

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

*And John testified, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him.
 I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me,
 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'
 And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God." —John 1:3b—34*

Transforming the e Word

This week our congregation's leaders made what I think is another fabulous decision to engage in the Leadership Development Initiative (LDI) that has so wonderfully served the mission and ministry of our neighbors at Grace Episcopal, Medford. You can read all about that program and see a video of the Grace experience here: www.diomassleads.org. I hope you saw the email I sent everyone inviting you to participate in that program—there is a lot of info in that invitation about why I believe it is going to help us discern our call and come to our bold decision about the future.

But another reason I am SO excited is that we will have a team of leaders who have been trained in the community organizing practices of Marshall Ganz. Those practices, at their core are about a) learning to understand and tell our stories in a way that motivates others to join us and b) building robust relationships with others that enable purpose, meaning, and outcomes. The training will help us both get to our bold decision AND help us to share the exciting and really good news about the new thing that God is doing here in our faith community.

Now you may already know where I am going with this—but before I say it, I want to make sure you are sitting down, are you sitting down? Think about it, telling our stories in a way that motivates others to join and building relationships that enable purpose, meaning and outcomes.... does that sound like something we Jesus Followers would want to do? Of course it is! We've got some seriously good news to share about God's amazing grace and Jesus's love and justice for all of God's people. Yet, in the vernacular of the Christian Church we call it evangelism and we mainline church folk **really** do not like to hear that word. As long as I have been a pastor, progressive Christians have talked about reclaiming that word from Evangelicals and yet as we have progressed through Crossroads, I have heard many of you admit to being uncomfortable with the idea of sharing your faith or inviting people to join you at church (and seen a couple of you cringe at the use of the E Word.



Continued on next page

My favorite weekly blogger, David Lose wrote about this as he reflected on the gospel lesson for this week: "...most of our people not only have little experience in evangelism but are downright frightened of it. And that, of course, cripples our ability to reach out with the good news...John's story of Jesus' baptism might be the perfect reading to invite us not only to admit our dis-ease with evangelism but also begin to overcome it."

Dr. Lose observes that in John's account of Jesus' baptism we get a second-hand account from the testimony of John the Baptist. "He sees the dove descend upon Jesus and tells others what he sees. That's it. Andrew later does the same. He tells his brother what he and John's other disciples saw -- the person they believe is the Messiah -- and invites Peter to come along and see for himself...when it comes to our relationship with Jesus, our primary job is to see and share. Not threaten, not coerce, not intimidate, not woo or wheedle or plead, but simply to see and share."

And Lose suggests it may be that simple, "At its heart, evangelism is noticing what God is doing in our lives, sharing that with others, and inviting them to come and see for themselves." I love this further connection that Lose makes, "It's also what Jesus does. When Jesus notices some of John's disciples following him, he asks them what they are looking for. They, in turn, ask where he is staying. He doesn't give an answer. He doesn't question further. All he does in response is make an invitation: "Come and see." "**Notice. Share. Invite.** These are the three elements of evangelism, sharing the good news of what God has done and is still doing through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for us and all the world." Lose goes on in his blog post to acknowledge that we do not know how to do this, and encourages his constituency (Working Preachers) to develop the skills and practices that will get us comfortable with the elements.

Transforming the e word...Not strong arm or manipulate or judge someone else's faith journey but



notice, share, invite. **Notice** the presence of God in the world and in you day and if that is too hard, notice the places you wish God was present in the world. With practice, you will begin to find God all over the place! **Share** with someone in a meeting, over tea, when you arrive for worship, during prayer time that which you noticed about God's presence or action. The only way we will get more comfortable is to practice this and I will try to invite us all into more opportunities to share. **Invite** someone to come and see. Dr. Lose writes that, "...we invite people to things all the time. To join a book club or play tennis...or to come over for dinner...[etc]... We're actually quite good about inviting folks to come to things ... just not to church. ...we invite people to those things we really like and think others would, too. [so] what elements of our church life do we most value? ... Then, our task is simply to think about who might also enjoy this event or activity and invite them."

It will take time of course, but if we can be deliberate about it and consider it a spiritual practice, we will develop the skills to notice, share, and invite. Think about how huge an impact this had on the early church...John testified, Andrew testified, Jesus testified and the world was changed forever. Your one small story, your one simple share, your one invitation will change the world too!

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

IN OUR PRAYERS AND PASTORAL CARE



Concerns: June L. who is facing Chemo treatment and a challenging prognosis; Ose's friend Wolcott and his wife dealing with Alzheimer's; Bev R's friend Rosemary is pregnant and suffers from a rare disease which affects carrying to term, but she's doing well; Dick S. A meeting about Ernestine coming home and prayers for Jeff, who is discouraged right now; Charlene and Rich's neighbor, Joe who lost his daughter recently and is dealing with pneumonia. Continuing to pray for 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; our sexton Steve's daughter and grandson; Diane's mother Anne; 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; a member of our community struggling with family matters.

Joys: Thelma's trip to Florida, Stephanie's delight in volunteering for Christmas in the City, serving over 4,000 homeless children and families; Jenny B being with friends and having a giggling baby on Christmas in their house; Paul R's work with a loon trapped in the ice and for all the volunteers and Tufts' Animal rescue league who worked to free and care for the bird; Bev R. celebrates having Tim home; all families who celebrate having family with them during the holiday season; having Albert with us in worship; Emma K. early acceptance to Harvard University next fall! Continue to celebrate Kerry H. call back to work for 90 days; and the finalized adoption with Mackenzie Rose Siobhan!

We continue to 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 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 (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 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.



Cleaning out the Closets!! Volunteers are needed for cleaning out the church closets: As we place the church building on the market and consider our future, Kathy Williams is leading this effort to "clean out our closets." You would be amazed at how much stuff has accumulated and is stuck in corners. We will donate, trash, recycle as is called for. **Cleaning will take place weekly from 9:30-10 am before church and 11 am-noon after church until completed. Volunteers are particularly needed to drive boxes of unneeded items to charity donation sites.**

If you would like to join Kathy on this mission, please contact her at kathypricewilliams@yahoo.com.

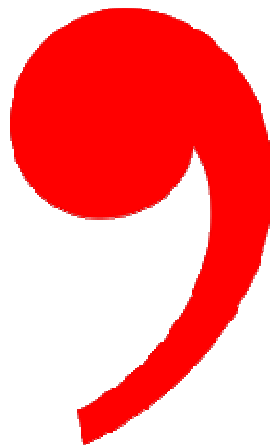


Bravo! Our 2014 Stewardship Campaign was met with generosity and a strong commitment despite the uncertainty of our future.

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 or call him at 781-281-1000.



FROM OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

Hallmark Health VNA and Hospice: Chronic Pain Self-Management Program presented by Hallmark Health System and Mystic Valley Elder Services are sponsoring a Free Program on Chronic Pain Self-Management for six sessions on Wednesdays, beginning January 22, through February 26, from 9:30 am - noon at Saltonstall Building at 121 Riverside Ave in Medford (Edgerly Hall). The Program is a "must attend" for those who want to learn how to manage their chronic pain, leading to a more satisfying and fulfilling life. Open to adults of all ages who have a primary diagnosis of pain or care for someone who does. This program is free, however registration is required as space is limited. To register or for more information, call (781) 338-7823.

MISSION AND OUTREACH

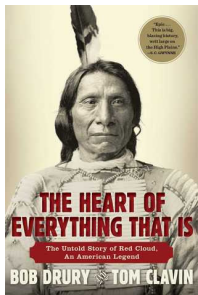
CCWM Ministry with Pine Ridge Reservation 23rd Annual Bedford VA Hospital Mid-Winter Powwow

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 18th. Please let Kathy Williams or Joy Harris know if you are available and willing to volunteer for at this fun event. Thanks!



Sunday, March 09, 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. (NOTE: Date change from March 2 to March 9 as of 1/15/13)

Heifer Farm Rutland: Pancakes at the Farm—Saturday, March 8

9:00 am to 1:00 pm

Tour the farm, visit the sugar shack, spend time with the animals and enjoy a hearty pancake breakfast with Heifer Farm maple syrup and sausages. Advanced reservations are required so please let Susan D’Arcy Fuller know if you’d like to attend by Feb 15th. We will arrange carpooling once we know how many are going. Adults \$12.00, Children (3-10) \$6.00, free for Children under 3

Note this replaces the Heifer trip postponed due to weather.



CALL TO THE CCWM ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING SUNDAY, JANUARY 26 10:00 AM IN WORSHIP

Pursuant to the provisions of Article VII, Section 2 of the By-Laws of the Church, the Annual Meeting is hereby called to be held Sunday, January 26, 2014.

The meeting will be held beginning at 10:00 am, as an act of worship, in the Sanctuary for the following purpose:



1. To share and update everyone on the discernment process and answer any questions about it, and the year going forward.
2. To receive reports from the officers, staff, committees, and organization of the church
3. To adopt and vote on an annual budget
4. To elect officers and committee members
5. To vote on an amendment to our by-laws to permit remote electronic participation and voting in congregational meetings.

The contents of this warrant shall constitute the legal business of this meeting.

Posted January 15, 2013



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.

Karen McCune Barca, karenmccunebarca@gmail.com, (857) 888-2984
Rev. Wendy Miller Olapade, revwdmiller@comcast.net, 617-592-5853

THIS WEEK AT YOUR CHURCH

January 19-25, 2014

January 19 2014 Second Sunday after the Epiphany

Cleaning Out The Closets—9:30 am-10:00 am; 11:00 am--12:00 pm
Sunday Worship Service (Sanctuary) 10:00 am
Goodland Church Worship (in Korean) (Sanctuary) 12:30 pm
Faith Formation/Confirmation (LR/DR) 4:00 pm

Monday

(3) Boot Camp Sessions: 5:45 am--6:15 am;
8:15 am--9:00 am; 5:30 pm--6:15 pm (FH)
MLK, Jr. Day of Service?—9:00 am
Yoga— 6:30 pm (FH)

Tuesday

Girl Scouts w Brenda & Jen Briggs (green room)
Spiritual Life— 7:00 pm (LR)
Gamblers Anonymous 7:30 pm (BC)
Gam-Anon—7:30 pm (YR)

Wednesday

3) Boot Camp Sessions: 5:45 am--6:15 am;
8:15 am--9:00 am; 5:30 pm--6:15 pm (FH)
(Alcoholics Anonymous— 8:00 pm (YR))

Thursday

Youth Champions-5 pm (FH)
Food Addicts—6:00 pm (YR)

Friday

(3) Boot Camp Sessions: 5:45 am--6:15 am;
8:15 am-- 9:00 am (FH)
Strategic Planning—9:30 am (LR)
Girl Scouts E. O'Rourke—7:00 pm (BC)

Saturday

Alanon - 9:00 am (YR)
Yoga—9:00 am (FH)
Boot Camp—12:15 pm (FH)

January 26 2014 Third Sunday after the Epiphany

Cleaning Out The Closets—9:30 am-10:00 am; 11:00 am--12:00 pm
Sunday Worship Service (Sanctuary) 10:00 am
Goodland Church Worship (in Korean) (Sanctuary) 12:30 pm
Faith Formation/Confirmation (LR/DR) 4:00 pm

Weekdays

(M—F) **Bright Stars Afterschool Enrichment Program**, www.BrightStarsKids.org

((M—F) **Gentle Dragon Co-op Preschool**, www.GentleDragonPreschool.org

(M—F) **English at Large** (ESOL/ESL Programs), www.englishatlarge.org

Room Legend: (FH) Fellowship Hall; (BC) Barnes Chapel; (YR) Youth Room; (LR) Living Room

The Congregational Church of West Medford, United Church of Christ

Ministers: All of us!

Organist and Choir Director: Dr. Herman Weiss

Moderator: Paul Roberts

Treasurer: Beverly Roche

Pastor and Teacher: Reverend Wendy Miller Olapade

Church Administrator: Diane Petrelis

Deacon of the Month: Brenda Briggs

Clerk: TBD

400 High St. Medford, MA 02155, www.medfordchurch.org

office@medfordchurch.org, 781-395-3360