



The Reporter

The Congregational Church of West Medford, United Church of Christ
Winter 2010, Volume 60, No. 14

Letter From the Pastor

Greetings and Happy New Year!

As we begin the new year the comforting strains of Silent Night, Holy Night are fresh in my memory but the world is all but calm and bright. Acts of terrorism across the globe, violence in our neighborhoods, the effects of greed, and growing humanitarian crises have me shaking my head in sorrow. Is peace possible? Can love overwhelm hatred and will justice conquer injustice?

Then my thoughts turn to our community, our little growing church, and I think of the many strides we made in the past 18 months toward overcoming adversity. My lungs fill with air; I breathe out a sigh of relief. We have proved that it is possible, through timid baby steps, to begin a journey of reconciliation and faithfulness to God who is love.

Because of these efforts we have been able to offer the love of Christ and the hope of resurrection to the sick, the dying, and the grieving. We have stretched our arms into a hurting world and fed the hungry. We have tithed more than 10 percent of the pledges we received to bless people in need. And we have opened our doors to all who seek to worship God and grow as disciples of Christ Jesus. Let's not be blinded by our successes though. Clearly much work remains to be done both within and without our community, not to mention within each and every one of us. We cannot for a moment become complacent or

too self congratulatory. We cannot afford to give in to willful pride. The onus is on us to be a blessing to the world, remembering always the fullness of the covenant God made with Abraham in Genesis 12:2: "I will bless you, I will make your name and nation great, SO THAT YOU WILL BE A BLESSING." How will you be a blessing this year? How will we as a Christian community called to glorify God and spread the Good News be a blessing this year? How will we bring calmness and light into the world this year?

I hear the words of Isaiah echo across the ages to us this day:

"Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you."

Isaiah 60:1

Blessings,
Steven



WOULD YOU LIKE TO TEACH OUR FUTURE CHURCH LEADERS?

We are still looking for volunteers to teach in our Sunday School program -- would you like to give it a try? No teaching experience is necessary. A very user-friendly curriculum will be provided and the schedule is flexible (alternating with one other teacher); no commitment is needed beyond the current school year. Please think about giving a little of your time to this wonderful group of bright, creative, imaginative kids! As we talk about our visions for CCWM, our youth program always springs to mind -- here is a chance to help ensure that it remains a vital part of our church life! Please see one of the current teachers -- Kim Grubb, Carol Luongo, Karen McCune Barca or Pastor Steven -- if you would like to explore this further.

LOOKING AHEAD TO EASTER

It will be here before you know it! Please plan to join us for the annual Easter breakfast in Fellowship Hall, followed by an Easter egg hunt for the children on the front lawn (weather permitting), and worship at 10:00. Bring your friends and neighbors -- it is a nice way to introduce newcomers to our church community, and a great way to begin the celebration of Easter Sunday.



Our Fall Fair was held on November 14th and, in spite of lots of rain, was a successful and fun day. With the proceeds from food, White Elephants, children's and crafter table rental we took in a little over \$1500, which was added to the church Mission Trip fund. More important, everyone had a great time!

Thank you to the many people who helped in so many areas: hanging flyers and the sign to advertise the fair, as well as on internet sites; organizing the craft tables; decorating the stage; cooking, selling and organizing the soup luncheon and baked goods; donating home-baked goodies; washing dishes; carrying rummage up from the basement, pricing and selling the rummage and taking the left-over to the Salvation Army store; working at the Children's Table; general clean-up.

So much work goes into the fair by too many people to list individually!

Thanks also to Stephen Smith, our sexton, for setting up all the tables and carrying rummage. And our gratitude goes to Whole Foods, Magnificent Muffin, and Dunkin Donuts for donating food and coffee. It's great to have our West Medford neighbors' help!

Outreach News

Discretionary Mission Gifts

At our December meeting, the Outreach members decided to send monetary gifts to the following organizations: Boston Coalition for the Homeless, Eagle Eye (Somerville), Indigo Shelter (grocery cards and teens' gift bags), and Community Cupboard (UU Church), Bread of Life, Seafarers' Friend, Abaarso Tech., Heifer International, Outdoor Church of Cambridge. The money for these gifts comes from the Discretionary Mission part of the Outreach budget, as voted by the entire congregation--thank you all!

Another gift of \$800 was made to the Medford Council on Aging, specifically to help elders with heating costs this winter. That money came from the proceeds of our spring Yard Sale.

Call to Annual Meeting

Sunday, 31 January 2010, 10am



Angel Tree – Baby Kits

Thanks to so many people who donated items for the baby kits, chosen from our annual Angel Tree. All these baby items will be packed up and sent to Church World Services, where they will be distributed to young mothers in suffering in poverty or by natural disaster, to help their newborns get off to a good start.

Indigo Shelter-Blankets, too!

As mentioned above, the Indigo Teen Shelter was a recipient of grocery gift cards to help with their Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners, and Christmas gift bags for the individual girls. This year, they received a bonus of 8 especially hand-crocheted blankets (one for each girl) made over the year by Brenda and Jenny Briggs. Many church members got to see how beautiful the blankets are, each one different, when they were on display with the Angel Tree one Sunday in Advent. Thank you to Brenda and Jenny for their idea and hours of hard work on this project!!

The Indigo Shelter is so grateful for our church's help. Please see their note of thanks, posted on the bulletin board in Barnes Chapel.

ONA Celebration

Outreach will be organizing a formal celebration of CCWM becoming an Open and Affirming Church. The date is not set yet, but be aware of notices to come after the New Year.

Outdoor Church of Cambridge

We are planning another trip to Cambridge Common in winter to attend a Communion service at the Outdoor Church and to bring sandwiches for the homeless. Our first trip was an eye-opening experience, and we hope more will join us for the next one. Stay "tuned" for more specifics later.

FOR THE FRIDGE!

Ongoing

Uplifting worship and engaging Sunday School each week at 10am followed by Bible Study at 11:15am in the Living Room.

The choir rehearses at 8:30am on Sundays in the music room. All voices are welcome!

January

Sun 24, 5pm Hymn Sing with Pleasant Street Congregational Church
 Tues 26, 7pm Council Meeting
 Sun 31, 10am Morning Worship with Annual Meeting

February

Sun 7, 10am Intergenerational Worship & Holy Communion
 11:15am Bible Study
 Wed 17, 7:30pm Ash Wednesday Service
 Tues 23, 7pm Council Meeting
 Wed 24, 6:30pm Lenten Devotion

March

Wed 3, 6:30pm Lenten Devotion
 Fri 5 World Day of Prayer
 Sun 7, 10am Intergenerational Worship & Holy Communion
 11:15am Bible Study
 Wed 10, 6:30pm Lenten Devotion
 Sunday, 14 *Daylight Savings Time Ends*
 Wed 17, 6:30pm Lenten Devotion
 Tues 23, 7pm Council Meeting
 Wed 24, 6:30pm Lenten Devotion

April

Thurs 1, 6:30pm Maundy Thursday Supper: Fellowship Hall
 7:30pm Maundy Thursday Service: Sanctuary
 Fri 2, 8am–noon Good Friday Vigil: Sanctuary
 Sat 3 Holy Saturday
 Sun 4, time TBA Easter Sunday Sunrise Service: Church lawn
 8am Breakfast & Easter Egg Hunt
 10am Easter Sunday Worship

Birthday Wishes

January

2 Julie Roberts
 6 Alisha Saulnier
 19 Tom Nackel
 22 Grace Kromm
 24 Emma Kromm
 25 Muriel Stewart

February

1 James Grubb, Jr.
 11 Nanette Savides
 17 Paul Roberts
 21 Tom Roche
 23 Matthew Kromm

March

13 Clarisse Coughlin
 15 Bill Slagle
 15 Charlotte Wilensky
 16 Helen Hanson
 27 Eva Wagner

April

1 Marion Dorrance



**Spring Edition
 By Monday,
 March 15, noon**