

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

*While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!" When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid."*  
 —Matthew 17:5—7

### ***"Be Not Afraid—Beloved"***

This Sunday is "Transfiguration Sunday"—one of those special moments in the liturgical year that we celebrate—but that I imagine leaves at least a few of you quizzically cocking your heads. Yeah, the story (which is offered up in all three synoptic gospels) is pretty compelling. Jesus and his best buds trudge all the way up a mountain to get away from it all; his face and clothes dazzle as bright as the sun; a couple of really famous dead prophets from his religious heritage join the fun; and then God breaks through the clouds and identifies Jesus as his own son, telling 'the boys' to "listen to him." The BFs fall out in fear, get back up when Jesus touches them and tells them not to worry, then the prophets are gone and they all head back down the mountain with Jesus telling them to keep it a secret! It is all quite dramatic but what is it all about?



The Transfiguration is considered one of Jesus' miracles but it is different, in that it happens to Jesus. It is also considered a hinge moment, a pivotal point in Jesus' ministry — for from this moment forward, he sets his face toward Jerusalem and the Passion which is to come. The setting is important, for on that mountaintop human nature meets God with Jesus as the connection, the bridge between heaven and earth. And, in this moment, like at his Baptism, God-self identifies Jesus as God's Son and God's messenger and mouthpiece. Jesus is assigned honor and glory and is placed above those who have gone before him—even the likes of Elijah and Moses, who now live again, in the presence of Jesus.

It is a very special moment indeed—and the drama and many characters and facets of the story could feed many a sermon. Theologians point to miracles, resurrection, identity, divinity, and other 'hard-to-understand-why-it-matters-to-me' theological themes from orthodoxy.

But in simple terms this is what I hear this week—God points to Jesus and says, "This breathtakingly bright, dazzling, gifted person is my beloved son and that makes him your brother. He is my unique,

*Continued on next page*

one-of-a-kind messenger who I want you to know and listen to and understand. Go with him, be with him, follow him down the mountain, all the way to Jerusalem and let him love you and then you will love me.” And that scares the living daylights out of us. And in response to our fear Jesus says, “It’s okay... do not be afraid.” This is what he will say again and again, even at the end of his life. “Do not be afraid. I am your access, your hinge point, the Way forward. I will open your heart to God and I will be with you—always—to make sure you can have that relationship—always.” He is saying it still. You are my beloved, do not be afraid. May you know this today as I know this today in the deepest places in my soul.

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

## IN OUR PRAYERS AND PASTORAL CARE



Concerns: We offer prayers of healing for Charlene and Rich C. as Charlene’s brother Lou enters hospice care with Alzheimer’s; Ose M, who was not feeling well last week; Susan C. and Sheridan, who broke her leg for healing and courage; Joy H. having rotator cuff surgery next week; Kathy W’s sister Annette, who had surgery last week; our congregation, to relieve our weariness and get us energized by new possibilities.

We continued our prayers for June L and her treatment; with Diane P, whose daughter-in-law passed away last week; for all suffering from addiction; Muriel now in assisted living, as well as her son-in-law and daughter who have been ill; all who are caring for elderly parents; Dick S.’ friend Ed is now battling cancer in addition to Lou Gehrig’s disease; for growth and learning from the stories of Black History.

Joys: We celebrate new forms of ministry as we try a web based Wed. worship and study group; we thank God for the visiting ministries of our deacons with June, Tom, Thelma and others; for the leadership of our ministries; the positive response of so many from our press release about our moving out to do the work of Jesus. We continue to celebrate June L’s good spirits; Susan D.’s sister-in-law Rachel and brother Ed getting ready for their first baby to arrive (we pray for healthy delivery).

We also continue our prayers with family caring for elders and those who are ill; those affected by weather extremes; for Bruce R.’s brother Bill in early recovery; ; our sexton Steve’s daughter and grandson; our church’s ongoing process of discernment and for the leaders who are guiding our conversations and discovery.

We pray for all the UCC 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; for our beloved elders at home: Eva W., June L. Thelma T. We remember fallen soldiers, 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 requests to [office@medfordchurch.org](mailto:office@medfordchurch.org) by noon Wed.**



### Thank You Notes:

**Connie Wescott** thanks you all for your thoughts and prayers upon the death of her sister-in-law Joyce Conlan who grew up in our church.

**June Livingston** thanks you all for your kind thoughts, prayers, and cards, and a special thanks to Robin Baker, Brenda Briggs, Julie Roberts, Bev Cohen and Bev Roche for the warm visits and making me feel better.

**Diane Petrelis** thanks you all for the prayers through out this trying year. I can't tell you how appreciative I am. All the power in those prayers seemed to have worked. Many thanks from the bottom of my heart and those recent prayers for the loss of my daughter-in-law Lisa Hill.

**Pastoral Care Concerns:** The Deacon of the Month for March is Ose Manheim who can be reached at (photos@comcast.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.

### Happy March Birthdays

10 Olivia Celeste  
13 Clarisse Coughlin  
15 Charlotte Wilensky  
27 Eva Wagner



**Empty your Pockets in the Pennies from Heaven Jar:** In the Narthex. Just one way to help support the church with your coins and paper money.

**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.

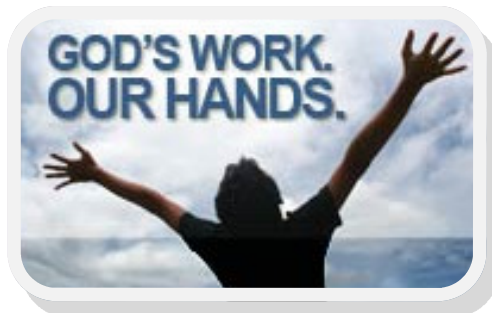
**Altar Flowers Always Welcomed:** Please contact Brenda Briggs bgbriggs51@gmail.com (or the church office@medfordchurch.org) to make arrangements to schedule a Sunday to bring flowers or order them in honor or memory of a loved one.

**Cleaning Our Closets!!** Volunteers are still needed for cleaning out the church closets: Kathy Williams is leading this effort to "clean out our closets." 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.



## OUR CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

**What is next for our 'Outreach' Ministry?** The action oriented ministries imagined & organized by our Outreach Committee have been foundational to the 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" to represent our Outreach Ministry. Contact Elizabeth Bennett or Rev. Wendy.



### Artist Reception March 8, 2—5:00 pm

#### Photography by Ose Manheim

Bestseller's Cafe  
24 High Street, Medford, MA 02155  
Refreshments served

Exhibit is at Bestseller's from  
February 19 to March 31, 2014

For details about the exhibit, visit <http://manheimphotography.smugmug.com> or

**GS**  
**Cookies**  
**\$ 4.00**  
**per box**

### Are You Ready?



**For Sale Today During Fellowship Hour!**

## CROSSROADS PHASE II

**Did you see the Mini-Explorations we have offered?  
There has been great interest and good conversation afterward!**

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Here are the three we have watched to date:

- 1) St. Lydia's Dinner Church in Brooklyn, New York. <http://www.stlydias.org/>
- 2) LuthersTable.org: [and the video here of Luther's Table in Renton, WA](#)
- 3) The Crossing, an Emerging Church in Boston: [www.thecrossingboston.org](http://www.thecrossingboston.org)

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### **Sunday Weekly: Prayer for our Process**

Each Sunday from 9:15 - 9:30 am,  
Rev. Wendy will lead a time of prayer in Bean Chapel for our discernment process.

### **Wednesday Weekly**

**2nd Wednesday Worship and Study from 7:00-7:30 PM and  
Joint Ministry Team Meeting from 7:30 to 9:00 pm.**

All are welcome.

### **1st, 3rd, 4th Worship and Study: Being Jesus Followers.**

7:00 pm-8:00 pm, Rev. Wendy will lead an online/web and or conference call worship and study using Fuze Meeting. 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, Wednesday, March 5 is Ash Wednesday and we will worship in the sanctuary!***

### **Experimentation and Exploration**

As a rule, we will experiment in worship with music and other worship practices. As time progresses, we will go out from our own sanctuary experimenting with new spaces and new forms of worship. Each week—we will have 15 minutes of exploration during fellowship time—offering up examples of vital and viable ministries with unique models for worship and community.

This time is designed to spark ideas and creativity in us.

### ***This week's exploration after worship***

***Sunday, March 2***

**Darkwood Brew: Ancient. Mystical. Christian. Television. [www.darkwoodbrew.org](http://www.darkwoodbrew.org)**

**Next week, Sunday, March 9 - We will worship in Bean Chapel and  
share stories about Lent and our faith journeys.**

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**For the Press Release issued this week about the marketing of our property see this post on our  
web site: <http://medfordchurch.org/west-medford-ucc-poised-to-leave-the-building/>**

*See next page for more*

### **Crossroads Update issued this week (email from 02.25.14)**

Dear Members and Friends,

On behalf of our Church Council appointed Strategic Planning Team (SPT), I am writing to update you on the marketing of our property and the status of the Crossroads Phase II discernment process.

As per our congregational decision of November 24, 2013 and with the support and guidance of Max and Rich Beal who are donating their time to consult with us, we have signed an agreement with Cushman & Wakefield to proceed with marketing the property. That effort has begun and several potential buyers have already toured the property. With the issuance of this press release, the broker will construct a 'For Sale' sign at the corner of Allston and High Streets.

This is the Press Release that has been distributed today:

*The Congregational Church of West Medford, an Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ, is pleased to inform our friends and neighbors that we have begun to market our landmark property at 400 High Street in order to pursue an exciting future as a transformative, progressive and prophetic faith community. This decision has been made prayerfully, after years of self-examination about our place as a church in the context of modernity, and in dialogue with the Holy Spirit and the wisdom and experience of others who have gone this way.*

*God is calling us to something new. With our 140 year history and United Church of Christ (UCC.org) tradition in hand, we have been called to follow Jesus out of our institution and into the Medford community to meet the spiritual and practical needs of our neighbors. The sale of the property and the inspired leadership of our staff and lay leaders will allow us to emerge--with a focus on prophetic mission, extravagant love for God and neighbor, and meeting people where they are with re-imagined worship and deep faith formation.*

*With the support of Cushman & Wakefield Real Estate we seek to sell the property balancing the financial needs of our future ministry, our responsibility to steward the gifts left to us by our forebears, the interests of our neighbors and community, and our Christian values. We expect the marketing process to engender proposals from creative thinkers and developers. Preliminary market research suggests that the sanctuary edifice will likely remain, possibly occupied by another faith community. Additional options that are being explored include housing that would serve the community and/or other non-profit use. We intend to keep the community informed as the process unfolds and we welcome your questions and contact.*

As a member of our faith community, you may be asked questions about the process and our plans. We hope you will familiarize yourself with the content of this press release, especially the middle paragraph, so that you might comfortably respond to the questions asked.

Of course, that is a lot of words -- 296 to be exact. If I were to craft a very short version of this news it would be this:

***"God is calling us to follow Jesus out of our building and into the community to love and serve through mission and faith formation."***

As you can see from the press release, our sense of mission and call has certainly begun to take shape. We have taken our cues about that call forward from the first phase of Crossroads. Your leaders are in the final stages of planning a process to complete Crossroads Phase II over the next three months. We will publish details within the next week for further congregational dialogue and discernment that will bring us to the bold decision we seek regarding the future of the faith community. Over the next few months, you will be invited to take several steps to live into the future as it unfolds:



- Hear, affirm (or adjust) a description of the shared values and mission statement that will a) define our call and our 'being' and b) guide our doing and having.
- Gather to have some fun and build relationships with each other that will carry us through the transition
- Leave the sanctuary at 400 High Street to experience 'worship' elsewhere
- Hear and respond to the bold decision recommendation of the leadership team on Palm Sunday, April 13
- Gather to vote on the bold decision on June 1

Again, watch for another email next week with a specific schedule of these plans.

We also hope that you will continue to pray for the process and the leaders who are guiding us through it (Sunday morning 9:15-9:30 am), join in the Wednesday Worship and Study of what it means to follow Jesus, participate as much as you are able in the continued conversation about our future, and ask for help (pastoral or otherwise) as you feel the need. May God continue to bless our process and our community.

Rev. Wendy Miller Olapade

## FROM OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

### 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**

### Power Kids The Paul and Patricia Coates Memorial Scholarship

Scholarship will be awarded on April 1, 2014.

**Power Kids Summer Camp Program** strengthens character and community. *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/> A 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; Resident of Medford, MA; Letter of referral from a non-family member. Complete and submit the above information, postmarked 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**  
unlocking potential



## MISSION AND OUTREACH

### **Heifer Farm Rutland: Pancakes at the Farm—Next 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 check with Susan D'Arcy Fuller to see if openings still available. Carpool is arranged.

### **Next 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.

**Save the Date: Sunday, March 30: Outdoor Church Sandwich Making:** Join the outreach effort for our standing 5th Sunday ministry with the Outdoor Church in Cambridge. Sandwich Making before worship at 9:00 am in the kitchen. Can you take a drive to Cambridge to deliver the sandwiches? Contact Elizabeth Bennett. Watch for more information.



arlington  
international  
film  
festival

'Where Arlington and the World Converge'

Presents...

### **KIND HEARTED WOMAN**

*by acclaimed filmmaker David Sutherland*  
who will be present for a discussion following the screening

**Sunday, April 6, 2014, 4:00 P.M.**

The Congregational Church of West Medford  
United Church of Christ, 400 High Street, Medford

An unforgettable portrait of Robin Charboneau, a 32-year old divorced single mother and Oglala Sioux woman living on North Dakota's Spirit Lake Reservation. Sutherland follows Robin over three years as she struggles to raise her two children, further her education, heal herself from the wounds of sexual abuse she suffered as a child and fulfill her goal of returning to her reservation to help prevent the abuse of women and children. This personal story allows us entree into the process of the tribal court and sexual abuse on the reservation. "As in my other films profiling rural poverty," says Sutherland, "I was trying to reach out to another forgotten corner of the American landscape, this time to put a face on a Native family so that we could see them close-up with all the detail that illuminates the rich reality of their lives." <http://itvs.org/films/kind-hearted-woman>

Tickets sold at the door \$10.00

Dinner will be available for a nominal fee—to support the church's ministry with Pine Ridge Reservation

*A partnership with Medford Arts Center & CCWM, UCC*