kitchen on the fourth Friday each month. Many have donated food for our collection box. There is an immediate need for the food pantry at Main Street Church. Items in short supply are beans, jelly, ramen noodles and cereal.

Volunteers also host once in a while at Anne Marie House for families seeking permanent housing. Volunteer training information can be obtained by contacting [Linda.Fraser@annemariehouse.org](mailto:Linda.Fraser@annemariehouse.org) The health care products we gather for them are always welcome.

We also want to congratulate **Patrick Bolton**, our latest Disciple for Life! Patrick will be attending Plymouth State University next month. Proud parent Kathy Bolton accepted the gift on his behalf. Thanks to all who have donated to our Education Fund for the purpose of sending our church family wishes out to our High School Graduates.

Greater Nashua Habitat for Humanity has completed a home in Wilton, built a ramp for Nashua Children's Home and is now preparing the interior of a Hudson home to create an opportunity for a qualifying family to own a home. Please visit their website for more information. <http://www.nashuahabitat.org/>

We are seeking a Coordinator for the Church World Service CROP Walk. This walk is organized by the Nashua Area Interfaith Council. One quarter of the proceeds remain in our local area. The rest is used to address hunger worldwide. A coordinator meeting is scheduled at the Immaculate Conception church in Nashua for 5:30pm on 14 September. Please call Lorna Stickney if you would like to attend. The 2011 walk is scheduled for Sunday , October 23 . Our team will again be set up online. Time to warm up!

As demonstrated at our church suppers, we are all in mission together. On September 17<sup>th</sup>, we will have a roast beef dinner. Thanks in advance for your support and participation.

If you have any ideas, would like more information, or would like to join the Commission on Missions, please contact Lorna Stickney at (603) 883-6192.



*ission opportunity from our district:*

## Mission Opportunity

### Salud Y Paz, Guatemala

The Tri-State District is sponsoring two mission teams to Guatemala in January 2012. The second team is full with 18 team members but there are still 4-6 spots on the following team:

January 21 . January 29, 2012  
Salud Y Paz Project, Camanchaj, Guatemala

Teams limited to 18 participants each  
Approximate Cost \$1500.00 (includes airfare, food, and lodging)  
Mission might include construction (building, painting etc); education of children and families; exploring the possibility of a long term project of clean water for the villages; working in a health clinic; and misc projects in the village homes.

For more detailed information email us asap. We are beginning the process of finalizing details.

For more information contact:

Linda Brewster [ljbre@maine.rr.com](mailto:ljbre@maine.rr.com) 207-807-2210  
Karen Garcia [regdwifan@yahoo.com](mailto:regdwifan@yahoo.com)

### *September Birthdays*

- 1- Sharon Cloutier
- Ben Roystan
- 7- Pdraig MacSeain
- 10- Ruth Coronis
- Roger Gaskill
- 13- John Fernandes
- Emily Erickson
- 14- Marc Sawyer
- 16- Mary Jane Carey
- 21- Marie Graichen
- 29- Robert Roystan
- 30- Robert Geer

### *September Anniversaries*

- 7- Sue & Ronald Viens
- 15- Sharon & Moe Cloutier
- Nila & Jim Proko
- 20- Donna & Ron Barron
- 25- Patti & Paul Randazzo

*If you would like to be included in the  
birthday & anniversary list, please  
contact the church office.*

### *Coffee Hour Hosts*

Sunday, September 18<sup>o</sup> Staff Parish Relations Committee  
Sunday, October 16<sup>o</sup> Choir  
Sunday, November 20<sup>o</sup> Worship Committee  
(coffee will be available every Sunday)

# September 2011

**Sun      Mon      Tue      Wed      Thu      Fri      Sat**

				1	2	3 Disciples of the Word 10am AA 7pm
4 (No communion today) Worship 9:30am	5 Labor Day	6	7 Choir meeting 7pm, Arrowhead Leaders Meeting 7-8pm	8	9	10 D.O.W. 10am AA 7pm
11 Communion  Rally Day, Worship 10am	12	13 Adult Bible Study 7-8:30 pm, Studying the Book of James	14 CROP Walk coordinator meeting 5:30pm at Immaculate Conception	15	16	17 D.O.W. 10am AA 7pm
18 UMM Breakfast 8am Worship Worship Committee after worship, Coffee Hour	19	20 Adult Bible Study 7-8:30 pm	21	22 Board of Trustees 7pm	23 Nashua Soup Kitchen 3:45-6:30pm	24 D.O.W. 10am AA 7pm
25 Sunday School 9:30, Worship 10am	26	27 Adult Bible Study 7-8:30 pm	28	29	30	



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Coffee Hour 3rd Sunday of the month

Worship 10:00AM

Children's Sunday School 9:30

New Sunday Schedule begins September 11

September  
2011

Make plans to attend Rally day on September 11

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