

A weekly collection of news, reflections and announcements from
 Sanctuary United Church of Christ | Congregational Church of West Medford
 an Open and Affirming Congregation
www.medfordchurch.org | www.sanctuaryucc.org
www.FormingFaith.NET



PASTORAL REFLECTION

"All peoples on earth will be blessed through you..." Genesis 12:3b

Blessed to Be a Blessing



I gotta' tell you that I am happy--really happy. This week, as I sat with an interested listener, talking about what we are doing and how it has been for us as we have leapt in faith off this amazing, risky cliff-of-grace, I filled up with tearful joy (yeah I know, surprise, surprise!)—the kind of joy that explodes onto and then out of your heart because of contentment, gratitude and the humble recognition that you are blessed. That moment and these moments remind of Mama June's voice (my 'Mother-In-Law'), which has become my voice through the years—"Beloved, we are blessed to be a blessing."

We are blessed, so blessed – and I am experiencing this coming from you! One of the delightful side effects of our bold decision to turn our money draining property into life-giving and people-meeting mission and ministry is that our perspective has shifted from the naturally fearful theology of scarcity that comes when you are living beyond your means - to being able to see the sale of our property and the 'cash' that comes from that decision as reflective of God's abundant blessing on our ministry. This practical shift in perspective, the faith formation you did during Steven Savides' tenure as your pastor and all of the hard work we have done through the Crossroads process to understand our mission to be Sanctuary has brought us to a watershed moment—a moment designed by God to move us from holding and securing to sharing and giving; from a theology of scarcity to a theology of abundance. This is a moment for us to see that we have been blessed to be a blessing.

This week (Tues, Oct. 14 @ 7 pm) we will gather for the Joint Ministry Team Meeting (to which everyone is invited) to begin a conversation about how our outreach and justice making ministries will express our mission to be Sanctuary. Guided by the wisdom and experience of the United Church Fund (our professional investment team) our own Board of Trustees of the Endowment are considering a renewed set of investment policies that can both secure our future through healthy investing and allow us to be a blessing through these blessings we have been honored to receive.

Continued next page...





As your spiritual leader, I recommend that we make a decision to tithe our blessings—to give 10% of our income to others. There are many excellent reasons to tithe about which I will preach and teach over the next few months of defining our future and setting in place how we intend to live out this new call. But the short answer to why we would do this is that generosity begets generosity. If we operate out of the glorious theology of abundance that understands that God will provide what we need to be what God is calling us to be; if we express a spirit of generosity and care for others with bold giving and proactive mission; if we show the world that we are not afraid of there not being enough, but rather are a people with confidence in God's grace and God's generosity towards creation—it will say a great deal about the kind of faith in which we are standing, the kind of faith community we intend to be and the kind of ministries we are able to share.

Yes, generosity engenders generosity. If we put in place a policy of tithing our income, we will be a power of example to others. We will be able to offer amazing opportunities for people to find meaning and purpose through our mission. People will know that their gifts to us will be used for the glory of God and the care of others and it will draw to us people who want to live that way.

And on top of all that—it will make God really, really happy! Beloved, we are blessed to be a blessing. I pray that we might go from this moment to live fully into that call and look forward to talking about how to be generous, blessed Sanctuary.

In prayer,

Rev. Wendy (revwdmiller@comcast.net/617.592.5853)

P.S. "Blessed to be a Blessing" is the theme of this year's stewardship campaign. Watch for more wonderful reflection on the topic!



Blessed
TO BE A BLESSING.

"...all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." (Gen 12:3)



Happy October Birthday

5 Kimberly Grubb
11 Phil DiSciullo
20 Thelma Thompson
20 Robin Baker
30 Jenny Briggs
31 Dylan Barca

October 14, 7:00 PM | The Joint Ministry Team Meeting (second Tues. of the month)

A Conversation About Being Sanctuary Through Our Outreach Ministries

We encourage all to gather at the next joint ministry team meeting for this important conversation! Beginning with a brief time of theological reflection and prayer—we will start a conversation about our philosophy and hopes for the outreach ministry of Sanctuary United Church of Christ. Here are a few of the questions we will want to consider: What are the ministries for which we have passion and resources? How does “Faith Formation” intersect with “Doing Service?” How can we build opportunities for serving Jesus’ sisters and brothers into everything we do. How do we manage the passions of our members for diverse projects and programs? How should we resource the ministries? Should we develop a policy of tithing our income for mission? Who makes the choices and decisions about outreach? How can we engage the wider community in this life-giving work? Can you imagine how exciting this conversation will be? Let’s get started! *Questions—Rev. Tom or Rev. Wendy*

FAITH.
It's not just a
Sunday morning
kinda thing
anymore!

FormingFaith.NET

www.formingfaith.net

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FormingFaith.NET combines fun, engaging, and downright awesome online resources with community activities and service projects to make faith formation an everyday kinda thing.

GET STARTED TODAY
www.formingfaith.net

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF WEST MEDFORD



**There is
still time
to register for
Super
Saturday—
October 25
in framingham**

We will have two tables onsite
for Pine Ridge/ReMember and
FormingFaith.NET

Come along,
do some leadership development
and help tell the story!!



“(Holy) Spirits, Tricks and Treats”

Friday, October 31

3:00 pm (afterschool crowd)

to

9:00 pm (teens and dinner goers)

Open Sanctuary—For Halloween

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**Let's**

**Dress up in Costumes**

**Give out Fair Trade Chocolates with a Sanctuary UCC Card**

**Hot Drinks—Cider, Chocolate and Coffee**

**Collect donations for a good cause (trick or treat for unicef?)**

**and**

**Offer a Blessing**



**Who's In??**

**Wendy the Witch?**

**Tom Cat?**

**Stormin' Steve?**



**Leadership Development Opportunity**

**Mass Bible Society's "Learning to Lead" Workshop**

Churches know that small groups are key to spiritual formation and vitality in their congregations. Using their Exploring the Bible: The Dickinson Series as a vehicle, in this six-hour workshop, you will:

- Learn the basics of leading any small group.
- Build confidence in leading a Bible study.
- Understand the difference between teaching and facilitating.
- Learn how to use Exploring the Bible: The Dickinson Series\*
- Practice the skills you've learned.
- Receive tips on recruiting your first group, even if you are in a small, rural church.
- Learn how to structure your group for success.
- Network with others who are learning to lead.
- Discuss ways to overcome the challenges of difficult personalities and group conflict.

\*All workshop participants receive a free copy of both the student book and leader's guide for [What Is the Bible?](#) (The first course of Exploring the Bible: The Dickinson Series). Cost is \$25.00 per person and online pre-registration is required here: <https://macucc-reg.brtapp.com/LearntoLeadWorkshop>



## **“Open Sanctuary”**

### **Can you volunteer to be a host?**

**Please contact Rev. Wendy if you have time you can offer.**

As we develop our presence in the community with worship, faith formation, arts offerings, hospitality and the spirit of being sanctuary—one of the things we want to be is a place for people to gather and find peace, connection and gracious hospitality.

We imagine offering ‘Open Sanctuary’ during the day and early evening when there is no programming scheduled, but there is a welcoming presence to encourage guests to enter, have a cup of coffee and linger for as long as they like. The host would be equipped to share our story, answer questions, and invite folk to ministries that might meet the guest where their heart is longing.

We hope to offer “Open Sanctuary” in several forms...

Open Sanctuary Café—a place to bring your lunch, have coffee, chat with others.

Open Sanctuary Meditation—a time to be still and know God.

Open Sanctuary Pastoral Office Hours—meet as a group with pastor (w/one-on-one offered too)

Open Sanctuary ??????—What else is God calling us into?

*Mother’s Group? Crummy Commute Group? Prayer Circle?*



## Communities for People

### **Make an Impact.**

**Open your mind. Open your heart. Open your home.  
Find out more about how to become a foster parent.**

For over 35 years Communities for People (CFP) has remained a leader in the community-based approach to residential programs for troubled youth. We focus on achieving permanency, making life long connections within the community, and developing independent living skills. We offer a wide range of programs and services in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Our goal is to provide youth and families with the services and support they need to thrive independently and as part of their communities.

877-852-1271

[www.communities-for-people.org](http://www.communities-for-people.org)

### **Save the Date!**

**Medford Clergy presents:  
“Medford Gives Thanks”  
Thanksgiving  
Worship and  
Food Pantry Drive**

**Monday, November 24  
St. Francis, Medford  
7:00 PM**

**A Community-Wide  
Gathering &  
Food Drive  
to benefit  
Medford’s Food Pantries**

# *Never Turning Back: 30 Years of ONA*

This year marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passage of the first-ever ONA annual meeting resolution in the UCC, which happened right here in Massachusetts!

The 1984 Annual Meeting resolution was authored by Marnie Warner, Susan Harlow, Margarita Suarez, and the Rev. rosi olmstead (proposer) and sponsored by the Church of the Covenant. It coined the term “Open and Affirming,” and led, the following year, to the national General Synod Resolution, launching the Open and Affirming Program.



Since the listing of the first ONA churches in 1987, there have been nearly 1,200 churches listed in all. As of the end of May 2014, there were 139 ONA churches in the Massachusetts Conference.

Join us for the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration on November 8 – more details to come! All are welcome. Watch our website, [macucc.org/lgbt](http://macucc.org/lgbt), for the latest information.

## **Featured speakers are:**

The Rev. Ann. B. Day, National Coordinator of the ONA Program, 1987-2007

The Rev. Felix Carrion, Interim pastor of Houghs Neck Congregational Church, Quincy, and former Director of the UCC's Still Speaking Ministry

**NOVEMBER 8, 2014**

**UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL, BOXBOROUGH**

*Sponsored by the ONA Ministry Team of the Massachusetts Conference, UCC*





Join CMS for the Sixth Annual **COAT BOSTON** campaign - launched in 2009 with the generous support of Citizens Bank Foundation. Since then, COAT BOSTON has distributed over 7,000 new winter coats to underserved and homeless children and youth in Boston. Our goal for 2014 is 2000 coats!

A NEW warm coat says, "Boston cares about our young people."

A NEW warm coat means children and youth who receive them Are able to attend school regularly; Will be warm and able to play outside; Will be able to enjoy the dignity of fitting in with their peers!

There are a number of ways to get involved: Launch your own coat campaign with your workplace, friends, or faith community--in person or online! Host a coat party to collect donations. Donate money to help us extend our buying power. <http://www.cmsboston.org/coat-boston-2013.html>



**"Faith and the Ballot":** On November 4th, Massachusetts voters will be faced with four ballot questions. What aspects of your faith experience will guide you as you consider how to vote? Hear what each question proposes and discuss the ways that faith can influence our decisions.

**Worcester** (First Unitarian Church, 90 Main St) Tuesday, October 14, 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm, dinner provided

**Sudbury** (St. Elizabeth's Episcopal, 1 Morse Rd) Thursday, October 16, 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm, dinner provided

**Quincy** (Good Shepherd Lutheran, 308 Squantum St) Tuesday, October 21, 7 pm to 9 pm

**Boston** (Old South Church, 645 Boylston St) Wednesday, October 22, 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm, dinner provided

Each event will include time to share the meal, a video introduction to the questions, a brief reflection on how we might think theologically about these questions, and facilitated small group discussions. All are welcome.

Click here to register: <http://www.eventbrite.com/o/the-ecumenical-advocacy-coalition-6927262763>



This event is hosted by the "Ecumenical Advocacy Coalition", which emerged in 2011 from the desire of faith based organizations and denominations across Massachusetts to build relationships and deepen our collective commitment to creating a better world for all. The Coalition is dedicated to working together to build a constituency of individuals and parishes to inspire, educate, and take action together on issues of justice. Members of the Ecumenical Advocacy Coalition include City Mission Society of Boston, Episcopal City Mission, Massachusetts Inter-faith Worker Justice, Massachusetts Council of Churches, and Unitarian Universalist Massachusetts Action.

## MISSION/MINISTRY WITH PINE RIDGE



Working with the Oglala Lakota Oyate  
Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota

### **Weekend with Pine Ridge/Re-Member with Founder Rev. Keith Titus Feather II Capital Campaign**

Please note change:

**Saturday evening Danvers dinner is cancelled;  
replaced with Table at Super Saturday!!**

**Sat. Oct 25: 8:00 am to 3:45 pm**

**@ Super Saturday in Framingham**

Join Rev. Titus, Joy Harris and others to share your experience of ReMember  
and encourage support of the Feather II Capital Campaign.

**Sun, Oct 26—11 am Joint Worship**

**@ North Prospect Union w/Rev. Titus preaching.**

144 North Street, Medford.

We will not worship at 458 High St. that day!

***Holiday Cookie Walk to benefit our  
ministry with Pine Ridge and ReMember  
December, 2014 (date TBD)***



***Save Your Cans and  
Large (32 oz) Yogurt Containers!!***

The ministry team for Pine Ridge is planning a cookie walk in December.

Please save coffee and other large cans, tins and containers (ie: 32 oz yogurt) for use for the cookie walk and dust off your cookie recipes so we can raise funds! We hope to hold the event Saturday on High St. and Sunday at NPU. Questions: Joy Harris



**Keith Janis and family**