

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

### Happy “Blankety-Blank” New Year

I must confess that I have been disinclined to do any writing, preaching, worrying, considering, or resolving on the matter of the New Year. Perhaps you too, given the information overload with which we live these days, have reached a saturation point on the matter. ‘Everybody’ and her brother have expressed an opinion on how, when, what and whether one should make resolutions. I read lots of wise, wonderful and sound advise yet I was feeling as though if I saw one more obligatory Happy New Year post on facebook I was going to explode. One of my facebook friends, a wonderfully ironic, twenty-something-year-old-man posted in the wee hours of January 1, “This post has nothing to do with the year 2014,” and I laughed-out-loud and snidely replied from my saturated spirit, “A-freaking-men.”

Then, as I was resisting New Year’ images for worship (which is focused on Epiphany) and sitting down to write this Pastoral Reflection the Ecclesiastes 3 scripture lesson that is assigned for New Year’s Day came barreling into view and my spirit shifted. One reading of the text and I remembered the value of the spiritual practice inherent in celebrating New Year’s Eve—there is nothing quite like it—to stop and take notice of this moment in time by taking stock, letting go and welcoming the new! It is such a good practice that I am encouraging you to do so using the age-old wisdom of Ecclesiastes included here:



*For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away; a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace. What gain have the workers from their toil? I have seen the business that God has given to everyone to be busy with. He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover he has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live; moreover, it is God's gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil.*

*Continued on next page*

Whether taking personal stock or taking stock of our faith community, we can use this text to measure all that has been and all that we hope to be. We can consider what needs to be 'killed' (eliminated) in ourselves and/or our community; and what or who or which relationships are in need of healing. We can measure our tears and the times we have laughed until we cried and find the blessings in both.

Using this text as a guide, we can ask questions like these: What does it mean to be born to new life or to "die" —with people in our lives or as a faith community? What might it mean to 'plant or to harvest' in the daily tasks to which we are called as individuals or as a community? How might we be more discerning about which is most appropriate? What does it mean in a time of mourning to remember that there will be dancing again? What about when I am laughing and others are grieving so much so they can't seem to remember the sound of such joy anymore? How much would we benefit from remembering that there is, in fact, a time to simply keep silence and times when a voice of courage and hope is desperately needed? **And what does it mean to us to remember that God holds it all and all of us through it all, in all of our times?**

What does it mean indeed, to remember that God holds it all and all of us through it all, in all of our times—even in our wisdom and joy-resistant, crabby, spiritually bankrupt times? Here is where my confession continues: I didn't want to hear the Happy New Year's wishes and the sweet, affirming goal setting stories because I was in a spiritual wilderness moment—and like most of us, I can enjoy the crabbiness of that place, for a little while. And I could probably get away with justifying my snarly, snarky spiritual condition, attributing it to the ongoing pain with which I am living from my broken arm or the stress of moving through the Advent/Christmas religious rush one-handed or any number of other reasons (a disappointing slight from a loved one, the resentments I have toward so-and-so, a broken newly manicured nail!). But the truth is I was crabby because I was focused on myself and I forgot—and when I forget, I get afraid—and when I am afraid I go to that crabby, bankrupt place where everything seems annoying and stupid and I get even more afraid (it is a vicious cycle).

But of course that is why we have spiritual practices that encourage us to take stock and see our blessings; faith communities to remind us how much we are loved by God and each other; and spiritual guides to direct us to the texts, prayers and practices that keep us right sized and in right relationships! When we stay in the moment, when we remember that we can be certain of God's unending love, when we ground ourselves in community we have the courage we need to faithfully explore and wonder about these important questions.



Beloved, I pray that together we might remember that "*For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven...*" and that God holds it all and all of us through it all, in all of our times. Let's be brave for 2014 and together we can always move from being focused on ourselves and being afraid to faithfully exploring and wondering about all that God has placed in store! Oh, and Happy beautiful, blessed, glorious, prosperous, joy-filled, courageous Happy New Year!

With blessing and prayer, Rev. Wendy Miller Olapade/revwdmiller@comcast.net/617.592.5853

## IN OUR PRAYERS AND PASTORAL CARE



Concerns: We pray for June L. who is facing Chemo treatment and a challenging prognosis; Charlene and Rich's neighbor, Joe who lost his daughter recently and is dealing with pneumonia; Bruce R.'s brother Bill in treatment for addiction; Carol L. at the passing of Joe's Aunt "Pete"; Charlene C's brother Lou in the final stages of Alzheimer's; grace for families for high acceptance and low expectations during the holidays and to remember God's presence rather than presents. Special prayers for all our service men and women overseas who cannot be home for the holidays; our sexton Steve's daughter and grandson; Diane's mother Anne. We continue to pray for Charlene & Rich's neighbor Joanne D. who passed away; Mary and Max Beal's great-grandson, George with

seizure disorder; for all with cancer; Dick's friend, Ed, who is returning home from the hospital; those who find the holiday season challenging; a member of our community struggling with family matters.

Joys: We celebrate Kathy W's sermon on Wounded Knee massacre; Karen and her sons who found an apartment with perfectly matched neighbors downstairs; Tom Campbell's birthday; everyone who is traveling during the holidays; DJ Padei's NYE gig at the Hard Rock; Charlene & Rich C celebrate both daughters being home for the holidays; Bev R.'s son Tim is coming home from the military; Kerry H. happy to be called back to work for 90 days; Patty H. is doing better with her health; Finalized adoption with Mackenzie Rose Siobhan!

We continue to pray for Ernestine S. in rehab and Dick S. as they face the future; Thelma as she settles into being at home; 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 continue to pray for all those struggling with cancer and addiction; all those dealing with Alzheimer's disease; 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.***

### Pastoral Care Concerns

The "Deacon of the Month" for January is Brenda Briggs who can be reached at (bgbriggs51@gmail.com). Please let the deacon of the month 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.

## OUR CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

pennies  
from  
heaven



### 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 January Birthdays

2	Julie Roberts
6	Alisha Saulnier
19	Tom Nackel
22	Grace Helen Kromm
24	Emma Louise Kromm



**Altar Flowers Always Welcomed:** Please contact Brenda Briggs [bgbriggs51@gmail.com](mailto:bgbriggs51@gmail.com) (or the church office [medfordchurch.org](mailto: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 January the Outreach Ministries Committee is sponsoring coffee hour. 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. Robin Baker is the contact at this time (robin)

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.



### **Bravo! Our 2014 Stewardship Campaign was met with generosity and a strong commitment despite the uncertainty of our future.**

Thanks to everyone who has already made a financial commitment to the faith community. We are so glad to see the same level of commitment as last year and consider that a powerful statement about the congregation's commitment to the ongoing discernment process and the future of our faith community! Your

pledge cards are always welcome. Just put them in the offering plate or get them to the Treasurer via the church office. **Offering Envelops:** For all those who have made a 2014 pledge, your envelopes are ready and can be picked up after the service. They will be in Barnes Chapel at coffee hour. **Tax**

**Documentation:** If anyone would like a letter from the church to verify your pledge/contribution for 2013 tax purposes, please contact Tom Roche at [thomasroche@comcast.net](mailto:thomasroche@comcast.net) or call him at 781-281-1000.

## MISSION AND OUTREACH

### CCWM Ministry with Pine Ridge Reservation

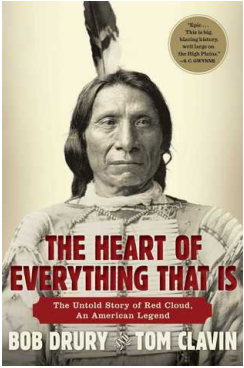
#### 23rd Annual Bedford VA Hospital Mid-Winter Powwow

Saturday, January 18th  
Bedford VA Hospital Gymnasium  
200 Springs Road  
Bedford, MA 01730

This event kicks off GLICA 2014 series of public events. Here you will have the chance to dance, hear native drumming and singing. This event is open to the public and traders are present so you can browse and purchase their unique native items.



CCWM will participate in this fundraising/awareness event to support our ministry with Pine Ridge. We are looking for one or two people to staff our vendor table and sell Hoka coffee, mugs, totes at this event as well as display information about our volunteer trip, Re-Member, conditions on Pine Ridge, etc. We are not sure of the exact hours yet but probably noon – 4pm on January 18<sup>th</sup>. Please let Kathy Williams or Joy Harris know if you are available and willing to volunteer for at this fun event. Thanks!



**Sunday, March 02, 11:30—2:00 pm: Book Discussion: “The Heart of Everything That Is”** Susan D’Arcy will lead this first book in book series/discussion group. “The Heart of Everything That Is” is written by Bob Drury and Tom Clavin – and tells the untold story of Lakota Sioux chief, Red Cloud. There are ten copies in local libraries or you are encouraged to purchase the book yourself. We are open to suggestions for other Indian themed books for future book discussion groups. Contact Kathy or Joy with suggestions or questions.

**Anniversary of the Massacre at Wounded Knee:** If you missed worship last week, check out Kathy’s sermon on the CCWM website, here:

<http://medfordchurch.org/the-anniversary-of-the-massacre-at-wounded-knee-december-29-1890>

#### **Leadership Needed for Ongoing Ministry to Indigo House and Outdoor Church Sand-**

**wiches:** 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. We are 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 or Rev. Wendy. Blessings, Charlene, Susan & Jenna



## FROM OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS



### **City of Medford: 2014 Inaugural Ceremony Sunday, Jan. 5 at 1 p.m.**

Howard F. Alden Memorial Chamber at City Hall, 85  
George P. Hassett Drive.

Medford's Mayor Michael J. McGlynn will be sworn into his 14th term of office by recently retired Council President Robert A. Maiocco. Everyone is welcome to attend the Inaugural Ceremony. Members of the Medford City Council and School Committee will be also be administered their oaths of office.

Mayor McGlynn's inaugural address will discuss his theme and tone for the City of Medford—a theme that Medford is a welcoming community that celebrates its diverse population, where all people can work together in a progressive and positive manner, and where a civil tone in government is important. In addition, Mayor McGlynn will speak about his administration's accomplishments and goals for the future.

United States Senator Edward J. Markey, Attorney General Martha Coakley and Middlesex County District Attorney Marian Ryan will be making remarks as part of the ceremony. All participants in the Inaugural Program represent the diversity of Medford's community.

Mr. Dominic Marcellino, United States Marine, Vietnam veteran and recipient of the Purple Heart and Bronze Star, will serve as the Master of Ceremonies.

Entertainment will be provided by Medford's Alumni Band, under the direction of Mrs. Marsha Caron, as well as by local singers from Medford.

Members of the clergy participating include: Father Edward Doughty of St Francis of Assisi Church, **Reverend Wendy Miller Olapade of the West Medford Congregational Church**, Reverend Noah Evans of the Grace Episcopal Church, Reverend Shin of the Wesley Methodist Church and Pastor Ronald Pierre of the Evangelical Church of Holiness.

The United States Marines will post the colors.

Students from Medford's Tibetan community will lead everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Light refreshments will be served in the rotunda immediately following the ceremony.

All are welcome!

***A New Way to Fund the Ministries of the United Church of Christ:*** After thorough study, much prayer and countless conversations, including a forum at Annual Meeting 2012 and focus groups with leaders from 20 churches, the Finance Committee of the Board of Directors has reached a preliminary conclusion that the future of the United Church of Christ in Massachusetts would be best served by a new way for our churches to fund our common mission. The new system is envisioned to have the following benefits: 1) It is based on percentage giving. This is biblical, and fair to churches of all sizes and socio-economic make-ups; 2) It is simple and easy to understand, because it mirrors the message we give to our members to give proportionally; 3) It invites generosity; 4) It allows all settings of the church to rise or decline together. If Conference and national ministries are effective in nurturing vitality and generosity in the local church, increased giving to the wider church would be one result; 5) All giving to and in the church is affirmed as mission giving; 6) It maintains a reasonable minimum expectation, with allowance for hardship situations.

### **Proposal:**

- Replace the current combination of membership-based Fellowship Dues and OCWM Basic Support with giving to United Church Mission based on a percentage of pledges and offerings received by the local church.
  - Ask Congregations to calculate what percentage of their pledges and offerings they are currently giving in combined Dues and OCWM, and to commit to maintain that percentage.
  - Invite churches to consider increasing this percentage gradually over time, as they are able.
  - Establish a minimum covenantal requirement. In order for this new system to adequately replace both Dues and Basic Support, we need to maintain the expectation that every church will contribute.
  - The same overall sharing ratio with the national church would be maintained and set annual by the Conference Annual Meeting.
- It will be important for churches to maintain their current percentage of giving.

Note: Findings from our conversations include the following observations:

1. The membership model of Fellowship Dues is outdated . It fails to reflect the health of many of our churches, and will not adequately sustain the ministries of the wider church in the future
2. Any new system must be simple, and easy to understand and accept by any lay person of any or no church background
3. It is good to encourage generous and increased giving
4. Any model must allow for great variations within local church budgeting practices
5. Adopting a new model is contingent upon a commitment by local churches to maintain current levels of support.

Because the work of the church in all settings is to manifest God's love and justice, all church giving at every level is mission giving. This is true of Christian education in the local church, search and call services provided by the Conference, and disaster response at the national level, to list just a few examples. For More, including video explanation: <http://www.macucc.org/pages/detail/2644>

**SAVE THE DATE:**  
**CCWM ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**  
**SUNDAY, JANUARY 26, IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING WORSHIP**

Watch this space for the official "Call to the Congregational Meeting."

**We expect to vote on the following matters:**

- 2014 Budget;
- 2014 Nominations;
- Proposed Bylaw addition: "Members who are connected to a meeting of the governing body via technology such as Skype or Tele-Conference and are able to listen and speak via said technology will be considered "present" at said meeting of the governing body; thereby providing those connected via technology the opportunity to participate in the meeting and vote on decisions per the practices of said meeting. Remote members who desire to be present via technology will be required to provide for themselves the equipment, network connection and a "technology-partner" who is physically present in the meeting and able to facilitate both the electronic connection and the remote member's interactions with the meeting.



**In addition, we expect to share updates and provide for Q & A in regards to:**

- The marketing and sale of the property at 400 High Street.
- The discernment of the bold decision called for from the Crossroads process.

*We hope you will plan to participate.*



**Congregational Nomination Process for 2014**

Happy New Year!

Final plans are underway for the election of committees members and officers at the January 26 Annual Meeting. Despite the possibility of organizational change that may come as a result of our Crossroads discernment process—we have wonderful ministry to do right now. We will continue to do ministry in and with our community and there is a place for folk who want to serve in ministry with elders, children, youth, and with our mission projects. There are places to serve as committee members, on projects, for events and in our discernment process. Let us know what interests you.

If you are looking for ways to get involved, if we haven't spoken yet, or haven't finalized plans, please take a moment to call or email regarding your interests. Thank you.

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