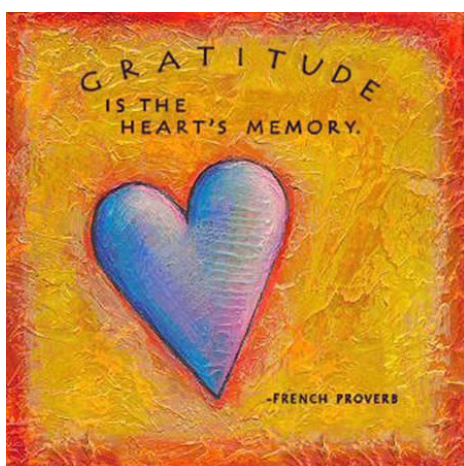


A weekly collection of news, reflections and announcements from the  
 Congregational Church of West Medford  
 an Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ



## PASTORAL REFLECTION



*Today we offer thanksgiving for those other things.  
 For troubles that shape and sharpen our patience,  
 for doubts that let faith moments shine,  
 and for confusions that keep our lives from being rigid.  
 For sufferings that help us share another's grief,  
 for fears that mark real terror in the world,  
 And for pains that open our eyes to joy.  
 For sorrows that join our hands to hope  
 and for loneliness that leads us to the heart of God  
 For all these gifts by which we have become  
 more human, we give thanks.  
 Let our thanks reach out  
 and embrace the daily small ingratitude of our lives.*

—Maren C. Tirabassi, Touch Holiness

### An Attitude of Gratitude

Well my friends, here it comes. “The Holidays”. With an Upper Case H and a Holi-Mackeral. It’s like a monster that has its own energy source and that you have no control over. Despite my supposed “spiritual wisdom” (HA!) which reminds me that all that consumer driven holiday-ing is not what it is about, I can see the ubiquitous presence everywhere I go (and everywhere I click) and I feel the frenetic pace of The Season encroaching. Fifty times this week I found myself feeling breathless and saying to myself—it is not even Thanksgiving—relax, one thing at a time is all you can do, focus on what matters and sign out of facebook, prioritize relationships over production, and do not complain about how busy you are! But dang, I am busy. We are all busy and there is never enough time to do everything we want to do. So what....? What should I do? How do I prioritize? Where is the balance? Help me Jesus!

Well of course taking a breath and practicing an attitude of gratitude is one approach to maintaining balance and a healthy perspective on it all. I consider this coming “Thanksgiving Sunday” and Thanksgiving Day high, holy days. Thanksgiving is that one holiday that does not require resisting any secular or commercial influences and it puts us in touch with the universal spiritual practice of expressing our gratitude. Praise the Lord—no one is fighting about this holiday, there’s no culture war going on (although I guess that is not true any more as we are facing the effort of retailers to be open on

*Continued on next page*

Thanksgiving Day—argghhh) and everyone, no matter what faith tradition or cultural background can at least (in theory) say something about that for which they are grateful—if only that “I got up this morning and my feet hit the floor”. Our Christian faith, our prayer and worship practices and the spiritual practice of stewardship are all about expressing gratitude. My own 12-Step informed spirituality is grounded in seeing and expressing daily reasons for gratitude—a day of sobriety, a lesson learned, a story shared.

So often, especially when we are sitting around the table on Thanksgiving Day, when we ask ourselves about that for which we are grateful, we express thanks for the things we have—family, friends, jobs, community, a meal, a roof over our heads, recovery, our health, the well being of people we love, healthcare, the end of treatment for an illness, the beauty of the earth. And (can I get an Amen?) we are (and should be) grateful for all of that—God has abundantly blessed us in so many material and relational ways.

But how about giving thanks for the experiences that are not material and are, at least on the surface, not so positive? These kinds of things often drive us to our knees, and when faithfully experienced, end up in bucketful of life lessons learned and souls deeply transformed. This prayer of thanksgiving, written by UCC Pastor and Poet, Maren Tirabassi, does just that—it offers thanksgiving for “those other things”—and it literally broke my heart—wide open. I am so glad for it. Maybe you will be able to use it as well. Maybe you will even be able to sharing it at your Thanksgiving Table this year... for these are universal experiences for which we all can be grateful.

As I sat at my desk to write this reflection I wept for a while at the wonder of this prayer. Do me a favor, find a quiet space and go back and read it again—only this time I want you to pray it, slowly, deliberately—and out loud. Thank you God for troubles. Thank you God for doubts. Thank you God for confusions, sufferings, fears, pains, sorrows and loneliness. Thank you God for those moments when we become more human. Beloved, for today, may God lead you to Her heart and may you be reminded of *everything* about which you might Thank God this Holiday.

Let us rise up and be thankful,  
for if we didn't learn a lot today,  
at least we learned a little, and if  
we didn't learn a little, at least  
we didn't get sick, and if we got  
sick, at least we didn't die; so, let  
us all be thankful. ~Buddha



Blessings, Rev. Wendy Miller Olapade, [revwdmiller@comcast.net](mailto:revwdmiller@comcast.net)  
...and Thank you Maren for your poetry and your wide open heart.

### **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; Mayor McGlynn and his family at the death of his mother, Helen; Patty H. struggling with Asthma; George F. great-grandson of Mary B who has had a recurrence of cancer; Venessa facing medical tests.

We continue to pray for Lucy diagnosed with Lou Gehring's disease; Frank as he cares for Lucy; Thelma as she returns home; our congregation facing so many questions; Joy's friend Sheila having chemo and surgery; 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.

Joy's: We celebrate the many gifts of food and money being collected for Medford's Food Pantries; ANTS as they choose their new President, Martin Copenhaver; Kate, approved for the Girl Scout Gold Award; 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. in treatment and 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](mailto: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**

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



**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:** During the month of November, the deacons are 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 24: Crossroads pot luck luncheon—big thanks to everyone and to Julie Roberts for organizing! Also big thanks to Karen McCune Barca who set up and cleaned up the coffee throughout November. ***B&G/ Stewardship sponsors fellowship hour for the month of December. If you can bring some goodies or veggies or fruit to support, they would be very much welcomed.***

**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.



**Church Office Hours**

**Thanksgiving Week**

The office will be open Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday this week and closed on Thursday and Friday due to the Thanksgiving holiday. If everyone involved in adding information to the bulletin or reporter, could get all items in by

Monday, November 25 and no later than Tuesday, November 26, 2013, by noon, it would be appreciated. Happy Thanksgiving Week!



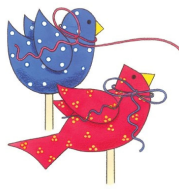
## **All Welcome Today —Thanksgiving Sunday, November 24**

### **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 Make Crafts and/or Other Things to Sell for Pine Ridge Fund Raiser?**



Response needed asap! The Pine Ridge Team is considering renting a table at a craft fair in Medford to be held on December 7 in order to raise funds for the volunteer ministry and the next volunteer trip. If you are artistic and have crafts that you are willing to donate to the table, please contact Kathy Williams at [kathypricewilliams@yahoo.com](mailto:kathypricewilliams@yahoo.com) If there is an enough interest we will rent the table, sell Kathy's Southern Cookbook, HOKA Coffee and your offering! Thank you for your support.

### **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

### **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 20<sup>th</sup>**

**Pick up will be at the church.**

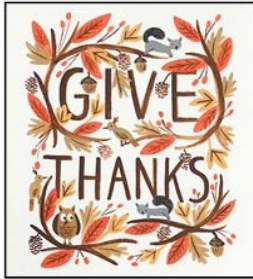
Also needed for a future fundraiser: Coffee cans of any size  
(please bring them to church) Many thanks in advance

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

**[brujoy2@comcast.net](mailto: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**

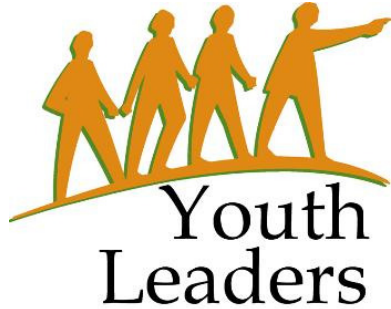
**Ticket/Show Information: 781-249-3480**

**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](mailto: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/>

