

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

*As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him...
 Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice.
 He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. —Luke 17:12a, 15-16*



An Outsider's Love

While we often hear this story preached as such, some would argue that the healing story of the ten lepers is not about thank you notes.

The context of the cleansing places us smack-dab in the middle of the drama and danger inherent in border crossings—Jesus is in one of those uncertain, vulnerable, in-between spaces we all know and fear (in his case the region between Samaria and Galilee) and the lepers are maintaining their distance from Jesus because the Law requires a separation of clean and unclean.

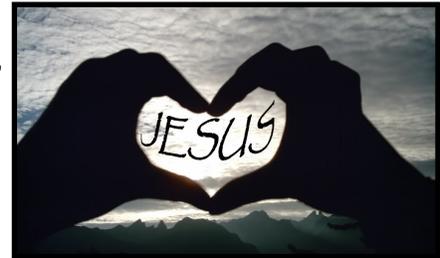
Jesus and his disciples have already experience some rejection on their journey, people and places that were walled-off from their ministry. And the lepers certainly know their place—banded together as outcasts and kept apart from community and religion.

When Jesus heals them (from afar, mind you) he sends them to the temple to get the appropriate re-entry-to-society-stamp of approval from the priest. On the way they see that they are in fact healed and one formerly leprous soul, a much maligned Samaritan, turns back to express, profusely, his gratitude. The others are doing what they were told, following the rules, observing their religious practice, heading to the Temple to get their ticket punched so that they can get back to business as usual. But as one commentator observed, the Temple isn't a place the Samaritan would be welcomed anyway. "There's no cure of being a Samaritan, a big-time outsider...there's no ex-Samaritan program he can enter to... rehabilitate his otherness" and so he has plenty of time to turn around and say thanks!

So of course this is another lesson in who is in and who is out. Just as we struggle today in the contemporary church to cross boundaries of culture and race and class to carry the message of the gospel, so too did the early church. Luke's community was trying to figure out how to relate to the Jewish roots of their faith and what to do with the Gentiles that were coming into their churches. And Luke offers this story of yet another outsider who recognizes Jesus for who he is and seems to "get it" more clearly, more gracefully, more open heartedly than the Jesus's own – the nine church insiders who are off attending to their own "religious" stuff.

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Barbara Brown Taylor, in a beautiful sermon on this text writes that "Ten behaved like good lepers, good Jews; only one, a double loser, behaved like a man in love." She thinks then about how hard she tries to fulfill expectations and obey rules and be a good church-going person, like so many of us. "I know how to be obedient," she writes, "but I do not know how to be in love" (The Preaching Life).



What about you? Do you want to know how to be in love? I sure want to be a follower of Jesus who acts like I am in love, carried away by the gratitude of being saved, every day, from my 'self'. I want to be full of joy and celebration because God loves me that much. I want to be so expressive an example of grace and redemption that the people who see me wonder what it is that has made me so passionate and in love. I want to be the kind of follower of Jesus that will tell someone why it is so! I even want to be the kind of follower that shouts out loud now and again about how much I love Jesus! You know, the kind of Christian that makes us "Frozen Chosen" really uncomfortable because we assume that if you are talking about it you must be an Evangelical or Fundamentalist. It makes us nervous to imagine ourselves like the leper, moved by grace enough to sing and shout and dance about God's blessings. We think we can't talk about it because people will think we are crazy (and yes, some people do)!

Yet, as we wonder about the future of our church and ask ourselves if we have a ministry to give, we will need to wonder about what we express about our faith and how people experience what we have to give. Will it be enough to keep doing what we have always done? Will it touch people if our expression is contained and subdued? Will the way we talk about our faith be enough to cross some boundaries and reach some "outsiders" who would love to know Jesus? As we seek discernment about what God is calling us to be and do—I guarantee that if it is to be sustainable, it will need to include passion and literally sharing the good news of God's love and grace. In today's postmodern world, it is not enough to hope they will come. We will have to go out and witness to the good news. I also guarantee that is includes reaching across some boundaries to meet people who need the gospel message—not here at 400 High Street, but over there, somewhere else, meeting them right where they are. For surely if all we can do is follow the rules and return to the Temple, we will be hard pressed to share the good news with anyone who has yet to hear. Beloved I pray for this: may we find our passion, may we find our way, may we see our healing and turn around to say thanks!

Rev. Wendy Miller Olapade, revwdmiller@comcast.net

In Our Prayers



Concerns: We pray for Karen B's sons who are both either contemplating or looking for jobs; for Jeff S. who has two job interviews this week; Dick S.'s friend Ed, suffering from Lou Gehrig's disease; the people in the Dakotas (near Pine Ridge) received almost 30 inches of snow on the weekend; for progress on the government shutdown and in gratitude that at least some people are going back to work and others will be paid back wages once the furlough is done.

Joys: Continued prayers of celebration for the new brides in the Carles' family (daughter Abby) and the Nackel family (daughter Jessica) whose weddings took

place recently; Charlotte's brother Paul and his girlfriend completed the Berlin marathon and are safely back home now

We continue to pray for Ose's friend TJ who is to have brain surgery and for Viola in her last hours; Roberta and Joy's brother Paul to find his way; a young friend, Brianna who lost a beloved pet; the Briggs family at the death of Jack's Aunt Milly; for all those affected by violence; for Thelma T. who is improving and hopes to return home soon; the people of Syria especially the refugees; our world leaders that they might find a peaceful path.

We continue to pray for our church's Crossroads process and future; for the environment; for President Obama and Congress regarding our present times of strife—may God's intentions prevail as they make decisions. We continue to pray for Lorna S. still hopeful for full recovery; Diane P's friend's Paul and Joe in treatment for cancer; 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 October is Robin Baker. 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 October Birthdays

Kimberly Grubb	October 05
Phil DiSciullo	October 11
Drew Hill	October 15
Tripp Hill	October 15
Thelma Thompson	October 20
Robin Baker	October 20
Jenny Briggs	October 30
Dylan Barca	October 31



Altar Flowers Always Welcomed: Please contact Brenda Briggs bgbiggs51@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.



Fellowship Café: Beginning October 27, we have our regular fellowship time—with volunteers bringing light snacks and coffee being served. Volunteers are being sought now for November. If you are not on a Committee and have not had an opportunity to do coffee hour lately, dates are available in November for non-committee member

participation. Please let Diane (office@medfordchurch.org) know when you would like to help out.

Worship Volunteers Always Welcome: We are always looking for folk to participate in worship as ushers and readers. Youth and Children are always welcomed to participate. The Spiritual Life Committee recruits readers. Kathy Williams is the contact at this time. (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.



The Gift of Bread: The Spiritual Life Committee is looking for volunteers to bake a simple loaf of gluten free bread for our monthly celebration of Holy Communion (on the first Sunday of the month). The recipe is very simple (and uses a gluten free pizza dough product). Spiritual Life can provide the bread making mix if you can provide the loving care. No kneading involved. One volunteer has already agreed—perhaps you would like to bake bread every other month? Contact Rev. Wendy.

An Invitation

Hope Central Church and
the Metropolitan Boston Association of the MACUCC
joyously invite you to

The Ordination of Nanette Pitt Savides

to the Christian Ministry of Word and Sacrament.
Sunday, October 13th, 2013 at 5:30 p.m.
Hope Central Church,
85 Seaverns Avenue, Jamaica Plain, Boston
Pick-up choir - all welcome to sing - 4:30 p.m.
Reception following the service.

RSVP & more info
www.thesavides.com/nanette/ordination



MISSION AND OUTREACH

Planning for Pine Ridge Volunteer Trip 2014: Preliminary planning meeting for the Mission Trip to Pine Ridge Reservation 2014 for interested participants will be held after worship service on November 3, 2013

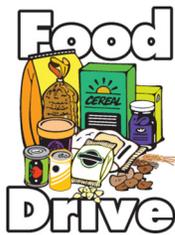
RE-
MEMBER



Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the UCC that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry(CAIM). Two-thirds of the offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through grants.

Neighbors in Need grants are awarded to churches and organizations doing justice work in their communities. These grants fund projects whose work ranges from direct service to community organizing and advocacy to address systemic injustice. Funding is provided through donations to the Neighbors in Need offering.

We will offer inserts over the next few weeks and receive the Neighbors in Need offering on Sunday, November 3. NIN contributions can be made on-line at any time [here](#).



Please save the date—and save some food!

“Medford Gives Thanks”

**Monday, November 25, 7:00 – 8:00 PM.
Community Food Drive and Thanks Giving**

Sponsored by the Medford Interfaith Clergy Group
to benefit the

Food Pantries in Medford*

Event will be held at Grace Episcopal Church, 160 High Street, Medford

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Any nonperishable food item that has not reached expiration is very welcome.

Things that are especially prized: diapers, Ensure, mayonnaise, catsup, Spam, pet food, toilet paper, shampoo, toothpaste, ramen noodles, Progresso soup, cooking oil, dishwashing liquid, laundry detergent, coffee

Monetary donations are always welcome too and checks should be made out to The Medford Clergy Association.

*\*\*Note change from initial publicity\*\**

*In addition to Community Cupboard the donations will be distributed to all pantries*



**Join in the CCWM Boston Urban Outreach In-Service Project  
Friday, November 8, 5 pm--Saturday, November 9, 3 pm - RSVP Please**

Once again, we will participate in an overnight mission event to learn about and to help relieve homeless and hunger in Boston. *Day only options available.* 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](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!

## FROM OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

**Medford Public Library Hosts Elizabeth Reian Bennett “All About the Japanese Flute” on Tuesday, October 15 at 7:00 PM.**

Elizabeth Bennett has been attending our church and she has invited us to her performance. In this performance and talk, teacher and musician Elizabeth Reian Bennett will introduce the shakuhachi, a Japanese end-blow flute. She will discuss its construction, how it is played, and the culture in which it is rooted. This will be followed by a performance of pieces from the early days of the wandering monks, the later ensemble repertory, and a composition written for her by local composer John McDonald. There will be a break for questions at the end. Reian Bennett is the first woman to be certified a Grand Master of the shakuhachi, which she has studied with Living National Treasure Aoki Reibo for over 30 years. This program is supported in part by the Medford Arts Council and by the Friends of Medford Public Library. For more and a sample of the music see her web site: <http://elizabethreianbennett.wordpress.com/>



**Mount Auburn Hospital, 330 Mt Auburn St., Cambridge Bereavement Support Group:**

All groups run for eight Monday evenings from 6:00-;30 pm and meet in the Clough Conference Room located on the second floor next to the Cafeteria. Each session closes after the second week. An education component is interwoven into the discussions. Contact Beth Loomis at 617-575-8606. Any adult who has experienced the death of someone significant is welcome. [eloomis@mah.harvard.edu](mailto:eloomis@mah.harvard.edu)

## 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
- Discipleship: A Model of Church for the 21st Century
- Practical Ideas for Youth Ministry
- Money Matters: Our Faith and Our Finances
- Worship with a Twist
- Divestment from Fossil Fuel Companies – Update & What's Next
- 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
- Faith Formation Family Style: Equipping Parents
- 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>

### **Celebration IX: Together We Can—March 28-30, 2014, Portland, Maine**

*“How wonderful it is for God’s people to live in harmony”*—Ps 133:1 A weekend of spiritual renewal where together we can build community, form friendships, participate in workshops and make a joyful noise through all the land. Registration is now open. The United Church of Christ Women Leaders of New England sponsor this event every four years and in 2014 it will be held in Portland Main at the Holiday Inn-by-the-Bay. Workshops, keynote speakers such as Maren Tirabassi, Nancy Taylor, Mary Luti and other fabulous women church leaders, music, Forums, Bible Study and a Marketplace. <http://www.uccwomenscelebration.org/>



**Notes of Gratitude from the UCC Coalition for LGBT Concerns** for the

Rainbow Scarves produced for the Scarf Project this past June. Special thanks to those who knitted on our behalf, Brenda Briggs, Jenny Briggs and Diane Costa. The scarves were handed out to youth as a ministry of the National UCC General Synod in California in an effort to show a UCC commitment to end bullying, especially the bullying of LGBT youth. Kathy Williams organized our West Medford effort.

Dear Friends at the Congregational Church of West Medford.  
How can we thank you enough for the scarves you made for the Scarf Project? Did you know that we made 14,000? You made a difference in young lives. We hope you'll watch for more on the Scarf Project. Keep raising awareness!  
Blessings, *Maya Com-Ton*

Dear Rev. Miller Olapade

We want to sincerely thank you for your beautiful expression of love. Thanks to your support, we shared 14,000 rainbow scarves with visitors and delegates at General Synod — more than four times our goal! Now UCC churches throughout the country are taking action to protect LGBT youth from bullying and suicide. You made this happen: thank you from the UCC Coalition for LGBT Concerns!

Peace,  
*Allyssa Boyer*  
(Mechanicsburg, PA)

