

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

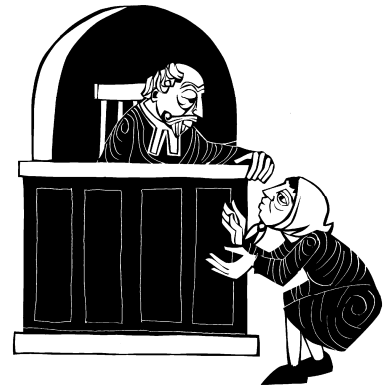


## PASTORAL REFLECTION

*Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart...  
 ...yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice,  
 so that she may not wear me out by continually coming."* —Luke 18:1, 15

### The Power of Persistence

"Mom, when can Sam come over and play? Huh, Mom, Mom, did you hear me? What day can Sam come over? Monday, Tuesday...?"  
 "Lois, Lois, Lois, mom, mom, mom, ...mommy, mommy, mama..." I know you parents can identify with that scene from "Family Guy" where uber-annoying Stewie just keeps calling for no apparent reason! You can see it here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cNkp4QF3we8>



Children are experts when it comes to being persistent. And children, like all people, are motivated by their desires and generally, they do not lose heart quickly. Consequently, like the persistent woman in the parable from Luke 18:1–8, they often get their heart's desire, at least when possible. Hopefully, we parents have the tenacity and courage to resist their persistence in the impulse section of the grocery store and the wherewithal and grace to surrender to it when it comes from a heart's desire that will provide joy, build character or express love!

As parents and people of faith, we pray that the Way of Jesus is shaping the nature of our desires. If it is, then like children, we are called to be persistent in pursuing love, justice, compassion, and peace. Our gospel lesson this week has a word for us about the nature of our desire and believing that God's way will prevail.

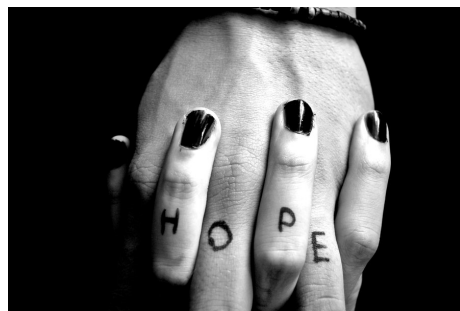
In Jesus' day, the responsibility of a judge was to settle disagreements. Disputes involving widows and orphans were not uncommon, as the law did not allow a widow to inherit her husband's estate, which passed on to the deceased man's sons or brothers. If these relatives did not act with justice and honor in providing for the widow of their father or brother, a judge was the widow's last recourse for securing the resources necessary to support life. For those of Jesus' hearers who were without status in society, a story about a widow with no power and a judge with no compassion might not have seemed shocking. This judge, however, "neither feared God nor had respect for the people" (v. 2). This judge did not simply lack compassion; he was unjust.

Still, in this story the widow's persistence wins the day. The widow refuses to accept her fate, and the judge is astounded. God's justice triumphs! The author of Luke interprets Jesus' parable as being

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about not losing heart AND about asking boldly and living justly when working against injustice. He suggests that whatever happens, God's ways will prevail.

Friends, living with such hope and certainty that God's justice will carry the day is no easy thing in light of our experience of injustice and inequality. Yet the message of Jesus is consistent throughout his ministry and throughout the gospels—God is in God's house and all will be as God would have it—our task is to be as God would have us be. If we allow Jesus's Way to shape our desires and our relationships and our actions we will create the Kingdom of God here on earth! As disciples, we are invited to voice our deep longings to God. As disciples, we are called to ask boldly and live justly while seeking the bountiful gifts of God's reign for all people. As disciples, we are called to pray and live faithfully in the ways of God's kingdom. Beloved, as disciples, we are called to be persistent in prayer. As disciples, we do not lose heart while waiting and working for the coming of God's reign. May it be so for us.



Rev. Wendy Miller Olapade, [revwdmiller@comcast.net](mailto:revwdmiller@comcast.net)

## In Our Prayers



Concerns: Marsha dedicates her solo to her good friend and music colleague Marjorie who passed away recently; Ose prays for her friend Alma whose husband has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease; Jeff prays for Min, the translator at Goodland Church, recovering from surgery; Joy prays for her friend Sheila with cancer is undergoing the first round of chemotherapy; Bev's granddaughter Abby's first cold. We continue prayers for Karen B's sons who are both either contemplating or looking for jobs; Jeff S.'s job search; Dick S.'s friend Ed, suffering from Lou Gehrig's disease; and for all those who were impacted by the government shutdown.

Joys: We celebrate Stephanie's neighbor Bill who just turned 100 and is in good health; Bev R's daughter Allie and husband Chris is celebrating their first wedding anniversary and having a reception in on Oct. 18; the relief of the stalemate in our government and in gratitude for those who led the way to collaboration.

We continue to pray 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](mailto: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 [bgbriggs51@gmail.com](mailto: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.

**Fellowship Café:** Beginning October 27, we return to 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](mailto: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](mailto: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.