

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

Happy Mother's Day?

You may have heard me say this before, but as a single parent, a divorced woman, and a pastor—I arrive at Mother's Day with a little bit of melancholy and a heaping heaping of fear and trepidation. My former husband was never one to jump to the tune of American cultural expectations so even when I was not a single parent no one served me breakfast in bed or celebrated the day. My kind and wonderful sons have not yet arrived at the point in life where they have become other centered enough to turn the spotlight on their mother. And my own mother has been geographically far enough away for the last 30 years that I add on a layer of guilt every May for how little I give to her. Of course, I am usually working on Mother's Day—so that adds to the challenge I hear (and the annoyance I feel) when the world is proclaiming "Happy Mother's Day!" I see the romanticized advertisements for bling and flowers; the Lifetime Television stories of grand and giving mother-child moments; the seemingly perfect mothering represented on the blogs of beautiful, blonde, still married mothers; the crafty creativity catering to kids on Pinterest and I feel myself slipping and sliding on the syrup and schlock. I compare myself to the fantasies presented by Hollywood, Hallmark and stay-at-home moms and think, "Why is my life not like that?" Therein lies the melancholy...

Fortunately, I have plenty of parenting and women's wisdom that offsets the messages coming out of Wall Street, Madison Avenue and the Web. Not the least of which is to be sure I am not comparing my insides to every one else's outsides—not to mention the knowledge that a lot of it is self reporting and



none of the advertising is real. I mean really, who actually has this 'photo-shopped' picture of perfection? This Mothering Myth that we are sold as the norm? You know what they say, the only 'normal' in this life is the cycle on your washing machine! By the grace of God, I can change the conversation in my head and gain an appropriate perspective.

But I have also been blessed as a pastor with many mentors in ministry who have taught me that this is a day filled, at best with mixed emotions (like those of my own experience) and at its worst, horrible pain. Whether it is little (whiney) disappointments like mine or big, big pain—like a beloved mother who recently died, a child who did not make it to this world from the womb, a mother who judges just a little too much or harmed us with abuse or alcoholism, a pregnancy given up for adoption, a step-child with whom you can quite connect,

or...—I am here to tell you that God understands. And the very same fantasy messages about mothering that I am talking about can hurt a little or they can hurt so badly that you can barely breathe through the day.

Beloved, I pray that on this day in particular, a day so fraught with mixed emotion for all of us, that you might turn to the God who loves you unconditionally, who gathers you up like a hen gathers her chicks, who named you and claimed you, and who holds you in Her hands day in and day out. Beloved, I pray that you know that you DO have a perfect Mother! She is the One who created you before you were in your mothers womb and who knows every cell and every fiber of your being. Turn to your Mother God this Sunday if your heart is hurting—for She will never leave and offers you the perfect peace. May it be so.

Happy Eastertide

Rev. Wendy Miller Olapade/revwdmiller@comcast.net/617.592.5853

Giving Thanks for our Biblical Mothers

Eve our first mother – thank you for stepping out and being the first to understand the complexities of life.

Sarah, Hannah and Elizabeth – thank you for your patience and courage in waiting for a miracle. May all people longing for children be strengthened by your stories and comforted in their pain.

Hagar – thank you for your resolve in the face of exile. May all mothers who are forced to flee or are forgotten be given hope in you.

Rebecca – thank you for your flexibility. Let us remember all mothers who have to raise their children in a different country or far from their relatives and who feel isolated.

Rachel – you carried the burden of grief and wept for your children. Hold the hands of all those mothers who weep for their children – children who have gone missing, who have died or are lost to them in other ways.

Jochebed – you used wisdom and insight to protect your children. Give to all mothers this wisdom and insight in the bringing up of their children, especially in vulnerable times.

Naomi and Ruth – you showed that love can conquer all trials. Help all mothers to love constantly when life seems impossible and despair weighs hard upon their souls.

Mary – the new Eve whose ‘yes’ to God changed our world forever. Thank you for sheltering the Holy One all those years ago, for your faithful love and tender care of God’s most precious Son. May we never forget that in your giving is our greatest receiving – of the gift of life wrapped in a manger and in a tomb. May we know the true cost of relationship by holding our faith in Christ deep within our hearts as you once held him deep within your womb. Amen



IN OUR PRAYERS AND PASTORAL CARE



Concerns: We pray for a friend, Marlin who lost his husband to depression; for Dick missing Ernestine; the return of the Nigerian school girls; the anxiety we feel as we face our decisions; a family remembering a lost loved one; Thelma, who is recovering at NE Rehab; Ray, an ex-prisoner, who is homeless and diagnosed with cancer, but getting services; Kathy W. in her prison work and keeping the balancing act it requires; Ernestine S. in Winchester Rehab; June L in her treatment for cancer and for Kim as her caregiver; a brother Rich in financial struggle; for sexton Steve S. who had hand

surgery this past week; Ose M. travelling mercies; patience for all who are working so hard on our transition; for Molly getting ready to present to colleagues.

Prayers continue for our students for finals and job searches; Danielle recently diagnosed with cancer; for God to make a way for reconciliation where there seems to be no way; for beloved friends who are not with us; all who struggle with addictions; for the churches who want to purchase our property as they discern their future; for our own process of discernment; Tom C. for relief from chronic neck pain and successful cataract surgery May 1; Sheila in treatment; a brother Paul and his wife's struggles; the situation in the Ukraine; those caring for the elderly; all affected by memory loss and dementia a growing concern in our country; Dick S's friend Ed who is now diagnosed with stage 4 cancer.

Joys: We celebrate the MBA Spring Meeting; the ministry partnerships we are exploring; returning from college soon for Kylie, Clarisse and Alex; the options open to us in the sale of the church building; the progress we have made as a congregation toward our resurrection—and the many possibilities in our path in regards to the sale of the property; our church's courage and willingness to consider making a Bold Decision.

We continue to pray for Charlene's family as they walk with her brother Lou who is in hospice care; Bruce's brother Bill in early recovery; our sexton Steve's daughter and grandson; 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 May is Karen McCune Barca who can be reached at (karenmccunebarca@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. Rev. Wendy can be reached: revwdmiller@comcast.net.

OUR CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Fellowship Hour Help Needed: Can you bring some goodies to support our time to “break Bread” and connect? Karen McCune Barca has take on the organization of this beloved time—and all are welcome to help. Please be in touch with her about signing up for a Sunday to bring snacks! Immediate help needed for 5/25. Please contact Karen (karenmccunebarca@gmail.com).

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.

Happy May Birthdays

5 Meghan Grubb
6 Elinor McDowell
7 Heather McLaughlin
7 Pam Kromm
12 Lorna Stockbridge
18 Bruce Roberts
22 Anita Nackel
23 Jessica Nackel
23 Brett Williams



Donations Needed for the Lakota Sewing Circle:

Donations of fabric, thread, needles, beads, ribbons, scissors, tape measures, etc. for the Lakota Sewing Circle.

Copy the links for inspirational stories. <https://www.facebook.com/LakotaSewingCircle> As well as http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aC64PK14pCc&list=UUcOHBWkJea6ssmyl_wk-5A&feature=share

Donations can be left in the dining room at church or at Joy Harris's home at 23 Gleason St, Medford,.

Thank you in advance from Joy Harris,

Packing and Closet Cleaning! Now that the holiday worship season is past, we are getting ourselves ready for the big

move! There is much to be considered (what are taking, what will we sell, what will the new owner want to buy from us, whew!) and there remains much to be donated, recycled and trashed. Kathy Williams is leading the effort to “clean out our closets.” **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. And if you can help with inventory/assessment efforts during the week, please advise Rev. Wendy.



Help Louise Wilensky and her classmates head to National History Day in

Washington. Louise and her fellow actors, “The MV Pentagons” were awarded 2nd place in the the MA State Competition, for Group Performance. They will present their play, “The 9th Commandment: Rights and Responsibilities in the Salem Witch Trials” at the National competition in Washington DC...but not without your help! Travelling and dorm fees add up to \$3000 for our entire group. Help these young folk get to DC and perform! All donations, no matter how small or big, are greatly appreciated. Each donator who leaves their e-mail will receive a unique heartfelt message from the Pentagons. 1. Shop our online store filled with 1500+ amazing items -- we'll receive up to 40% of every purchase! my.fundraising.com/PentagonsinDC/LouiseWilensky 2. Share our fundraiser with your friends + family by posting it to Facebook + Twitter. Your show of support will make all the difference... Thank you!



Calling All Friends and Neighbors—Friday, May 9,

2014 : Come to the church game night! Friday, May 9th from 6:30-9 :00 pm. We will play some well loved games, go on a church wide scavenger hunt, and just have a great time! Have a card or board game you love? Bring it and/or a snack to share with others! Questions? Contact Jenny Briggs at jbriggs85@gmail.com We will celebrate our building and have an agenda free evening of family friendly fun--with a wonderful scavenger hunt organized by Jenny Briggs. What a wonderful way to "send" off our ownership of the property at 400 High Street than with a chance to explore the

building and look for unique characteristics! All are welcome. Please bring a snack to share and your favorite board game or game.

Special thanks to Jenny for her Game Night Organization!!



?? The Medford Faith Formation Network ??

A Presentation About the Possibilities

for

Forming Faith in the Home

Wed., May 14, 7:00 PM

You may have heard me talk of a “new” model for faith formation—one that I am interested in offering as part of our bold vision for the future. This model is grounded in the “Flipped Classroom” educational theory which takes the distribution of content out of the classroom and onto the internet/video; while the classroom experience is focused on practice and shared learning. There is a growing interest in this flipped model for faith formation—especially as we remember that faith is not taught, but caught; and the best place to catch faith is in the home. As well, I have begun dialogue about possible partnerships with the staff and membership of North Prospect Union—further laying groundwork for our new ministry model. Rev. Tom Hathaway and I have gotten somewhat specific about what might be possible with this faith formation model for children, youth and families and we would like to share a 30 minute presentation with all who are able to attend—as part of the Joint ministry Meeting this Wednesday, May 14 at 7:00 PM. Please come if you are able!! All are welcome. Questions? Rev. Wendy.

MISSION AND OUTREACH

Outdoor Church Sandwich Making, Sunday, June 29: Save the Date and watch for more information.

ONA Churches at Pride Weekend, June 14

Can you volunteer to represent CCWM??

The 44th annual Boston Pride Parade and Festival is Saturday, June 14 (same day as the MACUCC Annual Meeting in Sturbridge). MA Conference ONA churches typically march as a delegation. Spectators enjoy our rhythm band, welcoming chants AND big numbers. They are excited to see so many churches that welcome LGBTQ/same gender loving people. This year’s theme is “Be Yourself - Change the World.” Sounds very UCC, don’t you think? We register as one marching delegation—with **one large parade banner (no individual church banners)** and each ONA church carries a small, commercially made sign bearing the name of the church. Volunteers needed to represent our congregation for this important witness! Deadline to sign up to March with the Conference group is May 8. See www.bostonpride.org.

The Fabulous and Ecumenical Pride Morning Worship at 10am at Old South Church UCC, will celebrate 10 years of Equal Marriage!!!

Watch for Changes as our Exploration Continues Upcoming Schedule for Worship		
Sunday	5/11/2014	10 am: Worship in Sanctuary, Mother's Day and Baptism
Sunday	5/18/2014	10 am: Worship in Sanctuary; Confirmation Sunday
Sunday	5/25/2014	10 am: Worship in Sanctuary
Sunday	6/1/2014	10 am: Worship at CCWM Congregational Decision Making Meeting—Bold Decision
Sunday	6/8/2014	11 am: Join NPU for Bluegrass Worship and Barbeque

Please Save These Additional Dates for Decision Making Process

- Fri, May 16—Sun. May 18: Before Friday, May 16, Church Council will email; and on Sunday, May 18 will distribute a written "Call to Congregational Meeting and the recommendations for a) the offer and sale of 400 High Street and b) model and plan for future ministries."
- Saturday, May 17 (9 am) and Tuesday, May 20 (7 pm): All church gatherings to answer questions and discuss the proposal(s)—to be voted upon June 1. In addition, one-on-one conversations will be offered.



**Wednesday Worship and Study: Online Via Fuze Meeting
'Nooma®' Films and Discussion
Led by Rev. Wendy, reflection by Rob Bell**

*www.nooma.com: a series of short films,
(10 minute-ish) about God and our lives.*

Like parables, these films use the experiences of our lives to teach about the fullness of life through Jesus, tackling issues like forgiveness, discipleship, and unconditional love.

Wed., May 14—Joint Ministry Team Meeting; no online worship

**Wed., May 21—Online Worship and Discussion; 7:00 PM
via Fuze meeting <http://fuze.me/23459647>**

Our Online Worship and Study this Wednesday with the Rob Bell Nooma Film entitled "Luggage" This films asks the question: "Why is it so hard to forgive?" We all have wounds and we end up carrying around these things that people have done to us for too long. It isn't easy to forgive but God created us to be free...

*For more information about this exciting online ministry, contact Rev. Wendy.
ALL are welcome, tell your friends.*

NEWS AND EVENTS FROM THE UCC



Register Now—Deadline Approaching! 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. **Registration deadline: May 23**

FROM OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

The 15th annual West Medford Open Studios: will take place on Saturday and Sunday, May 10 and 11, 2014, from 12 noon to 5 pm. Attendees may pick up WMOS site maps from many local locations. The maps include names and locations of the artists' sites as well as a schedule of readings and performances. West Medford Open Studios "gives you the chance to see the artists in our midst, to celebrate the creativity and enthusiasm that so many of us take for granted in our city." For more information please visit: www.wmos.org

2014 Edward Mark Lecture on Radical Love: Queer Theology for Reconciling

Churches: Lecture will take place on Thursday, May 15th at 7:00pm at the Harvard-Epworth Methodist Church, 1555 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138. This lecture is free and open to the public. To make reservations contact: harvardepworth@verizon.net or call 617-354-0837, ex. 5.

Historic Opportunity with author and speaker Elaine Marie Cooper: May 17, 2014 at 2:00 pm at the Smith Museum (Jason Russell House) 7 Jason St, Arlington, MA Free and open to the public. This is a novel about what happened in the town of Arlington, then known as Menotomy Village. The "Fields of the Fatherless" is a novel about the true events that occurred on April 19, 1775. Elaine blogs regularly at ColonialQuills.blogspot.com as well as her website, www.ElaineMarieCooper.com. Novelist Elaine Marie Cooper is the author of *Fields of the Fatherless* and the *Deer Run Saga*. (The Road to Deer Run, The Promise of Deer Run and The Legacy of Deer Run).

