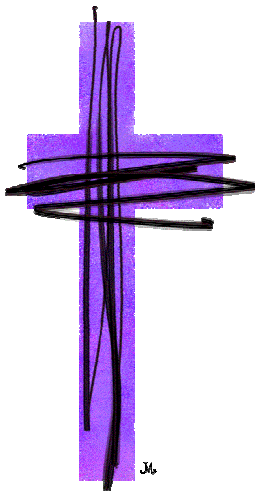


A weekly collection of news, reflections and announcements from the
Congregational Church of West Medford
an Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ



PASTORAL REFLECTION



"To make the Easter story into something that neither startles, shocks, terrifies, nor excites is to crucify the Son of God afresh."—Dorothy Sayers

The Appalling Strangeness of Divine Mercy (*Why I Love Lent*)

It's an odd sort of thing to say, "I love Lent," but then I suppose I am considered by some to be an odd sort of soul. Anyone who feels called to spend their whole being in The Church and preach and teach the story of Jesus' life and death and resurrection and call it "good news" has to be a little bit odd. Nonetheless I learned years ago, mostly because it was reflected back at me by a beloved friend and deacon that my writing and preaching was at its most meaningful during Lent, that it is my best spiritual season. Why, I am not sure. It is not because of the whole giving-something-up-for-Lent thing – that is not a practice that I follow very effectively. I am less concerned with giving up chocolate than I am in giving up my own excesses of emotion, self-centeredness, anger, or fear (or a thousand other character flaws with which I am gifted).

But it does have something to do with the deliberate nature of the journey and the idea the Jesus 'sets his face' to Jerusalem because he is called to go in that direction and that somehow, 2000 years later, I get to walk beside him and deepen my relationship with him along the way. It is about moving slowly towards something profound that is not wrapped up in presents or glitter (although I have been known to glitter-up on Easter Sunday) or over-the-top expectations about family and food. Lent seems so much simpler and it lasts long enough for me to notice. Without the expectations there is room for me to be startled by Grace, which allows me to be shocked by my shortcomings, terrified by my sin, and excited by Love.

Of course I know the end of the story, I know that Love wins. But before that happens there is the appalling drama of Holy Week – the heady excitement of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, the traitorous cunning of Judas, the guilty recognition of the disciples' own cowardice, the terror of Jesus' slow suffocation and then, the disarming wonder of an empty grave. His followers experienced this, cowardice or not. But how many of us go beyond acknowledging the drama? How many of us embrace the pain and promise of the story? How many of us get right down into the dirty, damning passion and give Christ's experience more attention than the weather?

It has been said that to observe Lent is to strike at the root of this complacency. Lent (literally "springtime") is a time of preparation, a time to return to the desert where Jesus spent forty days

Continued on next page

readying for his ministry. Jesus allowed himself to be tested and we may want to do the same if we take seriously the call to be Jesus followers.

Centuries old Lenten practices call for penitence, fasting, almsgiving and prayer, striking a balance between 'giving things up' and 'giving to those in need'. Yet, whatever else it may be, Lent is not a time to be morose, requiring us to begrudgingly sacrifice a handful of already guilty pleasures. Instead, it should be considered an opportunity, "...the church's springtime, a time when out of the darkness of winter, a repentant, empowered people emerges. Lent is the season in which we ought to be surprised by joy. Our self-sacrifices serve no purpose unless, by laying aside this or that desire, we are able to focus on our heart's deepest longing: unity with Christ. In him—in his suffering and death, his resurrection and triumph—we find our truest joy." (*Editors introduction, Bread and Wine: Readings for Lent and Easter*)

I think this is why it matters so much to me, why I find it to be a time that touches me so deeply. If I pay close attention to the lection and themes of the liturgical season, I have eyes to see and ears to hear the lessons Jesus was teaching on his way to Jerusalem. Framed by the story that I know so well, in touch with the pain of the part I play in the hammering of the nails and bolstered by the knowledge that Grace abounds—I can surrender to (as Graham Greene puts it) the appalling strangeness of divine mercy, and the Love from which it springs. Did I mention that I love Lent? I pray that you might surrender to it as well.

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

IN OUR PRAYERS AND PASTORAL CARE



Concerns: Prayers for Patty H. who underwent day surgery last week; Charlene C. who feels the distance from her brother Lou who now receives hospice care; Jeff for his anxieties undergoing changes, that he gets support through this time from his staff; Sheridan, who is recovering from surgery and Susan caring for her; the people in Ukraine to find a peaceful solution; Susan D.'s friend's baby who is overdue; continued prayers for June L; Joy H. for successful shoulder surgery; Kathy W. prays for prisoners, for their forgiveness by God and their recovery process.

We continue our prayers for healing for Charlene and Rich C. as they face the loss of Lou; Kathy W's sister Annette, who had surgery last week; our congregation, as we experiment with new possibilities; for all suffering from addiction; all who are caring for elderly parents; Dick S.' friend Ed is now battling cancer in addition to Lou Gehrig's disease.

Joys: Jenny celebrates the pending Gold Award for her Girl Scout; we celebrate the exploration of our team to The Well; new forms of ministry as we try a web based Wed. worship and study group; the visiting ministries of our deacons with June, Tom, Thelma and others; 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).

Prayers continue next page

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., Tom C. 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 by noon Wed.**

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

OUR CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

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.

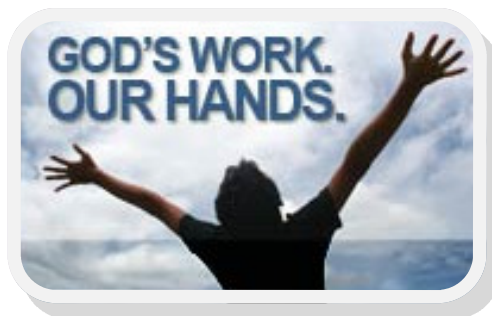
Worship Volunteers Always Welcome: We are always looking for folk to participate in worship as ushers and readers. Youth and Children are always welcomed to participate. The Spiritual Life Committee recruits readers. Robin Baker is the contact at this time (robinb12@verizon.net). You are also welcome to call the church office to volunteer.

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.



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.



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 for all those recent prayers for the loss of my daughter-in-law Lisa Hill.

Congratulations to local Medford children's theater group Spotlight Productions,

including Audry Soule, who performed "Godspell" this coming weekend at the Medford High School. The shows are Fri 3/7 @7pm, Sat 3/8 @2pm and Sat 3/8 @7pm, Tickets \$10-12. If anyone would like more info or would like to order tickets in advance, they can contact me: deb_soule@yahoo.com or 781-395-8309. Thank you.

CROSSROADS PHASE II

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

~

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

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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.**

Online, via Fuze Meeting 7:00 pm-8:15 pm,

***This Week, Wednesday, March 12 is Joint Ministry Team, we will meet in Barnes Chapel!***

### **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 9***

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

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**Watch for more details about the steps leading us to a
Bold Decision about our faith community.**

*Next Sunday—March 16, worship in Fellowship Hall at Tables
with discussion about our shared values and a Draft Mission Statement*

Sunday, March 23—NO MORNING WORSHIP

We will worship in the evening at North Prospect Union Church, Medford.

MISSION AND OUTREACH

Today 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

Save the Date! 215th Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference: 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.



Not all heroes wear capes.

Every 2 seconds someone needs blood. Every donation you give helps us do more of what we do.

Thank you!



Ina and John are Everyday Heroes helping to save lives with their blood donations.

Medford Community Blood Drive

Sponsored by Medford City Hall

Monday, March 24, 2014

9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Medford City Hall

Howard Alden Council Chambers

85 George P. Hassett Drive

Medford

For an appointment please call 1-800 RED CROSS (733-2767) or visit redcrossblood.org

American Red Cross

This Spring, renew hope. Donate blood. Each donation can help save up to three lives.

redcrossblood.org | 1-800-RED CROSS



Medford Community Blood Drive

Sponsored by

Hallmark Health System's Lawrence Memorial Hospital

Saturday, April 12, 2014

9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Hallmark Health System's Lawrence Memorial Hospital

Classrooms A & B

170 Governors Avenue

Medford

For an appointment please call 1-800 RED CROSS (733-2767) or visit redcrossblood.org



redcrossblood.org | 1-800-RED CROSS

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THIS WEEK AT YOUR CHURCH

March 9, 2014 First Sunday in Lent

Prayer for our Process (Bean Chapel) 9:15—9:30 am
Cleaning The Closets—9:30 am-10:00 am; 11:00 am--12:00 pm
Sunday Worship Service (Bean Chapel) 10:00 am
Reading Group—11:30 am (LR)
Crossroads Phase II Leadership Meeting (TBD)—11:30 am
Tibetan Sunday School (Lower Level) 12:00 pm Church of God Redemption(Bea Chapel) 12:00 pm
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)
Peer Group—10:00 am (LR)
Yoga—6:30 pm (FH)
Mother's Club—7:30 pm (LR)

Tuesday

LDI Coaching-6:00 pm St. Paul Cathedral
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)
CCWM Joint Ministry Team;—7:00 pm (Bean Chapel)
Alcoholics Anonymous—8:00 pm (YR)

Thursday

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)
Church of God Redemption Bible Study—7:00 pm (Bean)

Saturday

Alanon—9:00 am (YR)
Yoga—9:00 am (FH)
Boot Camp—12:15 pm (FH)
Girl Scouts 100th Birthday Celebration—2:00 pm (FH)

Sunday, March 16, 2014, Second Sunday in Lent

Prayer for our Process (Bean Chapel) 9:15—9:30 am
Cleaning The Closets—9:30 am-10:00 am; 11:00 am--12:00 pm
Sunday Worship Service (Bean Chapel) 10:00 am
Crossroads (LR) 11:30 am
Tibetan Sunday School (Lower Level) 12:00 pm Haitian Church (Bean Chapel) 12:00 pm
Goodland Church Worship (in Korean) (Sanctuary) 12:30 pm
Faith Formation/Confirmation (LR/DR) 4:00 pm

Room Legend: (BC) Barnes Chapel; (Bean) Bean Chapel; (DR) Dining Room; (LR) Living Room; (YR) Youth Room

The Congregational Church of West Medford, United Church of Christ

Ministers: All of us!

Organist and Choir Director: Dr. Herman Weiss

Co- Moderators: Paul Roberts & Rich Carle

Treasurer: Beverly Roche

Pastor and Teacher: Reverend Wendy Miller Olapade

Church Administrator: Diane Petrelis

Deacon of the Month: Ose Manheim

Clerk:

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

office@medfordchurch.org, 781-395-3360

Rev. Wendy—pastor@medfordchurch.org