

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

Patience, Patience, Patience

This past Wednesday a small and hearty group gathered for the first of three Advent Wednesday Worship services designed to help us be intentional about our journey and our waiting—waiting for Christ to come again, waiting in the space between now and then, waiting for the joy of the season to fill our hearts and waiting for answers to our questions about the future of our faith community. Golly, that is a lot of waiting.



Our guest preacher, the Rev. Dr. Susan Corso used Mary's pregnancy as a metaphor for our own birthing process. With colorful images of burgeoning bellies bouncing on a burrow and every part of your body from the earlobes to the tips of your toes feeling ready to "have this baby"—we all could identify with the feeling of impatience that comes when you have been waiting for a very long time for something so very exciting to arrive.

Beloved, we have been like a expectant mother these past many months, both delighted by the possibility of this new thing that is on the way and ready (oh, SOOOO ready) for the pregnancy to be over and the baby to arrive! Like a mother who is careful and committed to caring for her yet unknown, unborn child—we too have been nurturing and loving this new thing that is unknown and yet to be. We have been holding gently the whole Crossroads process with deliberate, loving care; building a strong foundation with the prenatal vitamin of shared conversation; energizing the soul of our community with the protein of great worship; cleaning out that which the Body no longer needs with the fiber of discernment; and building a nest for the new thing with the practice of organic prayer. Like a mother who is getting ready to pop, we are getting fat with possibility.

Yet, we are not ready and the midwives are saying, "Not quite, my dears." Rev. Susan reminded us that the baby never arrives on our schedule—rather the birthing happens when the new thing is ready—in God's time. And so we wait some more, fat with possibility and praying for patience.

She also explained that the etymology of the word *patience* leads one to a spiritual definition of patience as "*passionate expectation*." Wow, if that does not get a great big, "Amen! Preach it Sister!" from me. We have been energized and engaged throughout our process so far. As we get closer to the delivery,

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we will get heavy and fatigued with the fullness of it all, but we can still proceed with **passionate expectation**. I pray that as we continue on our journey, to Bethlehem and beyond, as we patiently nurture and lovingly nourish this new thing we are birthing, that we might do so with passionate expectation that GOD is doing a new thing through us and that it will be perfect, and beautiful, and glorious, and everything that God needs for it to be—and it will arrive just in [God's] time!

Blessings, Rev. Wendy
revwdmiller@comcast.net

In Our Prayers

Concerns: We pray for June L. and a positive outcome of her recent medical treatment; Bruce and Joy's brother Bill who is going through a difficult time; relief for Patti H.'s asthma; Charlotte's mother, Janie who needs to give up driving; Ernestine S. in rehab and Dick S. as they face the future; 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; George F. great-grandson of Mary B who has had a recurrence of cancer; Venessa facing medical tests.



Living the Season of Advent December 8: Isaiah 11:1–10

The prophet shares a hope-filled vision with us – a vision of harmony and understanding – and presents an unlikely subject for leading us toward this vision – “a little child.” Even more unlikely, Isaiah explains that animals who are enemies will lie down together. They will reconcile and be adversaries no more. These verses seem unbelievable, but longing for their fulfillment is the stuff of hope. Isaiah's vision pushes us to re-think the way we understand power dynamics today and show us that no matter what, peace inside ourselves and in the world is possible.

This week reach out with a note or phone call to someone with whom you often clash.

We continue to pray for Thelma as she settles into being at home; 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.

Joys: We celebrate with Brenda who heard from long lost friends; Theo who saw for a friend he hasn't heard from in several months; Andrea and Jody, friends of Joy and Bruce on their marriage; the wonderful lay led Hanging of the Greens worship service and all of the participants! We continue to celebrate the unanimity with which our congregation was able to come to a decision; and the careful work being done by the Strategic Planning Team and Kathy's new job.

We continue to pray for all those struggling with cancer and addiction; June L. in treatment at home; all those dealing with Alzheimer's disease including Elizabeth's father and Ose's family member; 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

OUR CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pastoral Care Concerns: "Deacon of the Month" for December is Joy Harris. 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 December Birthdays

Janice Willson	December 7
Timothy Roche	December 13
Joyce Henson	December 15
Melanie Whittington	December 28
Tom Campbell	December 29



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 December, Building and Grounds and Stewardship Committees 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! Big thanks to Karen McCune Barca who has taken on the responsibility of setting up and cleaning up the coffee weekly!! ***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)

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.

Surprise! Your Pledge is Always Welcome: Thanks to everyone who made last week's Thanksgiving and Pledge Sunday such a grand success. We worshipped and sang and blessed our commitments to each other and our ministry. Your pledge cards are always welcome. Just put them in the offering plate or get them to the Treasurer via the church office.



MISSION AND OUTREACH

Thanks to you and the Outreach Ministry of CCWM who made gifts this week of:
\$ 100.00 to the Medford Clergy Interfaith Food Pantry Collection
\$ 100.00 to the Girls at Indigo House for Thanksgiving
And many, many bags of food from individual members!
Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

**Support
The Pine Ridge Indian Reservation
and make your holiday “gifting” a mission!**



Hoka! Coffee Company is a Native American owned coffee company based on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. Hoka! has two missions— 1) to create a coffee/roasting company which will provide jobs and economic growth for the Pine Ridge Reservation and its community; and 2) to buy beans from indigenous smallholder farms who are guaranteed fair working conditions and a fair share for their product.

Hoka! Coffee was started in Sept. 2013 by Sharice Davids. A Cornell graduate, attorney and Native American, Sharice is passionate about coffee & economic development on the reservation. Her goal is *“to contribute to jobs and economic growth on the Reservation”*.



12 oz. bags: \$ 14.00 per bag
Light or Dark roast
No decaf at this time

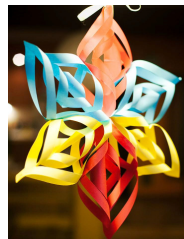
Mugs: \$ 6.00

Totes: \$ 9.00

For more information please contact Joy at
brujoy2@comcast.net

Today—Crafts to Support Our Ministry to Pine Ridge Reservation

Thanks to Kathy Williams and Joy Harris and all the “crafters” who gathered goods to sell at the Craft Fair yesterday. There are goodies for you to buy today—immediately after worship during our fellowship time, including HOKA Coffee!!



December 15: Gift Wrapping at Bestsellers Cafe where we can spread the word about our work at Pine Ridge as well as accept donations. Kathy and Karen have volunteered for this and could use one more person.

Outreach Leadership Needed: As 2013 draws to a close, the members of Outreach are being called to other ministries as we come to the end of our terms on the committee. We have loved serving as your Outreach Committee, and are grateful for the ways we have been transformed by serving you and serving our wider community. Given the uncertainty of how things will be organized in our faith community, we're hoping to ensure "project-based-leadership" for two of our long-term ministries - the Indigo House (Medford) and the Outdoor Church, Cambridge. We hope you'll pray about whether you feel called to be a leader in either of these ministries. If you're interested, or have questions, please be in touch with Jenna, by replying to this email. Blessings, Charlene, Susan & Jenna

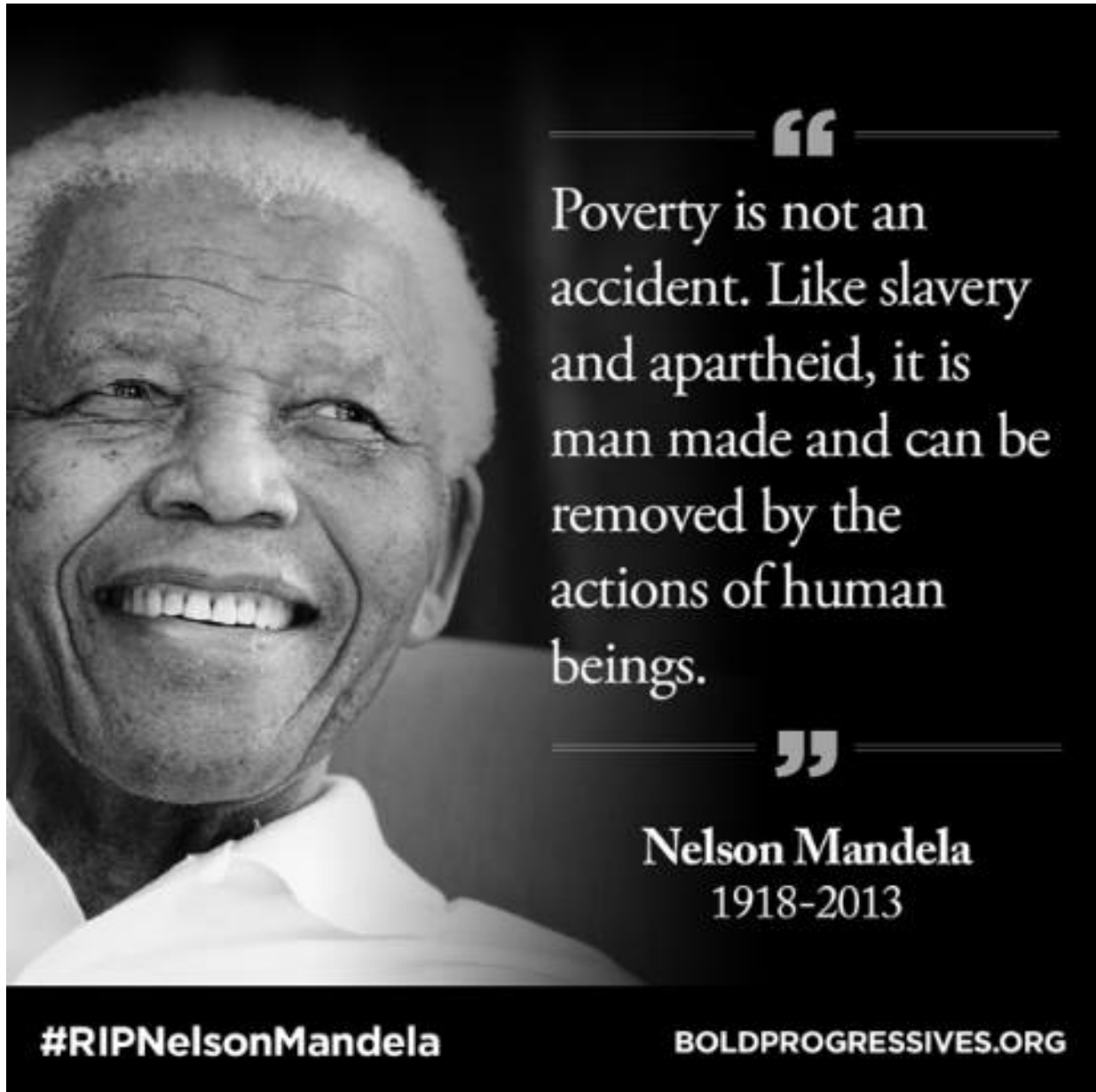


The Angel Tree: This beloved annual tradition is an opportunity to share God's abundance with others. You can purchase gifts for those in need--this year our tree will include gifts for local families and for residents at the Indigo House, a shelter for teenage girls in Medford. The Christmas tree in our sanctuary is adorned with paper ornaments listing the gifts that have been requested. If you would like to participate, take an ornament or two from the tree, buy the item(s) listed, and return them (wrapped, and with the ornament taped on, so we know what's inside) **by Sunday, December 15.**

Field Trip to Heifer International's Overlook Farm December 15--immediately after worship. During this open house at Heifer's Farm, we'll sip hot cocoa, explore the farm, and have the opportunity to learn about alternative gift giving. Heifer requests that attendees bring a canned good for admission. We'll convene immediately after worship and carpool to the farm, in Rutland, MA, about an hour and a half away. Questions see Susan or Jenna.

Sunday, December 29 - Making Sandwiches for Outdoor Church of Cambridge

We are looking for a volunteer to lead the sandwich-making. This involves purchasing the ingredients (for which you'll be reimbursed), rounding people up to make sandwiches on the day of, and delivering them to a church in Cambridge. Please email Jenna ASAP, by replying to this email, if you are able to help. If you aren't interested in leading, we of course also need help spreading tuna, bagging sandwiches, etc. as always. Many hands make light work! www.theoutdoorchurch.org



“Poverty is not an accident. Like slavery and apartheid, it is man made and can be removed by the actions of human beings.”

Nelson Mandela
1918-2013

#RIPNelsonMandela

BOLDPROGRESSIVES.ORG

FROM OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

Halleluia Chorus in East Somerville:

An Invitation from our friends at First Church Somerville

Dear Friends, Some of you may know that music is my work, my passion, and my play; I run an orchestra program in East Somerville. This program provides high-quality, daily, music education and academic tutoring to 66 young people and also seeks to unite and solidify the community around the positive actions of its youth. Last year, some of you came out on a cold December night to sing with us in a very special concert. We will be presenting our second annual "Community in Harmony" concert again this year and closing the evening with Handel's Hallelujah Chorus.

Please consider joining us at the East Somerville Community School auditorium, 50 Cross Street, on December 17th, 2013 at 6:30 PM. We hope to bring a little more cheer and warmth to an otherwise normal Tuesday night with other holiday favorites including: Ukranian Bell Carol, Jingle Bells, Pachelbel's Canon, Bach's Minuet 2, Ode to Joy, and Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker. **We are also ALWAYS accepting more voices and instrumentalists for the Hallelujah Chorus. Please let me know if you'd like to join!** Musically yours, *Diane Cline, Director.*

Christmas Caroling in Harvard Square (or your neighborhood!)

Cambridge Historical Tours will be providing extravagant Victorian costumes and classic carols in four-part harmony. Please come see our professionally trained, costumed, caroling quartets every Sunday in December as we sing for our community in Winthrop Square in Harvard Square. In addition to the Sunday performances, beginning Black Friday (11/29), we will also be available for bookings of all kinds. A great form of entertainment for your annual office Christmas party, brightening up a crowd of shoppers, or giving your neighbors the gift of Christmas music on their doorsteps – we'll come to you and we'll be ready to sing! While we book events for a living, we always remember that sharing holiday cheer is priceless. Please contact Daniel Berger-Jones for more information at dbj@cambridgehistoricaltours.org. We hope that you'll join us this winter!



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/>

