

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 some were speaking about the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to God, he said, "As for these things that you see, the days will come when not one stone will be left upon another; all will be thrown down." —Luke 21:5-6

End Times or Now Times?

It will come as no surprise that in this time of wondering about the future, I would have been drawn to preach this Sunday from the Lectionary text from Isaiah 65 which begins, "For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind." Yet the gospel lesson, Luke 21:5-19, is also pretty intriguing for our faith community—for Jesus is talking about the end times.

In our conversation this past Sunday, as we delved deeper into the implications of putting our property up for sale, as we wondered about the future with very practical questions about where we might worship and what we would be if we were not the Congregational Church of West Medford, United Church of Christ (in our 100 year old, 25,000 square foot building)—more than one of you admitted to struggling with how you feel about the possibility of an "End Time."



Some of you are asking yourself if you can stay engaged in the ministries that you have been a part of. Some of you are wondering why we would start anything new. Some of you are asking yourself whether you will make another commitment of your time or talent for the following year. Many of you wonder about making a pledge again when the future is so unclear and are asking, "To what am I pledging?" "Why would I pledge my financial gifts when someone else may own our property before too long?" "Everything is uncertain, maybe I should wait to see what is happening before I make a stewardship commitment." And I imagine that all of you have at least had the thought, "I wonder if I should cut bait now, find another faith community that will meet my needs and not wait to see what happens."

Theologian, David Lose suggests that we have two choices when facing apocalyptic projections. "We can take them as warning and start preparing for the end of which Jesus speaks, either by ordering our lives in a new way or by trying to figure out the events and calendar to which Jesus supposedly alludes. Or we can chuck all that and hear these words as an invitation to live now by faith and hope, inviting the

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prospect of future tribulation and trial only to sharpen our deep appreciation for the present God has created and given to us as a gift.”

Of course the preferred response is the latter, not only because pastors and theologians say so, but because Jesus himself says so. Lose points out that first, despite his apocalyptic words, Jesus tells us elsewhere in the gospels that no one knows the day and the hour that he will come again and that we should ‘keep our lamps trimmed and burning’. More significantly, Jesus invites us to trust that the present, the “now times,” the stuff of our lives are chances to be God’s hands and feet and heart in the world; chances to witness to God’s love and grace. And, Jesus reassures us that by God’s grace, the Holy Spirit will be present and equip us to do that witnessing, to speak the good news into the present and to share God’s love.

Lose argues that in this text, Jesus is responding to a sense of anxiety and doubt in the early Christian community and in their time of need, *“This isn’t a timetable -- it’s a letter of comfort and courage and invitation. One that we can respond to most faithfully not by predicting the end but by seizing the present moment in which to share our faith and confidence in Christ.”*

Beloved, we are surely in a time of anxiety and need – and we can take great comfort in this invitation offered to us right from the mouth of Jesus, *“...not a hair on your head will perish and by your endurance you will gain your soul.”* Let’s seize the present moment and witness to the power of community and our calling to be God’s heart in the world. Let’s make our commitments to stay the course and find the path to which we are being called forward and out of the way it has always been. God is making all things new and we have a future that has yet to be revealed, but which will be grounded in the present moment that God has given to us as a gift. Let us live *now* by faith and hope and invest in the future with our time, our talent and our treasure...and we will surely be blessed to be a blessing. May it be so.

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 the people in the Philippines who are suffering from the aftermath of the typhoon; for George F. great-grandson of Mary B who has had a recurrence of cancer; for Venessa facing medical tests; for Lucy diagnosed with Lou Gehring's disease; for Frank as he cares for Lucy; for Thelma as she returns home; for our congregation facing so many questions.

We continue to pray for Joy's friend Sheila having chemo and surgery; Kerry's cousin Erin's husband who was in a serious car accident and recovering from brain surgery; Sean H. struggling with being bullied in school and changing classrooms that he might remain open; Lorene's friend Patina having chemo; 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.

Joys: We celebrate as Kate is approved for the Girl Scout Gold Award; Paul R's church, St. Peter's, as they celebrate their 150 year anniversary; the Outreach mission to Boston Rescue Mission and Pilgrim Church and all those who experienced this ministry. We continue to 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 continue to pray for all those struggling with cancer and addiction; June L. recovering at home; all those dealing with Alzheimer's disease including Elizabeth's father, Ose's friend Alma's husband; Joy's friend Sheila being treated for cancer; 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. 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**



*Bring Your Pledge
to be joined, blessed and consecrated
to the Glory of God.*

*We will celebrate with a pot-luck luncheon
And Congregational Meeting after worship.*

Thanksgiving Sunday Worship

November 24, 2013

*If you are not able to be with us,
please mail your pledge before November 20.*

May God add a blessing to your gifts.

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

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



Altar Flowers Always Welcomed: Thanksgiving Sunday is November 24, 2013. Would anyone like to donate flowers? 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.

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

November 24: Crossroads pot luck luncheon—please signup for pot luck w/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, 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.

Next Week—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.



There is still time to help with the Pot Luck. Julie Roberts has the sign up sheets (heronjulia@yahoo.com) or call the church office at 781-395-3360 or email office @medfordchurch.org

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.



FROM OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

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
Grace Church members

Tours of the historic H.H. Richardson church

Artifacts on display Free and Open to the Public Refreshments

MISSION AND OUTREACH

CCWM Mission and Support of The Pine Ridge Indian Reservation Continues



Support Pine Ridge **AND** get some holiday shopping finished!!

Buy delicious Hoka Coffee right from Pine Ridge!

Hoka! Coffee Company is a Native American owned coffee company based on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. Hoka! has two missions—to create a coffee/roasting company that provides jobs and economic growth for The Reservation and its community; and to buy beans from indigenous smallholder farms who are guaranteed fair working conditions and a fair share for their product.

Hoka! Coffee was started by Native American Sharice Davids in September, 2013. Sharice relocated from Kanssa to Pine Ridge to start her small business—and is passionate about coffee and economic development on the reservation—marketing Hoka! at pow wows, local events and on the internet.

When you buy a bag or two of Hoka Coffee for yourself and/or as a gift for someone, you are contributing to the economic viability of a community and providing an opportunity for a small Native American owned business to succeed and grow. Proceeds above the cost of the coffee and shipping will go directly into the CCWM Pine Ridge Mission Fund.



**Orders can be placed through December 1st for
12 oz. bags @ \$ 14.00 per bag**

light or dark roast ~~ ground or whole bean

No decaf at this time

Delivery by December 20th

Pick up will be at the church.

Also needed for a future fundraiser: Coffee cans of any size
(please bring them to church) Many thanks in advance

**To sample a cup of Hoka coffee or to order,
please contact Joy Harris at**

brujoy2@comcast.net or 617 852 2941.

FROM OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

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”

SEASIDE PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS

THE HAPPY HOLIDAY SHOW

WHEN: DECEMBER 6, 7 and 8, 2013

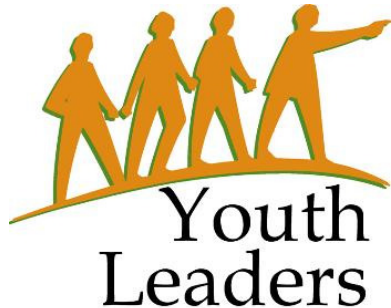
TIME: DECEMBER 6 and 7 @ 8:00 p.m.; DECEMBER 8 @ 3:00 p.m.

WHERE: WEST MEDFORD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, 400 HIGH STREET, WEST MEDFORD

Ticket/Show Information: 781-249-3480 Purchase Tickets: 781-424-4284

TICKET PRICES: IN ADVANCE: \$22.00/ADULTS;
\$20.00/ SENIORS (65+) and CHILDREN (UNDER 16)
ALL TICKETS \$25.00 AT THE DOOR

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/>

