

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



REFLECTION FROM DR. HERMAN WEISS

"Making music in a church setting is about sharing, inspiring and creating fellowship. In each of these areas I consider the music program of CCWM to have been a resounding success."

—Herman Weiss

Dear Friends,

At such an important time in the church's history [I wanted to convey a few thoughts about our time together]. I could concoct a list of the many wonderful musical events which we shared (not to mention so many other Sundays and Thursdays [like this past Holy Week]) but - you were there, so you know. If you ever need a tangible reminder let me know - I have it all on CD and/or DVD.

What I do want to express is my total gratitude for making me 'look good' for so many years. Making music in a church setting is about sharing, inspiring and creating fellowship. In each of these areas I consider the music program of CCWM to have been a resounding success. Your willingness to bring a spiritual connection through music to the congregation has been the one constant in the church's life during my time at CCWM. The list of [things to celebration] is long:

1. Working tirelessly to integrate yourselves into a choir led by some of the most wonderful professional musicians and then later continuing to maintain a high standard of excellence.
2. Displaying the patience to grow your musicianship skills. I have watched while so many of you have branched out into the greater musical community and inspired others to do the same.
3. Bringing music to the larger community such as the Messiah Sings with orchestra, performing Godspell and our Christmas programs in facilities in Medford and Winchester.
4. Helping and encouraging the youth of CCWM to build a program based in the Church School, resulting in many musical presentations on biblical themes ('100 Percent Chance of Rain', 'Jonah', 'Godspell', 'A Ceremony of Carols', 'Once Upon a Night', 'Once Upon a Tree', plus numerous anthems and service music). The youth musical program was enormously important in bringing musical involvement to church families and in the growth and maturation of the young people within the church. Integrating young singers into the adult choir happened almost seamlessly and they assumed a leadership role within the choir.
5. Ministerial support: We have been blessed by the support and leadership of our ministers who,



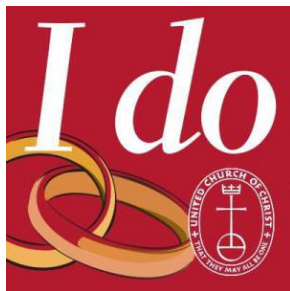
although different in their styles and personalities, have been constant in their support of the CCWM music program.

6. Musical Instruments: we have been fortunate to be able to purchase an excellent grand piano for the Sanctuary, largely due to the church's recognition of the importance of engaging the congregation and supporting the effectiveness of the music. The [historic] organ has been well maintained and has had important repairs as needed.

CCWM has been a musical church for many decades. The Church has seen many changes in that time. Music has been the glue that connects the present to the past and makes the future possible. At this pivotal moment for CCWM it is important to celebrate that which is good and positive while engaging the future.

With blessings and gratitude, Herman Weiss

PASTORAL REFLECTION



Resurrection Activism: Being an Easter People

Unless you have maintained a media blackout this week you have surely heard of the big splash made by our beloved United Church of Christ in the filing of a law suit in US District Court in Charlotte, North Carolina. The suit argues that the current law in North Carolina, as it pertains to marriage, violates the First Amendment right to religious freedom by prohibiting UCC ministers and other clergy from officiating at same-sex marriages. Here is why: After the passage of Amendment One in North Carolina in 2012 it became illegal for a member of the clergy to officiate at a wedding where a marriage license is not present. And, since in NC it is impossible for a same-sex couple to obtain a marriage license, any member of the clergy who officiates at a same-sex marriage ceremony in the state may be sentenced to "120 days in jail and/or probation and community service". In other words, the state of North Carolina is telling clergy that it is illegal to pray in the manner in which they see fit. For clergy like me—and many people of faith, marriage is more than just a civil ceremony. It is also a religious one. And under the current law, even if a member of the clergy is only intending to perform a religious ritual, and not to legally marry a same-sex couple, they could be arrested.

This is pretty big news and has been highlighted in more than one news cycle—in part because of the irony of the law suit turning on it's head the anti-equal-marriage-argument that equal marriage laws infringe on the First Amendment right to freedom of religion for those who do not want to bake a wedding cake or take wedding photos for a same gender couple! Some key religious conservatives who have battled equal marriage have unexpectedly acknowledged the legal point. Southern Baptist Seminary President Albert Mohler said this week, "Even as we advocate for religious liberty, we have to understand that the guarantee of religious liberty means the freedom of heretics to teach heresy," he said. "If we deny religious liberty for others, very soon others will deny religious liberty to us. That's fair warning and this case bears close attention."

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It is also big news because it is yet another “first” for our courageous, historically activist, justice driven denomination. If you have never seen the UCC’s list of “Firsts,” which will make you tear up with pride, check them out here: <http://www.ucc.org/about-us/ucc-firsts.html>. From the “the Pilgrims to the present” the Congregationalists/UCC’ers have been activists and led transformation throughout our American history in everything from religious freedom to abolishing slavery to women’s rights to civil rights to Marriage Equality. This law suit is a landmark action (in a long line of landmark actions) that our denominations has taken on behalf of justice—and I could not be more proud and grateful for the witness to Jesus’ call to love our neighbor and seek justice.

It also feels like “resurrection activism” by an Easter people—people who believe that God calls us to live and love and act in ways that change the status quo, that demonstrate that we take seriously Jesus’ call to care for the least of these and make the kin-dom of God a reality here and now, and that make the world the kind of place that God intended it to be when God created all of it and us! This kind of activism, called out from our faith and our understanding of Jesus’ Way, is the kind of witness that inspires and transforms. I pray that you might feel the same pride and gratitude that I feel for our denomination. And, I pray that like the women who arrived at the tomb, like the disciples to whom Jesus appeared in that locked room, like the men whose hearts burned on the road to Emmaus—that you will go and tell others about this provocative, bold act of love and grace that has been called forth from the UCC because of the resurrection! May grace and wisdom prevail as the situation unfolds.

Happy Eastertide

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

IN OUR PRAYERS AND PASTORAL CARE



Concerns: We pray for 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 Jack B. at the death of his sister, Susan D. of cancer (fighting cancer since 1992); Willie who is recovering from surgery; David, a teen and his family and friends after learning he has leukemia—may his treatment and recovery be complete; one who is struggling with envy, jealousy and forgiveness; Clarisse for finals and final week, a job search, her future plans; 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 returning from college soon for Kylie, Clarisse and Alex; Susan C. and team Krystle's successful Marathon run for Krystle Campbell team (raised almost 70K); the safe and joyful Marathon; 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; Diane's vacation to Disney with daughter and granddaughters; gratitude for the volunteers and help in the church office (Heather, Julie, Charlene, Brenda); all the wonderful worship we have experienced over the last month.

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 5/18 and 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.

Our Own Jeff Smith to Walk in NAMI Walk: Saturday, May 10, 2014 - The 11th Annual NAMI Walks Massachusetts; Artesani Park in Boston along the Charles River (9 am registration, 11am Walk starts). Can you help Jeff to raise funds for NAMI? Please contact him at JSmitty2000@hotmail.com.

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



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.

Sunday, May 4: MBA Spring Meeting, Congregational Church of Needham, 1154 Great Plain Ave. Keynote Speaker, Rev. Molly Baskette, Lead Pastor of First Church Somerville—presenting themes from her soon to be published book: *Real. Good. Church. How Our Church Came Back From the Dead and Yours Can Too (Pilgrim Press)*, will talk about First Church Somerville UCC's growth in spirit and numbers, and particularly about how a culture shift around money in the congregation helped with their dramatic renewal. Through visionary spending, and a risky but life-giving movement from Yankee 'privacy' to transparency, vulnerability and testimony about money and giving, this congregation has seen a six-fold increase in pledged giving in the last 10 years.

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.

MISSION AND OUTREACH

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

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.

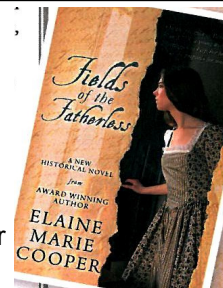
The Fabulous and Ecumenical Pride Morning Worship at 10am at Old South Church UCC, will celebrate 10 years of Equal Marriage!!!

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) .



Watch for Changes as our Exploration Continues Upcoming Schedule for Worship		
Sunday	5/4/2014	No Worship at CCWM 5 pm: Worship w/Communion, at North Prospect Union
Sunday	5/11/2014	10 am: Worship in Sanctuary, Mother's Day and Baptism
Sunday	5/18/2014	10 am: Worship in Sanctuary
Sunday	5/25/2014	10 am: Worship in Sanctuary
Sunday	6/1/2014	10 am: Worship at CCWM Congregational Decision Making Meeting—Bold Decision

- Please Save These Additional Dates**
- Sunday, May 16--18: Church Council will email and 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 to 12 noon) and Tuesday, May 27: Leadership Team will offer 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 7—Online Worship and Discussion: "Kickball"
<http://fuze.me/23459647>

This films asks the question: "If God really cares about us, why don't we have what we want?"
 Hmm. Is it easier to want what is in front of us than to trust that God might know better?

Wed., May 14—Joint Ministry Team Meeting; no online worship
Wed., May 21—Online Worship and Discussion

*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.

Hospice Volunteer Training Hallmark Health VNA: At the heart of Hospice are its volunteers. Hospice volunteers are caring individuals who provide a helping presence for people facing terminal illness and their families. Whether by reading aloud, running an errand, or just listening, you can make a difference in the lives of others as a Hospice volunteer. Registration is required. Hallmark Health VNA and Hospice will be holding a training program for those interested in becoming a hospice volunteer. The training is held one night a week for nine weeks from 6:00-8:30pm at the agency's office in Malden. Please call Allison Caplin at (781) 338-7863 for further information.