

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



FROM THE CROSSROADS PHASE II TEAM



Being God's Missional People

Excerpted from Crossroads Handout 3-3

After he appeared to them that first evening he prayed with them, "Peace be with you." Then Jesus said this to the disciples "As God has sent me, so I send you." Beloved, likewise, we are sent into the world to live a different way of life – in our households, with our co-workers and neighbors, in stores and restaurants and wherever we find ourselves. Our voice is the voice of Jesus for a community that needs God's liberating, reconciling words of love and grace. Our work is being Jesus' hands, heart, and mind in a way that continues Jesus' work of healing the sick and releasing the captives in our day. We are called and gifted by God to serve the neighbors around us as we go about your daily life and work. This is our mission.

One has been said that, "It is not the church of God that has a mission in the world, but the God of mission who has a church in the world. . . God is on the move and the church is always catching up with God. We join God's mission." At the heart of this is the principle that we must be active followers of Jesus—to practice Jesus' Way in everyday life. So, congregational ministry is about forming people so that they follow this call. It is about teaching people spiritual disciplines so that their daily lives are matched to God's intentions. It is about empowering people to network and grow in ways that enliven their work for God's purposes.

As well, we are to "go into the world and make disciples of all people." This work of going out—into our culture, into our city—is an active practice of sharing and showing people that the ways of God are very different from the ways of the world. It is the refusal to participate in the greed and oppression and destruction that the world seems to value. Instead, we "clothe ourselves" with the values of the gospel (see Colossians 3: 12-17). We are to practice reconciliation, mercy, forgiveness, peace, justice and the like so that others may see and "clothe themselves" with a new way of living in the world. We do this so others may understand the power and hopefulness of Jesus' Way of life. And we do this so others may become disciples—followers—of Jesus' convictions and lifestyle.

On the next page is the draft list of shared values to which we believe we have been called and will discuss during worship this Sunday. I pray that this reflection will serve as a foundation for our discernment as we proceed towards the development of a vision for our future.

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

A DRAFT OF OUR SHARED VALUES

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unity in Essentials, Diversity in non-essentials, Charity in all things 2. Transparency and Healthy Communication 3. UCC – Centered in the people, congregational polity, non-creedal, leadership is decentralized 4. Our Theology is Progressive; and that means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God is Still Speaking • We are engaged in the “Emerging/Converging” conversation • Is a theology that invites questions • Experiential and Experimental • Includes diverse and wide ranging spiritual practices; including practices from other faith walks and traditions • The Pastor is coach and teacher and empowers others to use their gifts to achieve our mission • You can discover your faith here • Worship and Relationships are heartfelt • Worship and Ministry are Interactive • Everybody is welcome at the table • We do not: Judge, Exclude, Consider scripture to be inerrant or the absolute truth, Tell you what to believe • As congregationalists we are not: Hierarchical, “Evangelical” with an upper-case E, focused on Doctrine 5. Open and Affirming 6. Jesus Followers – we Love God, love neighbor as yourself | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Action, Mission and Justice Oriented (Local AND Non Local (Pine Ridge)) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental, economic, racial, gender, sexual, educational justice matter 8. Committed to Community, Connection and Collaboration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing the load • It takes a village • Seeking and Building Partnerships across the City and the World 9. Micah 8: Seek Justice, Love Kindness, Walk Humbly with God 10. Multicultural, Multiracial 11. Worship needs to be about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sacred – Experience God/The Holy • Considers the mystical, mystery and beauty of God • Include Threshold moments that move us from our lives to experience of the Holy • Forgiveness-Reconciliation • Beloved-ness • Everybody included, everybody involved • Moves us from head to heart (18”) • Music opens the soul to God, includes multiple genres and is easy to sing • Reflects our context - neighbors • Joyful • Includes Story and Witness • Includes Confession • Includes Communion • Is Challenging and Intelligent |
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IN OUR PRAYERS AND PASTORAL CARE



Concerns: We pray with all who are struggling with the For Sale Sign out front; the family and friends of Susan Coleman who passed away; for a pregnant sister-in-law, Jessica who was diagnosed with cancer; with Jeff S. in his job search; for Kathy W's sister Anette in recovery from by-pass surgery; Stephanie M. prays for protection for the Marathoners, in which her cousin will participate; Beverly C asks for prayers for families of the missing Malaysian airplane; Bruce R. prays for Joy and her family who has lost two aunts in a short period; Anita N prays for her family as they negotiate her mother's transition; for Tom for energy and grace; for a friend whom Dick S. misses.

Joys: We celebrate with Jenny as she shares the joy of celebrating two birthdays, Jeanna age 6 and her grandmother; Susan D. at the birth of her nephew; the recovery ministry from the Boston Marathon being done at Old South, especially the marathon scarves project.

We continue prayer for Patty H. for continued recovery; 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; for June L; Joy H. for full recovery from her shoulder surgery; Kathy W. prays for prisoners, for their forgiveness by God and their recovery process; for healing for Charlene and Rich C. as they face the loss of Lou; 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.

We continue to celebrate the ministry of the Girl Scouts; 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.

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 (photo@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



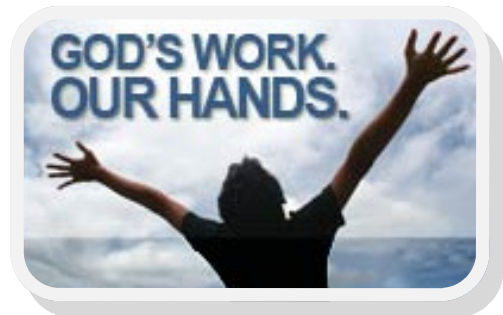
Empty your Pockets in the Pennies from Heaven Jar: In the Narthex. Just one way to help support the church with your coins and paper money.

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.



CROSSROADS PHASE II

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

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Here are the four that 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
- 4) Darkwood Brew: Ancient. Mystical. Christian. Television. www.darkwoodbrew.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**

**3rd 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 19: We will meet online to see and discuss the Nooma Film  
"Rain" which speaks to where God is when the rains come into our lives.***

### **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.

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

Sunday, March 23—NO MORNING WORSHIP

We will worship at 5:00 PM at North Prospect Union Church, Medford.

***Please see the full schedule for worship
for the next 3 months on page 7 of the Worship Bulletin.***

MISSION AND OUTREACH

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.

Worlds of Change: The Outdoor Church: Don't forget to collect your pocket change!

During Lent we are participating in the Outdoor Church's "Worlds of Change" fundraiser. We simply ask that at the end of each day to take your spare change and place it in the box we passed out a couple of weeks ago. It may not feel like a lot, but when combined with the contributions of hundreds of individuals from other congregations, these small daily contributions can make a world of change for the chronically homeless men and women of Cambridge. After Easter, someone from the Outdoor Church will pick up the boxes, count the change, and send us an announcement celebrating how much we as a congregation raised. Thank you for your commitment to the homeless men and women in our community.



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

Please invite your friends and family to this wonderful opportunity

Thank You Note to the Congregation



Dear Kind Generous Christians,

It warms my heart that you are so wonderful that you even cared enough about an older homeless kitty like me to fund my dental surgery. Your Christian practice knows no bounds and your love is greatly appreciated. I had my surgery successfully and I am now waiting at the Pets in Need Somerville shelter for a forever person. If you know of anyone who can provide a safe indoor home to a gentle girl kitty who loves sitting on your lap, catnip and lots of treats, please apply to adopt me!

Diva



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.



FROM OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS



Project Bread's 46th Annual Walk for Hunger Sunday May 4, 2014.

The 20 mile walk is the largest walk event in the state, bringing more than 40,000 people together each year to raise more than \$3.5 million to support Project Bread's Work to end hunger in Massachusetts.

Registration is now open—you can walk, volunteer, and donate at www.projectbread.org/walk or call 617-723-5000 for more information.

Project Bread: A Fresh Approach to Ending Hunger

St. Patrick's People's Parade for Peace

Sunday, March 16

D Street and West Broadway, South Boston;

Gathering at 2:00 pm,

Parade at 3:00 pm

Your church is invited to join the Religious Division of the Saint Patrick's Peace Parade, the alternative and inclusive parade for peace, equality, jobs, environmental stewardship, social and economic justice that walks the same route and behind the traditional Saint Patrick's Day Parade. For additional information and to download the flyer for this event: [http://](http://macucc.s3.amazonaws.com/F2CA14E966DA497FA2894250E59A46A8_2014StPatReligiousFlyer.pdf)

[macucc.s3.amazonaws.com/
m/
F2CA14E966DA497FA289
4250E59A46A8_2014StPat
sReligiousFlyer.pdf](http://macucc.s3.amazonaws.com/F2CA14E966DA497FA2894250E59A46A8_2014StPatReligiousFlyer.pdf)

*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!



Iria 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

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