

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



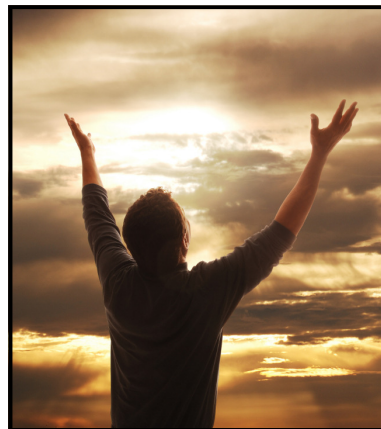
PASTORAL REFLECTION

*I will lift you up high, my God, the true king. I will bless your name forever and always.
I will bless you every day. I will praise your name forever and always.
The LORD is great and so worthy of praise. God's greatness can't be grasped. —Psalm 145:1—3*

Praise God—Find Faith

All of the passages assigned for this week's lectionary address the challenges of living in the present time, when temptations abound to dwell in the past or worry about the future. Psalm 145, the prophecy from Haggai 1:15b-2:9, Paul's encouragement in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, 13-17, and the gospel story in Luke 20:27-38; all offer guidance to their communities about living faithful lives today.

I will preach in Sunday worship from the epistle text which encourages us to "*stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by our letter.*" Those traditions of course are the foundation of our faith—and Paul's writings always direct the early church (and therefore us) to stand firm in the spiritual practices and experiences of our faith! But these glorious images of praise from the Psalm suggest that grounding one's personal and communal life in praise of God provides the surest way to be faithful.



The practice of "singing" these Psalms, of "praising God" is a wonderful spiritual tool. If we sing this particular song we cannot help but get in touch with how amazing our God really is—and how deeply and wholly God cares for us. If we sing this song, we will witness to the ways that God is involved in our lives and our community. If we sing this song, it will shift the heart from the aches and disappointments of the past and the fears and worries about the future to the glory of God's grace and presence in the present!

Psalm 145 is the first in a series of "praise psalms" (145–150) which conclude the Psalter. As with many psalms, the voice changes often: some verses speak to God, some speak of God. Using the acrostic poetic form, in which each verse begins with a consecutive letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the psalmist spells out God's greatness and goodness from A to Z. Proclamations of God's might and power join with proclamations of God's love for the individual, for generations, for the community and for all of creation. As these doxological statements weave through the psalm, they create a vivid testimony to God's universal care, God's intimate involvement with humanity, and God's ability and willingness (God's *Hesed*) to provide for all.

Continued on next page

Friends, if we allow that testimony to wash over the aches and disappointments of the past and reframe the fears and worries about the future—we cannot help but sing! One of my favorite hymns in the New Century Hymnal is know as **‘How Can I Keep from Singing.’**

My life goes on in endless song; above earth's lamentations,
I hear the sweet, though far-off hymn that hails a new creation.
Through all the tumult and the strife, I hear the music ringing,
It finds an echo in my soul—How can I keep from singing?

What though my joys and comforts die? My Savior still is living.
What though the shadows gather 'round? A new song Christ is giving.
No storm can shake my inmost calm, while to that Rock I'm clinging;
Since Love commands both heaven and earth, how can I keep from singing?

When tyrants tremble sick with fear, and hear their death knells ringing,
When friends rejoice both far and near, how can I keep from singing?
In prison cell and dungeon vile our thoughts to them are winging;
When friends by shame are undefiled, how can I keep from singing?

I lift my eyes, the cloud grows thin; I see the blue above it;
And day by day this pathway smooths, since first I learned to love it.
The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart, a fountain every springing;
All things are mine since I am Christ's—how can I keep from singing?



As we face the really huge stuff we are negotiating, in our personal lives and in our communal life—I invite you to listen for the echo in your soul and hear the music ringing. And ask yourself: “Since Love commands both heaven and earth, how can I keep from singing? When the peace of Christ makes fresh my heart—how can I keep from singing?” How indeed?

Blessings,

Rev. Wendy Miller Olapade, revwdmiller@comcast.net

A Pastoral Invitation—Let’s Talk? Let’s Pray.

As our Crossroad discernment process moves from the theoretical to the real, from church the way it has always been to “Oh my goodness, does it mean that we might...?”, from “I baptized my children there” to “Where would we worship?” we are all experiencing a wide range of feelings and responses—including



me! I want to extend an invitation to any and all who might want some one-on-one time with me or other members of the leadership team to check in and talk. You may want to talk about the process, concerns you have, questions you need to ask but may not want to bring up in a public setting. Please, allow me to walk with you through this time as your pastor and spiritual guide. Of course as we make decisions we will build in time for processing along the way, but if you want time now, please say so.

OUR CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS



In Our Prayers

Concerns: We pray for Janelle's loved one facing surgery; Joy's friend Sheila having chemo and surgery; Ose's friend, 5 year old Maya who had a ruptured appendix and is continuing to recover; Kerry's cousin Erin's husband who was in a serious car accident and having brain surgery; Sean H. struggling with being bullied in school and changing classrooms that he might remain open; Lorene's friend Patina having chemo; Mary B. who had a fall recently; we pray for our church's ongoing process of discernment and for the leaders who are guiding our conversations and discovery. We pray for all the MACUCC churches engaged in

Crossroads. We pray for the blessed saints who have left us this beautiful building and heritage and for all those saints who have passed away—named in our All Saints communion.

Joys: We celebrate the addition of names to the Medford Veterans Memorial including Jamie Grubb and Brad Roche and others connected to our community; that Thelma is home from rehab and continue to pray for her recovery; we celebrate the money given by Tufts University which will support our Medford schools; we continue to bask in the joy of Celine's baptism and the Red Sox World Series win.

We continue to pray over the death of a teacher in Danvers and the perpetrator of the crime; Diane's friend who lost her son to a drunk driver; Jenny & Brenda B pray at the loss of a family member who passed away; all those struggling with cancer and addiction; Dick's friend Ed who has Lou Gehrig's disease; June L. recovering at home; Elizabeth's father with Alzheimer's disease and for her mother facing decisions about his care; Ose's friend Alma whose husband has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease; Joy's friend Sheila being treated for cancer; 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; for Lorna S. still hopeful for full recovery; 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*

Pastoral Care Concerns: "Deacon of the Month" for November 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.

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 November Birthdays

Max Beal	November 2
Margot Semonian	November 24
Larry Wescott	November 30



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: During the month of November, the deacons will be sponsoring coffee hour with the help of the children of the Sunday School and all of you are invited to bring treats to share!



November 10: Apple Festival, please bring special apples, apple desserts, apple treats (any kind)

November 17: Pumpkin Festival, who can bake a pumpkin pie or pumpkin bread?

November 24: Crossroads pot luck luncheon—please sign up for pot luck with Julie Roberts!

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.

Today, Sunday, Nov 10: Please join us as the Crossroads Conversation Continues!!

All Congregation Conversation, after worship in Barnes Chapel. Please gather to hear what is bubbling up from the Crossroads Conversation and check in about where we are in regards to our Bold Decision. This will be a chance to prepare for the Decision making meeting on Nov 24—please plan to participate and share ideas. We will share some specifics on the conversations we have had to date with Real Estate Brokers and Developers—and we will offer some examples and ideas from successful, mission focused emerging Christianity. Let the creativity and brainstorming continue!!!

Next Sunday, November 17: A Time of Prayer and Meditation for our Future & our Conversation: After Worship at 11:30 am in Bean Chapel Rev. Wendy will host a time of prayer and meditation for our process, our leaders and our future. Bring your prayers for our church, for our discernment and for yourself.

Thanksgiving Sunday, November 24, 11:30—1:30

Pot Luck Soup and Salad Luncheon & Congregational Meeting

The Crossroads Leadership and Strategic Planning Teams invite you to a soup and salad luncheon to celebrate the season and participate in **a meeting of the governing body of our church. We will take a vote on actions indicated by the Crossroads process.** Please plan to be with your church Nov 24 to proceed towards the “Bold Decision” indicated by our Crossroads Process and Strategic Planning.

Can you help organize this Thanksgiving Sunday Pot Luck? Rev. Wendy is seeking one or two persons who feel called to help host and organize the pot luck so that we have the meal, set up and

clean up covered (the sexton will help with some of this). Watch for a sign up sheet during fellowship time!! Julie Roberts will help to keep us organized—can you help her to get people signed up?

Here is what we are seeking:

Hearty Soups

Salads (green, fruit and pasta)

Desserts

Drinks/Bread



If you want to sign up but won't be here for worship before hand, please call the church office.

Save the Dates

Advent Wednesdays—December 4, 11, 18 at 7:00 pm

**A time of reflection, healing and renewal
for the journey as we birth something new.**

We will join Joseph and Mary on the road to Bethlehem as they answer Herod's mandatory call to travel home and be counted for the census.

We will worship, create community, and wait for the birthing of a new thing. The service will include a message, prayer, meditation, and the healing act of laying-on of hands. Come and sit in stillness.

In collaboration with our pastor, the Rev. Dr. Susan Corso will lead these mid-week sessions. Dr. Corso is the head of the Spiritual & Energy Medicine Departments at Visions HealthCare, and has been a Spiritual Director for over thirty years.



MISSION AND OUTREACH

Food Collection: If you are not able to attend the “Medford Gives Thanks” event, bring your food donations to church and we will take them along!



**“Medford Gives Thanks”
Monday, November 25, 7:00 – 8:00 PM
Food Drive & Community Wide Thanks Giving Event**

**Grace Episcopal Church
160 High Street, Medford**

Sponsored by the Medford Interfaith Clergy to benefit

The Community Cupboard Food Pantry

Unitarian Universalist, 147 High Street, Medford; 781-396-4549

St. Raphael/St. Vincent DePaul Food Pantry

38 Boston Ave., Medford,; 781-488-5444

Friends of Francis Food Pantry

441 Fellsway West, Medford; 781-396-3400

**Bring your non-perishable and non-expired food
donations to the event to be blessed and distributed.**

Monetary donations are welcomed. Checks to “Medford Interfaith Clergy Association”

Boston Urban Outreach! Thanks to the Outreach Ministry Team for their leadership and thanks to all who participated this weekend. It was a special experience for the confirmands!

FROM OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS



PETS IN NEED ANIMAL RESCUE
cordially invites you to enjoy
an evening of entertainment
and giving at

the 16th annual

PETS IN NEED SILENT AUCTION

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 7–9 P.M.

bidding closes at 8:30 p.m.

Somerville City Club
20 Innerbelt Rd. Somerville, MA 02143



There will be great items to bid on, music, and food.
Best of all, proceeds from the event will benefit
the dogs and cats served by Pets in Need. To view
a preview of auction items and to get directions
to our venue, please visit our website
at www.petsinneedanimalrescue.org.



**Medford Historical
Society
and
Grace Episcopal
Church
present:**

A History of Grace Episcopal Church

Sunday,
November 17, 2013
2:00—4:00 pm at
Grace Church
160 High Street,
Medford



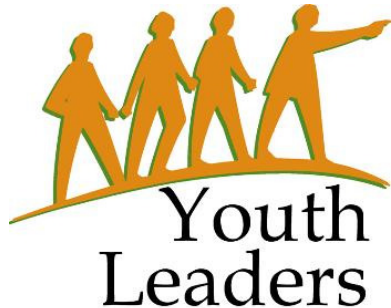
Featured Speakers:

Mayor Michael McGlynn,
the Rev. Noah H. Evans,
parish historian
Allison Andrews &
personal histories from a
panel of Grace Church
members

**Tours of the historic H.H.
Richardson church**
Artifacts on display

Free and Open to the Public
Refreshments

NEWS AND EVENTS FROM THE UCC



Equipping Youth Leaders (EEYM): The current series offered by the MACUCC begins in January, 2014. Do you know someone who might be interested? Beginning Saturday, January 11, 2014 with the first of four sessions, Education for Effective Youth Ministry (EEYM) is designed to provide youth leaders with a philosophy and theology of youth ministry and to give them practical, experiential tools and training to meet the needs of youth ministry in our local churches. EEYM sessions are taught by clergy and lay ministers who are actively involved in programming in local church, seminary and

conference settings. Over 300 youth leaders have completed the EEYM program since its inception. The cost is \$250 per person or \$62.50 per session but participants must attend all four sessions to receive certification. For more information about registration, please contact Cindy Bolton at 508-875-5233 ext 237 or by email at boltonc@macucc.org. The program includes:

Session I--January 11, 2014: Framework and Theological Context for Youth Ministry

Session II--February 8, 2014: Youth, Bible Study and Worship

Session III--March 29, 2014: Mission and Service

Session IV--April 12, 2014: Safe Church Practices & Resources and Getting Equipped for Ministry

For more: <http://www.macucc.org/events/detail/1246>

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 Maine 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/>

