

A weekly collection of news, reflections and announcements from the  
 Congregational Church of West Medford  
 an Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ



## PASTORAL REFLECTION

*...when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place... For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted." ...when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.* —Luke 14:10a-11,13-14



### Whose Banquet Is It Anyway?

One of the go-to-sound-bites of the perpetrators of the culture war (aka: The War on Christmas) is the question, "Whose birthday is it, anyway?" Most often posed by Christians who complain that they are being discriminated against because shop keepers insist on the more inclusive, "happy holidays" over "Merry Christmas" the answer to the question is, of course, Jesus.

Just as Jesus did when he told this parable about dinner invitations and seating arrangements, the Rev. Dr. Shanell T. Smith (a professor at Hartford Seminary) flipped that Christmas

question on its head, when reflecting on this week's March on Washington she asked, "Whose Banquet Is It Anyway." I like Smith's questions so much more!

As we honor and celebrate the economic and social contributions of our nation's workers this Labor Day weekend, Smith's question is a marvelous call to the very meaning and history we remember this week. "What if America was a banquet, and at this banquet the servings were fair wages, just trials, civil rights and liberties, but offered by invitation only? According to those who "March(ed) on Washington," this was exactly the case. Blacks deserved the same fair treatment as whites, and they were protesting to bring about the necessary changes. Perhaps if everyone took heed of Jesus' instructions on banquet etiquette, things would be different and better."

Beloved, we have not achieved the dream of equality in America. And everyone wants to be at the banquet—the banquet of equal opportunity, mutual respect, and equal rights—justifiably so. Therefore as part of our Labor Day celebration, let us be reminded that Jesus invited everyone to the table. Everyone. No exceptions. Jesus said to his disciples, "Do as I do. Turn it upside down. Humble yourself and sit at the lowest place. Invite the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind. And you will be blessed—and repaid at the resurrection of the righteous." Then Jesus will say to you, "Come. Sit here, next to me."

Rev. Wendy Miller Olapade (revwdmiller@comcast.net)

## Labor Day Roses, 2013

*"Hearts starve as well as bodies – give us bread but give us roses."*

Bread and Roses Strike 1912, Lawrence Textile Mills, song based on a poem by James Oppenheimer



Texas Fertilizer plant – they worked for bread.

On their deaths, we lay roses.

Prague office block – they worked for bread.

On their deaths, we lay roses.

Chinese poultry plant – they worked for, well ... rice.

on their deaths, we lay roses.

Bangladesh garment factory -- naan roti, flat bread.

On their deaths, we lay roses.

Premex in Mexico City -- tortillas for their children.

On the deaths, we lay roses.

As we go weeping, weeping, for so many workers dead,  
our singing still is naming the right of all for bread.

And, still for love and beauty as our world divided grows --  
poor, as rich, need dance and art, need music and the rose.

The dead will be remembered, the living given dreams --  
safety in the workplace and justice' living streams.

We are praying, praying, even if great power opposes.  
For the names of God are many – and each of them discloses

a feast of love in many breads, a legacy less roses.



## In Our Prayers

Concerns: We pray for the family and friends of Marion D. who passed away this week; for Jennafer and Jamie H. recovering from medical procedures, for Kerry's sister having a procedure next week and for grace and energy for Kerry and Patti. We continue to pray for Peggy B. as she settles into her new home in Connecticut; for Lorna S. still hopeful for full recovery; for Dick S's friend Ed with Lou Gerig's Disease; for Diane P's friend Joe who has been diagnosed with an additional cancer site; also for Diane's son for wellness; for a loved one struggling with mental illness

and for all who struggle emotionally; Kathy W. prays for her sister Annette struggling to recover from an injury due to a workplace incident.

Celebrations: Bev R celebrates Tim's friend Molly passed nursing exams and a job at Children's Hospital and Tim's new training program in the Army; college students moving into dorms including Kylie in Atlanta, Alex in Cambridge, Clarisse in Lowell and all teachers and students as a new year of learning begins; Robin B. celebrates Kylie's Spanish exam scholarship.

We continue to pray for the people in Syria and Egypt, for Mary B. recovering from broken leg at home; Eva W. recovering at home who suffered another fall; for Thelma T. and June L. receiving care at home. We remember fallen soldiers and Veterans and those serving in our military. We lift up all of the children of our congregation and those we bless in Bright Stars.

*Please send prayer requests to [office@medfordchurch.org](mailto:office@medfordchurch.org) by noon each Wednesday*

## OUR CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Invitation to the Blessing of the Backpacks

**On Homecoming Sunday, September 8, 2013** we will have our annual Blessing of the Backpacks. We hope all children who will be returning to school of any kind will make a point to come to church at 10:00am with their school bags (or whatever they would like to bring to represent the new school year), as we ask God's blessing on the start of another year of learning and growing. **We will bless students of all ages** as they continue in their pursuits of wisdom and knowledge. **We will also bless educators**, both current and retired, who have dedicated their lives to impart that wisdom and knowledge. In addition to the blessing, each child will receive a small gift to tag their packs as a sign of God's presence in their daily life. As always, everyone, everyone, *everyone* is welcome! You might invite a few friends for the blessing—worship will be brief (40 minutes) to allow for Crossroads to begin!

**Pastoral Care Concerns:** "Deacon of the Month" for September is Kathy Williams.. Please let us know if there is someone who could use a visit, phone call, card, or prayer. The Deacons (aka: Spiritual Life) rely on your input about the well being and needs of our members and friends.

**Church Clerk Needed:** The Clerk is responsible for reporting our statistics to the UCC and with the help of technology and the life long care of Mrs. Wescott, maintaining information about membership, births, deaths, and confirmations. Might you step up and find a place at the leadership table this summer? Pray about it and ask the Holy Spirit if you might be called to be the next Clerk of CCWM!! Or suggest someone who would might be appropriate, please let Paul Roberts, Moderator know.



**Fellowship Café:** During the summer, our **Fellowship Café** is simplified. This simple affair, has snacks provided by the church, but needs some volunteers to bring some cold drinks and set things out/clean up afterward. If you haven't had a turn in a while, please call and/or email the office at office@medfordchurch.org and let us know if you could participate. Thanks in advance.



### **Always Welcome:**

**Worship Leaders/Readers, Ushers, Greeters, Fellowship Café—sign up in the book on the table in Barnes Chapel (or see a deacon).**

### **Happy August Birthdays (Sept. Birthdays will be listed next week)**

Shealyn Maloney	August 7
Herman Weiss	August 7
Laura Williams	August 8
Rebecca Roberts	August 16
Irving McDowell	August 19
Beverly Roche	August 21
Albert Howell	August 29
Camille Mary Kromm	August 31



**Empty your Pockets in the Pennies from Heaven Jar:** The "Pennies from Heaven Jar" will be in the Narthex for you to empty your pockets of the loose change you may have. This jar is just one way to help support the church in a very easy way. The jar easily takes coins and paper money.

**Spiritual Life Committee:** We are in need of volunteers to participate in worship. Readers for the Call to Worship/Scripture (adult or youth) this fall. Please contact Robin Baker @ robinb12@verizon.net or call 781-799-7580 with any particular week available. Our church works better when we all pitch in and participate! Your help is appreciated.

**Altar Flowers Always Welcomed:** As the summer wanes, you may still have some zinnias to share from your garden!! Please contact Brenda Briggs bgbriggs51@gmail.com (or the church office@medfordchurch.org) to make arrangements to schedule a Sunday to bring flowers or order them in honor or memory of a loved one.







**IT'S LIKE GOD-CAFFEINE  
FOR YOUTH MINISTRY**



**Youth Faith Formation (aka: Confirmation) begins this fall.** Rev. Wendy is planning an exciting program of Faith Formation for our youth ages 13-16 year olds using a fabulous, progressive curriculum entitled Re-Form which includes 40 hilarious animated short films that frame the theological questions that youth really ask and an Anti-Workbook that's chock full of individual and group activities. You can see a bit about the curriculum here: <http://reform.wearesparkhouse.org/>. We hope to do some shared mission and worship experiences with kids from the UU Medford church. If you have neighbors or friends in this age group, who you think might be interested in discovering their faith—please let Rev. Wendy know so that she might send an invitation. Watch for more info,

## A STEWARDSHIP REFLECTION

### Our True Vocation

*The land of a rich man produced abundantly. And he thought to himself, "What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?" Then he said, "I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods." Luke 12:16b-18*

You may recall the way Jesus concludes this parable: *"And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry." But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?" So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God.*

I have sympathy for this land owner. He evidently farms a fair amount of land. A large farming operation is a lot of work, responsibility, and risk. So here's a hard working guy who gets a bumper crop. Isn't he entitled to enjoy his success? Aren't we? He's done nothing criminal. Why should Jesus be so harsh? Jesus wants us to save us from the peril of living only for ourselves. He wants us to know the great blessing and joy of living our true vocation as sharers of our abundance, our very lives, in ways that bless all God's people, especially the most vulnerable and in need. We find fulfillment in living our true vocation. How do you understand your true vocation?

—Doris Powell, author of *Stewards in the Household of God: a Resource for Holistic Year-round Stewardship*. This reflection and is made possible by your gifts to the UCC's "Our Church's Wider Mission."

## MISSION AND OUTREACH

### **Join in the CCWM Boston Urban Outreach In-Service Project Friday, November 8--Saturday, November 9 - RSVP Please**

Once again, we will participate in an overnight mission event to learn about and to help relieve homeless and hunger in Boston. **The program will take place Friday, November 8, 5 pm through Saturday, November 9, 3 pm.** *Those not interested in sleeping overnight are still welcome to participate in the evening and day programs only.* This is our third year hosting this mission. Those who have participated in the past know what an enriching experience this is!



During the event we will: have dinner with and hear directly from those who have experienced homelessness; share time together preparing meals and sandwiches; participate in conversation, games and music before a sleepover at a church in Charlestown. The next day we'll distribute the sandwiches we've made at Boston Common, and then head to the Boston Rescue Mission to make and serve lunch to the homeless and hungry there. *(note to those who have helped before: This year we will be helping at Boston Rescue Mission in downtown Boston instead of Pilgrim Church because that is where the need is at this time)*

We hope that everyone can make this wonderful event! WE also hope that you might invite friends and neighbors who are interested in the kind of spiritual growth that comes from mission work. The costs of the event will be fully covered by our Outreach Mission fund, but we need to know now how many spaces to reserve.

**Please RSVP by Sept 10th to Susan D'Arcy Fuller ( [susandarcy@hotmail.com](mailto:susandarcy@hotmail.com) ) indicating how many from your family will attend, and please indicate if you plan to sleep overnight at the church in Charlestown. Children 12 and up are welcome with an adult chaperone.** Note that our confirmation class will be required to participate as they are able. Thank you!

**The Pine Ridge Reservation Volunteer Team** is back from a successful trip, filled with hard work, learning, and reflection. A big thanks to everyone in the congregation and the community for the many ways you have supported these efforts, from driving to the airport to volunteering at the silent auction. Check out photos from the trip, here: <https://pineridgerezstrawbailhome.shutterfly.com/>

**Pine Ridge Potluck, Friday, Sept 20 7:00 pm!** Interested to learn more about our Ministry to Pine Ridge Reservation? All are welcome to gather for a Pine Ridge Potluck on Friday, September 20th at 7pm in Fellowship Hall. This will be an informal fellowship opportunity for 2012 and 2013 trip volunteers, as well as anyone else who is interested in learning more about the trip or participating in the future. Bring a dish to share!

**Sandwiches for Outdoor Church, Sunday, Sept 29, 9:00 am:** Join us to make sandwiches for the Outdoor Church on Sunday, September 29th. Because of the Crossroads programming after church, we will gather before church, at 9am in the kitchen, to assemble the sandwiches.

## NEWS AND EVENTS FROM THE UCC

**Super Saturday Save the Date! The Next Super Saturday Event is October 26, 2013.** Come spend the day! Enjoy a variety of workshop offerings, marketplace and networking. Tri-County Regional Vocational High School, 147 Pond Street, Franklin, MA. Keynote Speaker: The Rev. James Moos, Nominee for Election as Executive Minister of Wider Church Ministries, UCC and Senior Pastor of Bismark (ND) UCC.

**Calling all Youth: “Sabbath in a Modern Age: A 24 Hour Christian Spiritual Formation Retreat”** for youth and youth groups: Nov. 1-2, 2013 at Grotonwood Retreat Center (<http://macucc.org/events/detail/1211>) or April 4-5, 2013 at Craigville Retreat Center (<http://macucc.org/events/detail/1212>). Helping youth: reconnect to God, others and themselves; think about the meaning of Sabbath and how that might be a spiritual practice; and meet and grow spiritually with youth from around the UCC. Come to worship, sing, building community and reflect. Come to explore, come to deepen, come to expand, come to open. For more details see links: Led by Rev. Matt Carriker and other Confirmation retreat leaders from the MACUCC. Register asap—the leaders are very popular and these retreats fill up quickly.

**Free Stewardship Webinar!** Mark your calendar now for Tuesday, September 24, 6:30-7:30 p.m., and plan to participate in "Best Practices for an Annual Pledge Program", a webinar presented by Andy Gustafson, Associate Conference Minister for Stewardship & Financial Development. Why are some churches so successful with raising pledges and others not? Log on to this webinar from the Massachusetts Conference and learn some best practices for inviting generous responses to your annual campaign, gleaned from working with scores of congregations around Massachusetts. To register: <http://macucc.org/events/detail/1294>. Log-in information for the webinar will be emailed to you closer to the event.

## **THIS WEEK AT YOUR CHURCH**

**September 01–08, 2013**

September 01, 2013 Fifteenth Sunday After Pentecost

Worship Service with Holy Communion-10 am

Goodland Church Worship (in Korean)—12:30 pm

### .Monday

(3) Boot Camp Sessions: 5:45 am--6:15 am;

8:15 am--9:00 am; 5:30 pm--6:15 pm (FH)

Yoga—6:30 pm (FH)

### Tuesday

Gamblers Anonymous—7:30 pm (BC)

Gam-Anon—7:30 pm (YR)

### Wednesday

(3) Boot Camp Sessions: 5:45 am— 6:15 am;

8:15 am--9:00 am; 5:30 pm--6:15 pm (FH)

Alcoholics Anonymous- 8:00 pm (YR)

### Thursday

Food Addicts—6 pm (YR)

### Friday

(3) Boot Camp Sessions: 5:45 am--6:15 am;

8:15 am-- 9:00 am, 5:30--6:15 pm (FH)

### Saturday

Alanon - 9 am (YR)

Yoga- 9am (FH)

Boot Camp- 12:15 pm (FH)

### September 8, 2013 Homecoming Sunday

Worship Service—10 am

Blessing of the Backpacks—10 am

Luncheon and Crossroads (all church) in Fellowship Hall—11 am - 1 pm

Goodland Church Worship (in Korean)--12:30

## **Weekdays**

(M—F) **Bright Stars Afterschool Enrichment Program**, [www.BrightStarsKids.org](http://www.BrightStarsKids.org)

((M-F) **Gentle Dragon Co-op Preschool**, [www.GentleDragonPreschool.org](http://www.GentleDragonPreschool.org)

(M-F) **English at Large** (ESOL/ESL Programs), [www.englishatlarge.org](http://www.englishatlarge.org)

Room Legend: (FH) Fellowship Hall; (BC) Barnes Chapel; (YR) Youth Room

## **The Congregational Church of West Medford, United Church of Christ**

Ministers: All of us!

Pastor and Teacher: Reverend Wendy Miller Olapade

Organist and Choir Director: Dr. Herman Weiss

Church Administrator: Diane Petrelis

Moderator: Paul Roberts

Treasurer: Beverly Roche

Deacon of the Month: Brenda Briggs

Clerk: Clarisse Coughlin

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