

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

And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, "Woman, you are set free from your ailment." When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. —Luke 13:11-13

A House of Healing

Like most of the healing stories in the bible, the ailment from which this woman suffers is unclear, but the specific diagnosis does not really matter. Whether it is arthritis, or multiple sclerosis, mental illness or addiction, or plain old ordinary worry—the burden of it doubles her over and separates her from community. She is so bent over that she cannot look others in the eye. She cannot see as one who is upright, fully present, whole. We might wonder what she must feel and how others see her.



Minister John Bell (of the Iona Community) observed that ““One of the less savoury aspects of contemporary society seems to be the desire to categorize people according to their deficiencies, rather than call them by their names. So we talk about the physically challenged, the mentally challenged, the abuse victim, the anorexic, the overeater, the divorcee, the single parent, the cross-dresser, the agoraphobic. And true as these descriptions might be, there are two greater truths with which we have to deal in the face of Jesus Christ. The one is that God does not define us by our problems or our past. And if God does not, why should we? The bend-double woman whom Jesus healed would never have been completely cured as long as she was diminished by the stigma which had been attached to her. She had both to walk tall and to believe that her prime identity was that of a daughter of Abraham, a beautiful child of God.”

Recovery is a process, frustrating as it is to all who are involved—whether it is recovering from the birth of a child, the replacement of a knee, addiction or the death of a loved one. In the early years of my own recovery from alcoholism, I identified myself first and foremost as an alcoholic and I remember thinking that there was nothing else for me but that. It was a helpful approach in the beginning. I was enveloped by a community of people who were seeking the same recovery, my days and nights were filled with the 12 step spiritual solution and I followed the directions given to me by those who had gone before me, making seriously big changes to the way I lived my life. All of this focus on the ‘disease’ provided me with a community of support, made for safer choices and allowed me to keep my eyes on

Continued on next page

Pastor's Reflection, Continued from page one

the prize, so to speak. But, as my recovery has progressed, and the spiritual solution to my addiction has literally become woven into everything that I am and do (and even engendered my vocational call to Christian ministry) the identifier of alcoholic has become simply a part of who I am and how I see myself. It informs my path but does not define me. More significantly, that 'community of support' loved me before I could love myself, carried the message of the solution to me and countless others, and taught me to see myself as a perfect, forgiven child of the God who makes no mistakes. It was only in the context of community that my recovery became complete and my identity was transformed.

In the Synagogue, in community, the woman's sights are raised by Jesus, not just to see better, but to see who she is more clearly in the eyes of God. And, despite the indignation of the synagogue leader over Jesus' ministrations on the Sabbath, it was the 'entire crowd' that rejoices.

Beloved, you must know that we are way more than our afflictions, way more than our shortcomings, way more than our limits, way more than our worries and fears, and waaaaaayyyy more than the labels that others put upon us. God has always known our names and our natures and always seeks us out. God celebrates our worth and calls us to follow. God calls out to us today, by name, in order to get us seeing the whole picture and standing upright so that we might be transformed and renewed into the whole and perfect soul that God created us to be.

I pray that our faith community might be a place of sanctuary to all who are bent over with worry. I pray that we might be a house of care to all who are burdened with life. I pray that we might be a company of welcome to all who are lost to community. I pray that we might be a community of seekers to all who travel with questions. I pray that we ours might be a sacred space of worship for all who reach out for God. May it be so.



Rev. Wendy Miller Olapade (revwdmiller@comcast.net)

Invitation to the Blessing of the Backpacks

On Homecoming Sunday, September 8, 2013 we will have our annual Blessing of the Backpacks. We hope all children who will be returning to school of any kind will make a point to come to church at 10:00am with their school bags (or whatever they would like to bring to represent the new school year), as we ask God's blessing on the start of another year of learning and growing. **We will bless students of all ages** as they continue in their pursuits of wisdom and knowledge. **We will also bless educators**, both current and retired, who have dedicated their lives to impart that wisdom and knowledge. In addition to the blessing, each child will receive a small gift to tag their packs as a sign of God's presence in their daily life. As always, everyone, everyone, *everyone* is welcome! You might invite a few friends for the blessing—worship will be brief (40 minutes) to allow for Crossroads to begin!



In Our Prayers

Concerns: We pray for Anita H.'s friend, Brad who has a brain tumor, and his wife Elaine; for Peggy B. moving to Connecticut, her niece Susan, and our congregation who will miss her; Bev R. celebrates Thelma T's progress and prays for the continued healing needed for a full recovery; for Lorna S. still having leg problem; for Dick S's friend Ed with Lou Gerig's Disease; Bev C's friend Debbie who had a kidney transplant, her husband Joe and her daughter Courtney who gave her the kidney; Jeff S. for a stressful situations in his life; for Diane P's friend Joe who has been diagnosed with an additional cancer site; for Diane's son for wellness. We continue to pray for Gail A.'s friend's son in Afghanistan; Shirley's friend's 54 year old daughter dying of cancer; Rev Judy and Joe B. recovering from double knee replacements; Mary B's broken leg; family and friends at the death of Helen H.; for a loved one connected to our community who is struggling with mental illness and for all who struggle emotionally; Kathy W. prays for her sister Annette struggling to recover from an injury due to a workplace incident.

Celebrations: Stephanie celebrates family visits; Bev R celebrates Tim's friend Molly passed nursing exams and a job at Children's Hospital and Tim's new training program in the Army; college students moving into dorms including Kylie in Atlanta, Alex in Cambridge, Clarisse in Lowell and all teachers and students as a new years of learning begins; Robin B. celebrates Kylie's Spanish exam scholarship; the Pleasant St Church's bequest of \$10,000 to our church for food ministry and the arrival of the insurance from the embezzlement. We continue to celebrate the wonderful experience of our volunteers who attended the Pine Ridge Reservation Trip; travelling mercies for the Briggs family travelling through Labor Day' the wonderful news article about Kerry and Patti's twins.

We continue to pray for Lorna S dealing with her leg brace; Mary B. recovering from broken leg in rehab; Eva W. recovering at home, for Thelma T. and June L., and a renewed spirit for Peggy B. We remember fallen soldiers and 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 prayer requests to office@medfordchurch.org by noon each Wednesday

OUR CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pastoral Care Concerns: "Deacon of the Month" of August is Kathy Williams.. Please let us know if there is someone who could use a visit, phone call, or card, or we should keep in our prayers.

Church Clerk Needed: The Clerk is responsible for reporting our statistics to the UCC and with the help of technology and the life long care of Mrs. Wescott, maintaining information about membership, births, deaths, and confirmations. Might you step up and find a place at the leadership table this summer? Pray about it and ask the Holy Spirit if you might be called to be the next Clerk of CCWM!! Or suggest someone who would might be appropriate, please let Paul Roberts, Moderator know.





Fellowship Café: During the summer, our **Fellowship Café** will simplify . This simple affair, has snacks provided by the church, but needs some volunteers to bring some cold drinks and set things out/clean up afterward. If you haven't had a turn in a while, please call and/or email the office at office@medfordchurch.org and let us know if you could participate. Thanks in advance.

Volunteers Always Welcome: Worship Leaders/Readers, Ushers, Greeters, Fellowship Café—sign up in the book on the table in Barnes Chapel (or see a deacon).

Happy August Birthdays

Shealyn Maloney	August 7
Herman Weiss	August 7
Laura Williams	August 8
Rebecca Roberts	August 16
Irving McDowell	August 19
Beverly Roche	August 21
Albert Howell	August 29
Camille Mary Kromm	August 31



Altar flowers needed for August: You can even use flowers from your garden. Please contact the Deacon for August, Kathy Williams, at office@medfordchurch.org



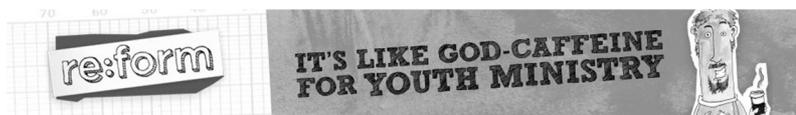
Empty your Pockets in the Pennies from Heaven Jar: The "Pennies from Heaven Jar" will be in the Narthex for you to empty your pockets of the loose change you may have. This jar is just one way to help support the church in a very easy way. The jar easily takes coins and paper money.

Spiritual Life Committee: We are in need of volunteers to participate in worship. Readers for the Call to Worship/Scripture (adult or youth) this fall. Please contact Robin Baker @ robinb12@verizon.net or call 781-799-7580 with any particular week available. Our church works better when we all pitch in and participate! Your help is appreciated.

Youth Faith Formation (aka: Confirmation) begins this

fall. Rev. Wendy is planning an

exciting program of Faith Formation for our youth ages 13-16 year olds using a fabulous, progressive curriculum entitled Re-Form which includes 40 hilarious animated short films that frame the theological questions that youth really ask and an Anti-Workbook that's chock full of individual and group activities. You can see a bit about the curriculum here: <http://reform.wearesparkhouse.org/>. We hope to do some shared mission and worship experiences with kids from the UU Medford church. If you have neighbors or friends in this age group, who you think might be interested in discovering their faith—please let Rev. Wendy know so that she might send an invitation. Watch for more info,



MISSION AND OUTREACH

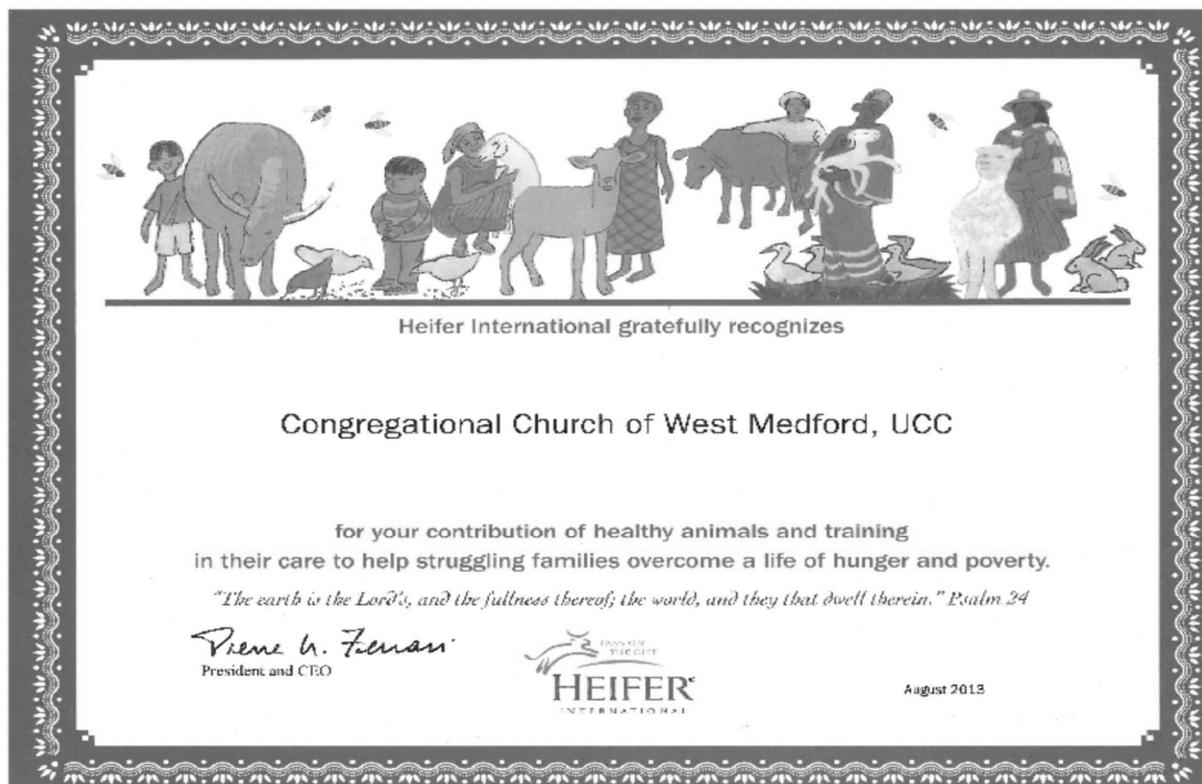
City Mission Society of Boston is co-sponsoring 50th Anniversary activities on Wednesday, Aug. 28, including:

- A Prayer Vigil, 1:00 PM, Garden of Peace, 100 Cambridge Street, Boston;
- A Memorial March for Peace, 2:00 PM, from downtown Boston to Newton Centre;
- An Interfaith Gathering for Justice and Peace, 7:00 PM, at the First Baptist Church in Newton, 848 Beacon St, Newton, MA. Speakers will include: Professor Susannah Heschel, Rev. Kim Odom, and Donnell Baird of BlocPower in Brooklyn, NY. Donations will support the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute in Boston. This event is free and open to the public. Donations will support the Louis D Brown Peace Institute in Boston. Info at memorialmarchforpeace@gmail.com

Cambridge Outdoor Church: Mark your Calendar for Sunday, September 29 we will make sandwiches before worship at 9:00 am. Susan D'Arcy Fuller will take the lead on this month's sandwich making and delivery.

Thank you, Thank you, Thank you!

CE and Outreach Celebrate your gifts to Heifer Project International.



FROM OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

Hallmark Health VNA and Hospice to Hold Kids and Grief Support

Children react differently from adults regarding the death of a loved one. To assist in helping children process their loss, Hallmark Health Visiting Nurse Association and Hospice is sponsoring a Kids and Grief Support Group for children ages 6-12 at the Immaculate Conception Church, 600 Pleasant Street in Malden. The next support group for children begins Wednesday, September 25, 2013 and meets for six sessions: October 9 & 23; November 6 & 20; and December 4. The group takes place from 4:30 to 6:00pm. A parents and caregivers support group meets at the same time. According to Judy Seifert, Bereavement Coordinator at Hallmark Health VNA and Hospice, the Groups provide a safe place for children to not only express their feelings, but also to share memories, meet new friends, and learn how to process their grief. Registration is required to attend the first meeting.

For information and to register, call Judy Seifert at (781) 338-7861.

Hallmark Health VNA and Hospice in Malden is looking for volunteers who may be interested in participating in a Hospice Volunteer Training Program during the months of September and October.

The training will be held on 9 Mondays from 6:00–8:30pm. Volunteers are needed to work with patients and families, as well as to assist with office-related duties such as mailings and special events. Contact Allison Caplin, Hallmark Health Hospice Volunteer Coordinator for more information at acaplin@hallmarkhealth.org or 781-338-7863.

Hallmark Health System and Greater Lynn Senior Services are sponsoring a Free Program on Chronic Pain Self-Management for six sessions on Wednesdays, beginning September 4, through October 9, from 9:30 am - noon at Hallmark Health VNA and Hospice, 178 Savin Street, 3rd Floor, Malden. The Program is a "must attend" for those who want to learn how to manage their chronic pain, leading to a more satisfying and fulfilling life. Open to adults of all ages who have a primary diagnosis of pain or care for someone who does. This program is free, however registration is required as space is limited. To register or for more information, call (781) 338-7823.

Girl Scouts of America: Leaders and Volunteers Needed

September 28, 2013

Leader Recruiting Meeting 10 am—2 pm

The Congregational Church of W Medford

Contact Evalyn O'Rourke through the office@medfordchurch.org

NEWS AND EVENTS FROM THE UCC

Super Saturday Save the Date! The Next Super Saturday Event is October 26, 2013. Come spend the day! Enjoy a variety of workshop offerings, marketplace and networking. Tri-County Regional Vocational High School, 147 Pond Street, Franklin, MA. Keynote Speaker: The Rev. James Moos, Nominee for Election as Executive Minister of Wider Church Ministries, UCC and Senior Pastor of Bismark (ND) UCC.

Calling all Youth: "Sabbath in a Modern Age: A 24 Hour Christian Spiritual Formation Retreat" for youth and youth groups: Nov. 1-2 at Grotonwood Retreat Center (<http://macucc.org/events/detail/1211>) or April 4-5 at Craigville Retreat Center (<http://macucc.org/events/detail/1212>). Helping youth: reconnect to God, others and themselves; think about the meaning of Sabbath and how that might be a spiritual practice; and meet and grow spiritually with youth from around the UCC. Come to worship, sing, building community and reflect. Come to explore, come to deepen, come to expand, come to open. For more details see links: Led by Rev. Matt Carriker and other Confirmation retreat leaders from the MACUCC. Register asap—the leaders are very popular and these retreats fill up quickly.

Free Stewardship Webinar! Mark your calendar now for Tuesday, September 24, 6:30-7:30 p.m., and plan to participate in "Best Practices for an Annual Pledge Program", a webinar presented by Andy Gustafson, Associate Conference Minister for Stewardship & Financial Development. Why are some churches so successful with raising pledges and others not? Log on to this webinar from the Massachusetts Conference and learn some best practices for inviting generous responses to your annual campaign, gleaned from working with scores of congregations around Massachusetts. To register: <http://macucc.org/events/detail/1294>. Log-in information for the webinar will be emailed to you closer to the event.

THIS WEEK AT YOUR CHURCH

August 25 –31,2013

August 25, 2013 Fourteenth Sunday After Pentecost

Worship Service-10 am
Goodland Church-12:30 pm

Monday

(3) Boot Camp Sessions: 5:45 am--6:15 am;
8:15 am--9:00 am; 5:30 pm--6:15 pm
Yoga- 6:30 pm
Mothers Club-7:30 pm

Tuesday

Gamblers Anonymous- 7:00 pm

Wednesday

(3) Boot Camp Sessions: 5:45 am— 6:15 am;
8:15 am--9:00 am; 5:30 pm--6:15 pm
Alcoholics Anonymous- 8:00 pm

Thursday

Food Addicts- 6 pm

Friday

(3) Boot Camp Sessions: 5:45 am--6:15 am;
8:15 am-- 9:00 am, 5:30--6:15 pm

Saturday

Alanon - 9 am
Yoga- 9am
Boot Camp- 12:15 pm

September 1, 2013 Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Worship Service-10 am
Goodland Church Worship--5:30--7:30 pm

Weekdays

(M—F) **Bright Stars Afterschool Enrichment Program**, www.BrightStarsKids.org

((M-F) **Gentle Dragon Co-op Preschool**, www.GentleDragonPreschool.org

(M-F) **English at Large** (ESOL/ESL Programs), www.englishatlarge.org

The Congregational Church of West Medford, United Church of Christ

Ministers: All of us!

Pastor and Teacher: Reverend Wendy Miller Olapade

Organist and Choir Director: Dr. Herman Weiss

Church Administrator: Diane Petrelis

Moderator: Paul Roberts

Treasurer: Beverly Roche

Deacon of the Month: Kathy Williams

Clerk: Clarisse Coughlin

400 High St. Medford, MA 02155