

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

*“Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them,
 does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it?
 When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices....
 Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them,
 does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it?
 When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying,
 ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.’ —Luke 15:4—5, 8—9*

Tony, Tony, Turn Around

Some theologians consider Luke 15, with its parables of the lost sheep, lost coin and lost, prodigal son to be the heart of Luke’s gospel—for it expresses the wildly extravagant, crazy-in-love God who would go to any lengths to find us when we are lost. Jesus told these three parables to help us understand that no matter how lost we are, our God is a God who sweeps and sweeps and sweeps, who searches and searches and searches until we are caught up in the love and mercy and grace that God spreads all over the place through Jesus the Christ.



And it does not matter what kind of lost we are. The truth is most of us are relatively righteous—we seek to live a good life, we try to follow the golden rule, we abide by the laws of our nation, we are not out here beating our kids or thieving to make a buck! But we all suffer from losses that can create the kind of turning away from God that needs repentance—loss of a loved one, a job, a marriage, a friend, our good looks, our youth, our mobility, our financial security, our hair, our teeth! And we all struggle at times with having lost our way, our faith, our hope, our direction, our focus, our temper, our minds!

No matter what kind of lost we are, the God who loves us enough to be with us, Emmanuel, is the God who loves us enough to throw a party, inviting the whole community and spending her last dime to celebrate when we re-turn.

If you do not have a Roman Catholic background, you may not know that the 13th Century holy man, St. Anthony of Padua is known as the patron saint of lost items. As the legend goes, Anthony had a book of psalms that, in his eyes, was priceless. There was no printing press yet. Any book had value. But, this was his book of psalms, his prayer book. And in the margins he’d written all kinds of notes to use in teaching students in his Franciscan Order. A novice who had already grown tired of living a

Continued on next page

religious life decided to leave the community. Besides going AWOL, he also took Anthony's Psalter! When he went to his room to his prayer corner to pray and found it missing, Anthony prayed it would be found and returned to him. After he prayed this prayer, the thieving novice fleeing through the forest, was met by a demon (ok, this part of the story is murky—how negative could be an avenue of God's good) who told the thief to return the Psalter to Anthony and to return to the Franciscan Order, which accepted him back.

Soon after Anthony's death, people began praying through him to find or recover lost and stolen articles. "A prayer to Christ," written in honor of St. Anthony shortly after his death goes like this:

*The sea obeys and fetters break; And shattered hopes limbs thou dost restore;
While treasures lost are found again; When young or old thine aid implore.*

But the popular version of prayer is this: "*Tony, Tony, turn around. Something's lost that must be found.*" That is a prayer I can wrap my head around. *Tony, Tony, turn around, something's lost that must be found.* Johnny, Johnny, turn around, something's lost that must be found. Wendy, Wendy turn around, something's lost that just be found.

The world (and the church) are filled with the lost. And God is searching for all of us. Right here in our community there are those who have lost hope, faith, self-esteem, perspective.... so many lost coins, so many lost sheep, so many lost sons and daughters. Surely this is an aspect of our calling as a faith community—as Jesus' hands and feet in the world—to seek and sweep and search and forgive and celebrate when the lost are found.

One purpose of the church is to be the shepherd and leave behind the ones who are already in the fold, and go out and search for the lost, looking in crevices and ravines, calling and watching and finding and carrying back those sheep who have lost their way. As well, the church needs be a place of grace and safety, a place where we leave the light on and keep the faith traditions burning for those who are away from home searching for themselves; a place where the good news is preached and lived-out in our humility and our love for our neighbors and our justice-seeking actions; a place where above all else love abides and the discovery of one lost sheep, one lost coin, one lost child is met with the biggest party we can muster!

As we continue our conversations about the future of the Congregational Church of West Medford, as we seek the Holy Spirit's guidance about who we are and what we are called to be and do for Christ, I pray that we remember our calling to find the lost and welcome them home. I pray that we see in our future the call to provide a community of love and faith that meets the lost where they are, offers creative worship that connects them with the Truine God, teaching that guides them on the path of the Way of Christ, and then drives them out to do Holy Spirit inspired mission and ministry that transforms them and the world. Church, Church, turn around, something's lost that must be found. May it be so.

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





In Our Prayers

Concerns: We pray for Kerry's sister recovering from procedure; Robin's friend, Brian, struggling with depression; Charlotte's friend struggling with depression; Olivia prays for our church because we are in a tough spot; for McKenzie H. having a test this week; Bev R. prays for the Addie's Angels team in the Jimmy Fund walk; Holly prays for a friend Jeff, who is a single dad, with bacteria in leg; Louise prays for friend from choral group, Anne who died this summer of brain cancer; Holly's friend who committed suicide and left behind 3 young children.

Continue to pray for Thelma T at Aberjona Nursing Center for rehab (and would love visitors); for the family and friends of Marion D. who passed away last week; for our congregation as we enter the Cross-roads phase this fall and for our future; continue to pray for students of all ages, for educators and administrators that they might have the resources to teach; for the environment; for President Obama and Congress regarding our present times of strife—may God's intentions prevail as they make decisions; for the people of Syria and Egypt.

We celebrate joys: Kerry H. got a new job which she loves, working for the Everett DPW; Kathy W. celebrates the rescue by Jen and Brenda of a little grey cat; Jen B. celebrated Christen's wedding and Gianna's debut as flower girl; the wedding of Dick S.'s son, Steve and David; Jeff S. celebrates his work as a peer counselor.

We continue to pray for Lorna S. still hopeful for full recovery; for Dick S.'s friend Ed with Lou Gerig's Disease; for Diane P.'s friend's Paul and Joe in treatment for cancer; for a loved one struggling with mental illness and for all who struggle emotionally; Kathy W. prays for her sister Annette; for Mary B. recovering at home; Eva W. recovering at home 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 by noon each Wednesday

OUR CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS



Pastoral Care Concerns: "Deacon of the Month" for September is Brenda Briggs. 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.

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.



Happy September Birthdays



Brenda Briggs
Patty Hutchinson
P. Alexander Olapade
Holly Maloney
Kerry Hutchinson
Jenna Nackel
Shawn Wittington
Rev. Wendy Miller Olapade
Alyson Roche
Patrick Coughlin
Joy Roberts
Joe Luongo

September 04
September 09
September 16
September 19
September 20
September 21
September 22
September 23
September 24
September 25
September 29
September 30



Volunteers Always Welcome: Worship Leaders/Readers, Ushers, Greeters, Fellowship Café—sign up in the book on the table in Barnes Chapel (or see the deacon of the month)!

Fellowship Café “Lite” Continues Through Crossroads: As it has been through the summer months, our fellowship time will remain a simple affair through October 20. Basic snacks will be purchased by the church staff and volunteers will bring cold drinks, set-up and clean-up. 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 might participate. Thanks in advance.

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.

Seeking Volunteers for Worship—Readers and Ushers:

We are always looking for folk to participate in worship as ushers and readers. The Spiritual Life Committee recruits readers and at this time the Deacon you can speak with is Kathy Williams (kathypricewilliams@yahoo.com).

If you would like to usher, please see Rev. Wendy to find out more or ask any questions. You are also welcome to call the church office to volunteer. Our church works better when we all pitch in and participate! Your help is appreciated.





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



Stewards of Peace and Justice: Our Amistad Story

Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured.
 – Hebrews 13:2-3

I'm one of your national staff who gives tours of our Church House in Cleveland. I start in the Amistad Chapel by telling the story of 53 captives who were wrenched from their homeland in Sierra Leone, routed to Cuba, then sold and transported on a ship named La Amistad (Spanish for "friendship") to be illegally sold into slavery in the United States. The captives mutinied and gained control of their vessel. In their attempt to return to Africa, they were re-captured and jailed in New Haven, Connecticut in 1839.

There our ancestors in faith, Congregational abolitionists, did as Jesus had taught. They befriended these strangers, visiting them in prison and defending them in the courts, all the way to the Supreme Court where they won their freedom. Every step involved fundraising to support these efforts and finally charter a vessel to return the captives home to West Africa.

To this day, remaining funds are held in an endowment which supports the UCC's justice ministries. UCC congregations also give to the Neighbors in Need special mission offering each October to build a more just, compassionate, and peaceful world.

A message by Doris Powell, author of Stewards in the Household of God: a Resource for Holistic Year-round Stewardship. (September 2013, God is still speaking.) This resource is a free service and is made possible by our gifts to the United Church of Christ, 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 to Susan D'Arcy Fuller (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.

FROM OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

Can you help with a Girl Scout Gold Award project?

Hello,

My name is Justine Rose. I am a senior at Malden High School working on my Girl Scout Gold Award project. I am reaching out to you through Malden Reads because I am looking for folks who value reading and literacy. I am seeking volunteers for the project described below.

As part of my Gold Award project, I have recently set up a small reading library in the waiting room of the Cambridge Health Alliance in Malden, a community-based health care center located at 195 Canal Street. The purpose of this library is to promote literacy and reading in families with children of all ages. I have already collected books and set them up inside an area of the waiting room. For the next part of the project, I am working to organize a team of volunteers to read to the children in the waiting room. This would not only help children build a love for reading, but it would encourage families to read to their children at home.

Volunteers can sign up for hours throughout the next couple of months to come in and offer to read to kids. I would be grateful for any amount of time that you could give. If you are really interested in helping with my project, I do have other tasks that can be taken on by volunteers, such as making sure the area is always clean and organized, handling book donations, or helping with some special reading-centered events. If you are interested, please let me know! You can send me an email. Al-

so, if you want more information on the project, you can visit the website I set up for volunteers: <http://libraryatcha.wix.com/malden>

Thank you!

Justine Rose

justine.anne.rose@gmail.com



Girl Scouts®



M A L D E N R E A D S
....one city, one book

NEWS AND EVENTS FROM THE UCC

Join Rev. Wendy for MACUCC Super Saturday. Registration is now open. Saturday, 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.

Here are some of the workshop titles which may pique your interest:

- Whole Church Evaluations
- Reality Check
- From the Ground Up: Creating Sustainable Systemic Change in Congregations
- Discipleship: A Model of Church for the 21st Century
- Practical Ideas for Youth Ministry
- Christian Educator Resources and the Web
- Website 101 - Tips and Tools for Developing a Robust Web Ministry
- Money Matters: Our Faith and Our Finances
- We Believe in One Baptism
- Worship with a Twist
- Let Your Fingers do the Healing: Tapping Prayer
- End of Life Conversations
- Divestment from Fossil Fuel Companies – Update & What's Next
- End Homelessness for Youth and Young Adults
- The Spirit Moves (yoga and Christian worship)
- Faith - Grow it, Deepen it, and Live it Through a Holistic Approach to Adult and Intergenerational Faith Formation
- Seeking Common Ground: an introduction of the commonalities of Islam & the Abrahamic faiths
- Faith Formation Family Style: Equipping Parents
- Next Steps in Mission
- Centering Prayer, Centered Living
- Transforming Stewardship into Joyful Celebration (Jena Roy is presenting this one!)
- Called to Care Ministry (Rev. Wendy is presenting this one!)

For details, workshop descriptions and more about registering—<http://www.macucc.org/events/detail/1165>

