

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

"It is in the ordinary places in our lives that the Holy shows up, if we pay attention."



The Holy in the Ordinary

by Amanda Osenga, reprinted with permission SoS, 2014

Dorothy Day sought to embody living the beatitudes as she devoted her life to the poor, the voiceless, and to the peace of Christ. In her work she came to believe that the more common something became, the more holy it was. To travel to the Holy Land and visit the traditional site of the Sermon on the Mount becomes a visit to a most ordinary place that has become marked as a sacred space. Thousands travel to the hillside every year to stand on the ground where it is believed that Jesus spoke the words that revealed the way of living into the reign of God.

Not unlike the Israelites who built altars in places where God's presence was made real so that they would remember God's faithfulness, today a garden has been planted and a church that overlooks the Sea of Galilee has been erected on this site. It has become a beautiful landscape and place to be enjoyed by pilgrims and tourist alike. And many do, as they come in by the busload and wander the grounds. It's not uncommon to find groups of people worshipping and celebrating Communion together.

Rabbi L. Hoffman has suggested there are four ways to approach holy sites:

Anticipate – Take time the day before to anticipate what you will see the next day.

Approach – Remember to approach the site with a "muster of expectation" that you are going to have a powerful experience.

Acknowledge – When you arrive at the site, acknowledge the sacred, that you are on holy ground, and take that spiritual moment seriously.

Appreciate – Appreciate the moment, record and reflect upon your thoughts and feelings.

The Mount of Beatitudes has become, for many, a sacred place. However, to imagine this place as it once might have been as Jesus and his followers had gathered together, is to imagine a rather unremarkable landscape. It's the Kin-dom message that Jesus shared and the radical transformation that takes place in following these words that has marked the Mount of Beatitudes as a worthy place to visit. It's an ordinary place that has been marked as holy.

Continued on next page

It's in the ordinary places of our lives where the holy often shows up if we pay attention. A trip to the Holy Land to experience these sacred moments is not needed. Each morning we can anticipate, approach with the expectation that something powerful might happen, whether it be at the bus stop, at our desk, in our cubicle, feeding the baby, at the gas pump, waiting in line, or around the table. God is present in the simple act of sharing bread and the wine. We can acknowledge that each place we step on is holy ground. We can end our day in appreciation of the holy moments, just reviewing and reflecting, and giving thanks. God is perhaps most present in the ordinary common places of our lives – it is, after all, where most of life is lived.



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

IN OUR PRAYERS AND PASTORAL CARE



Concerns: We pray with Connie W., her brother Skip and their family at the death of Joyce Barnard Conlon a former member of our congregation; Diane P who struggled with loss this past week; Shirley G. who had surgery and June L. who underwent cancer treatment this week; Ose's friend Wolfhart with Alzheimer's and cancer passed away this week—for his wife Alma and all who loved him; for Bruce and Joy who are in Florida supporting aging parents and other family.

Joys: Gratitude to Ose, Stephanie, Rich, and Karen who attended the Leadership Development Institute with Wendy this past weekend; Jenny B celebrates her stint as a substitute for a Physical Education teacher who is returning to work fully recovered; Ose is grateful to be here and feels blessed; Prayers of gratitude for Paul R., Bev R., Tom R., Kim G. and all the Committee Chairs for getting the Annual Report ready in time; special gratitude for Diane's work on the reports;

We continue our prayers for Kim G.'s family at the death of her sister-in-law's grandmother; Jeff S. getting some help; those affected by the bombing in Afghanistan killing 3 US people and all those who are suffering in the midst of violence; For students returning to college and all those affected by the extreme cold in North America; for Bruce R.'s brother Bill in early recovery; Charlene C's brother Lou in the final stages of Alzheimer's; our sexton Steve's daughter and grandson; Dick's friend, Ed, and his caregiver; for Ernestine S.'s continued recovery at home; 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; for all those struggling with cancer, addiction and Alzheimer's; for the environment; for President Obama and Congress regarding our present times of strife—may God's intentions prevail as they make decisions; 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: The Deacon for February 2 is Brenda Briggs, who can be reached at (bgbriggs51@gmail.com). The Deacon of the Month for February is Robin Baker who can be reached at (robinb12@verizon.net). 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. Rev. Wendy can be reached: revwdmiller@comcast.net.

Joint Ministry Teams: Thank you for your support of a new way of planning and collaborating about our ministries. Beginning this month, Spiritual Life, Christian Education and Outreach Ministry Teams (Committees) will meet together as a joint ministry team to **focus on faith formation**, plan and imagine our ministries for now and in the future. We are excited about the creativity and possibilities that this new model might engender. ***ALL are welcome to attend the joint ministry team gathering and we extend an invitation to any and all comers who want to share an idea about our ministry, ask a question about faith formation, see what it is all about or just join the party!*** The schedule is as follows:

- The Joint Ministry team will meet on the second Tuesday of the month, 7:00 PM – beginning February 11.
- Church Council will continue to meet on the fourth Tuesday of the month, 7:00 PM.
- Spiritual Life will also meet on the first Sunday of the month, 11:30 AM; for 30 minutes to address any confidential pastoral care matters – beginning March 2.

We welcome your items and questions. Contact members of the ministry teams/Rev. Wendy.



Empty your Pockets in the Pennies from Heaven Jar: The "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.



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 February the Christian Education 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 (robinb12@verizon.net). 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 Our 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.



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.

Happy February Birthdays

- 1 James Grubb, Jr.
- 17 Karen Morey
- 17 Paul Roberts
- 21 Tom Roche
- 23 Matthew David Kromm
- 28 Johnny Maloney



CROSSROADS PHASE II

- **Weekly: Prayer for our Process:** Beginning today, Feb 2, each Sunday from 9:15 — 9:30 am, Rev. Wendy will lead a time of prayer in Bean Chapel for our discernment process.
- **Weekly: Wednesday Worship and Study: Being Jesus Followers:** beginning Feb 5, 7:00 pm — 8:00 pm, Rev. Wendy will lead a weekly worship, study and dialogue designed to consider what Jesus asked of us when he said, “Follow me,” and what that suggests to us about what God is calling us into for the future.

**This Week, Feb 5 we will study the Matthew text
from last Sunday when Jesus said,
“Follow me and I will make you fish for people.”**

- **Weekly: Worship Experimentation:** We will deliberately experiment in worship—with new music, with experiential practices, with more visual and embodied engagement. Some of this has begun to happen already but we are excited to try other new things. As the journey unfolds, we will try new models for worship—perhaps a Taize service, or worship in another space, or a dinner worship. Watch for more specifics.
- **Weekly: Exploration:** Every Sunday we will bring you 15 minutes of exploration via video, web sites, and other means—offering you a chance to see vital and viable ministries and unique models for worship and community. This time is designed to spark ideas and creativity in us—and will happen each Sunday after worship during fellowship hour. We intend to expose ourselves to lots of new ideas in the interest of getting our own creative juices flowing.

**This Sunday, Feb 2 we will watch a video of
St. Lydia’s Dinner Church in Brooklyn, New York.
<http://www.stlydias.org/>**

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**We are working on additions to our web site**

**[www.medfordchurch.org](http://www.medfordchurch.org)**

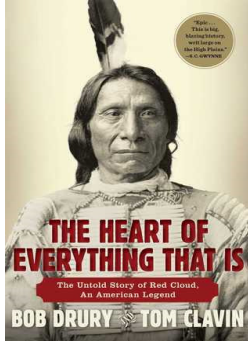
(including a new Crossroad’s blog)

which will allow you:

- A list and access to the vital and viable ministries that are doing a new thing;
  - A place to add your own responses to the things we are trying
    - A place for your ideas about what else we might try
  - A place for the “Explorers” to describe what they have found
    - And other things that unfold...

**We really want to encourage you to like us on facebook too—there is a lot that gets posted on our facebook page that will help us to understand the changing landscape of our ministry and the influence those changes need to have on our choices.**

## MISSION AND OUTREACH



**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 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**

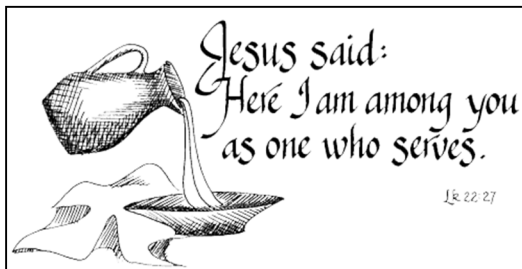
Tour the farm, visit the sugar shack, spend time with the animals and enjoy a hearty pancake breakfast with Heifer Farm maple syrup and sausages. Advanced reservations are required so please let Susan D’Arcy Fuller know if you’d like to attend by Feb 15th. We will arrange carpooling once we know how 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.*



### **Looking for a few folk to imagine what is next for our ‘Outreach’ Ministry:**

The mission efforts and action oriented ministries imagined and organized by our Outreach Committee have been foundational to the faith turnaround and re-energizing of spirit that our congregation has seen over the last couple of years. Think Pine Ridge Reservation and our passion for economic and racial justice; Sandwich making for Outdoor Church and City Mission Society Urban Outreach Mission Projects and our growing concern for the homeless, the chance to express our generosity through gift giving to the Angel Tree, holiday collections for the Indigo Girls of Medford and Heifer Project International.



We are in need of a couple of souls who feel called to consider how we will continue to live out our call to walk humbly, care for the least of these and work for justice. If you are interested in these concerns, think about joining the newly formed “Joint Ministry Team” (see article on page 3) to represent our Outreach Ministry. Contact Rev. Wendy or Karen McCune Barca.



## FROM OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS



**Power Kids Summer Camp Program** strengthens character and community. It's different from other summer programs; our lead counselors are experienced classroom teachers who teach positive social skills while the kids have summertime fun. *Power Kids* helps children to mature socially, emotionally, intellectually, morally, and physically to realize their dreams and unlock their true potential. Unlock your child's potential by enrolling them

today and give your **Kids** the **POWER** to succeed. <http://www.medfordpowerkids.com/>

The Paul and Patricia Coates Memorial Scholarship was established in honor and memory of *Power Kids* Owner, Michael Coates' parents. The scholarship is funded by *Power Kids* Summer Enrichment Program. It covers full tuition for six weeks of a *Power Kids* summer experience (valued at \$1,525). Eligibility Requirements: Enrolled in grades K through 5; Resi-

**The Paul and Patricia Coates  
Memorial Scholarship**  
Scholarship will be awarded on April 1, 2014.

dent of Medford, MA; Letter of referral from a non-family member.

### UCC's Silver Lake, CT Summer Camp Registration Now Open



**SPEND A WEEK AT CAMP IN GOD'S BACKYARD**

**SILVER LAKE**  
Conference Center  
Co-Directors Anne and Tim Hughes  
223 Low Road, Sharon, CT 06069  
860-364-5526 • [hughes@ctucc.org](mailto:hughes@ctucc.org)  
[WWW.SILVERLAKECT.ORG](http://WWW.SILVERLAKECT.ORG)  
Silver Lake is the Outdoor Ministry  
program of the Connecticut Conference  
of the United Church of Christ.



**GET REAL: FINDING YOUR TRUE SELF IN JESUS**

Nominated Children must: Have a letter of referral submitted by a non-family member explaining why they are deserving of a Power Kids Summer Enrichment experience. The letter should include the nominated child's name, age, school, parent's email address and phone #. As well as, the name and contact information of the adult who referred the child. Complete and submit the above information, post-marked no later than the deadline of MARCH 28 to: Power Kids, Paul and Patricia Coates Memorial Scholarship, 59 Dunster Lane, Winchester, MA 01890, Direct Dial: 781-756-4874,

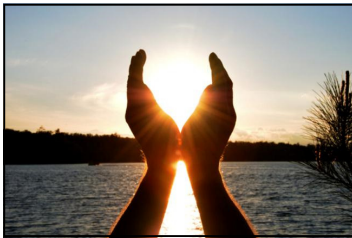
Power Kids is a great program, and Jessica Coughlin will be one of the counselors this summer. Kids love it, and the scholarship is a great opportunity for someone to attend for free. This summer we will be offering six weeks at our new location, St. Clement High School. The high school has a newer gym and hall, but best of all, it's only a few blocks away from the pool.

## NEWS AND EVENTS FROM THE UCC

**Sourcing the Soul for Lent:** Tuesday, February 11, 2014, 9:00 am--3:30 pm. *"Your worship must engage your spirit in the pursuit of truth. Those who worship him must do it out of their very being, their spirits, their true selves, in adoration."* --John 4:23 – 24 (*The Message*). A day for those who seek to nourish their souls in preparation for the Lenten journey. Come engage with scripture through worship and a variety of spiritual practices that invite ways of opening to God's Presence with/within us. The Practices of the day, together with the reflections from the gathered community, will create a model for creating Lenten Worship or your own personal devotion. For Clergy, and all pastoral care-givers, worship leaders and those thirsty for God. With Rev. Dr. Dirkje F. Legerstee & Rev. Susie N. Allen.

Registration: <http://www.macucc.org/events/detail/1497>

**Filling Your Cup: Opening Your Heart.** An Adult Christian Spiritual Formation Retreat with Matt Carriker & Elaine Gaetani, Friday, Feb. 21, 2014 (5:00pm) to Saturday, Feb. 22, 2014 (4:30 PM).



Designed to:

- Ground you spiritually
- Replenish your energy, joy, and purpose
- Give you practices to keep your cup overflowing
- Help you live your life as a spiritual practice
- Discover your spiritual tools for the ups and downs of life

Registration: <http://www.macucc.org/events/detail/1404>.

### Save the Date!

**215th Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference** is being held June 13 - 14, 2014, at the Sturbridge Host Hotel & Conference Center. The theme of this year's meeting, inspired by John 14:12; is "Greater Works than These." The Keynote Speaker will be **Yvette Flunder**, Founder and Senior Pastor of **City of Refuge United Church of**



**Christ** in San Francisco. Flunder founded the City of Refuge UCC in 1991 in order to unite a gospel ministry with a social ministry. City of Refuge is a thriving inner-city congregation that celebrates the radically inclusive love of Jesus Christ. Preaching a message of action, the church has experienced steady numerical and spiritual growth. In June 2003, Bishop Flunder was consecrated Presiding Bishop of **The Fellowship**, a multi-denominational fellowship of 110 primarily African American Christian leaders and laity representing 56 churches and faith-based organizations from all parts of the United States Mexico and Africa.

