

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

Being A Christian in an Age of Pluralism

As our young people (my own 14 year old included) stand on the precipice of adulthood, poised to make an “Adult” decision to affirm their baptism and join our mighty band of Jesus followers through the Rite of Confirmation—I am struck by how very different the world is for Christians from when most of us “joined the church”! The context in which they live, the questions they ask, the presumptions they carry into their engagement with faith and the church are so different that one could say it is another world—a post-modern world for sure, and a post-Christian world as well. These differences define the context that is leading us to sell our big building and imagine a while new way of being followers and community.

As I was preparing for worship this week, I discovered again (for the first time ;-)) Marcus Borg’s reflections on being Christian at a time such as this. Many of you know of his theological reflections and his work as a member of the Jesus Seminar. He is a historian—and yet he is an ardent Christian who finds a way to balance the data and facts of post modernity with a passionate faith life and active religious practice. Here are a few thoughts that seem apropos to a Confirmation Sunday and our youths’ decision (from chapter 11 of Borg’s book, “Living the Heart of Christianity”).

Heart and Home: “Why I’m a Christian”

The Christian tradition is familiar; it is “home” for me. I was born into it and grew up in it. Its stories, language, music, and ethos are familiar. It nurtured me.

I have grown to appreciate its extraordinary richness: its antiquity and wisdom; the beauty of its language and music and forms of worship; its passion for compassion and justice; the sheer goodness of its most remarkable lives. Its worship nourishes me; its hymns move me; its scripture and theology engage my imagination and thought; its practices shape me.

For me, it mediates the good, the true, and the beautiful; and through all these, it mediates the sacred. It is, for me, a sacrament of the sacred. And it is home.

It is familiar to me in a way that no other religion could ever become. Had I been born a Buddhist or a Muslim or a Jew ... I am quite sure I would still be one.

But for me, Christianity is “home” like no other tradition could be. For me, the ethos of Christianity – its vision and way of life, its scripture, worship, language, music, thought, vision, and so forth – is home. Home is about more than familiarity and comfort. Home is also about

...continued next page

growing up, about maturation, about learning and living a way of life that one takes into the larger world. Christianity is a way of life; that is its heart. To be Christian means living “the path” within this tradition. At the heart of Christianity is the way of the heart—a path that transforms us at the deepest level of our being.

At the heart of Christianity is the heart of God—a passion for our transformation and the transformation of the world. At the heart of Christianity is participating in the passion of God.

—Marcus Borg

What a blessing it will be to learn from our young people this week and beyond—the ways that they are choosing to live as Christians in a pluralistic culture, in this dramatically different and whole new world! May we all see their journey as connected to ours and may we learn new ways of seeing Jesus in each other through them.

Happy Eastertide

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

IN OUR PRAYERS AND PASTORAL CARE



Concerns: We pray for Thelma T. recuperating; June L. coming home from a hospitalization; Ernestine S. in rehab; Dick S. missing his wife's presence; for Kim caring for so many; for Eva W.; for those for whom Mother's Day is sad from having lost their mothers; the girls kidnapped in Nigeria and their mothers; for all whose lives are effected by the sex trade and other forms of slavery; Meckenzie having surgery on Thursday, Patti's asthma and an infected pic line. We continue to pray for a friend, Marlin who lost his husband to depression; the anxiety we feel as we face our decisions; Kathy W. in her prison work and keeping the balancing act it requires; a brother Rich in financial struggle; for sexton Steve S. caring for his father and grandson; patience for all who are working so hard on our transition; our students heading home fro college; 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 our own process of discernment; Tom C. for relief from chronic neck pain; 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 pray in gratitude that Tom C's cataract operation went well; Patti's asthma is better (so glad she can be with us today during the baptism); Ose celebrated her daughter's wedding last weekend, (so happy it went well), she now has a wonderful partner for life; Jenny B. celebrating Kate's Gold Award (Girl Scouts) to be presented at the State House on June 27; and the progress we are making toward the future—including a very generous offer on our property.

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

Summer Worship Plans—House Church!! The Church Council has proposed, in conjunction with the sale of our church property and to support continued discussion about what our weekly worship model might be that at least for the summer, we continue to worship at 10:00 am on Sunday and do so in each other's homes. So for July and August while the proposed hospitality and ministry center is under construction we are looking for volunteers to host our Sunday worship. The deacons will be organizing the worship locations through the summer and will be arranging worship during Rev. Wendy's vacation. If you can host a Sunday morning gathering either at your home or at an outdoor venue that would provide for a covering in the case of rain (15-25 people) please be in touch with Karen (karenmccunebarca@gmail.com).



Fellowship Hour Help Needed—through our Final Worship June 29: 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 and the last three Sundays in June. 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 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



Packing and Closet Cleaning! We are getting ourselves ready for the big move! Kathy Williams is leading the effort to “clean out our closets.” Work is now being done on many Tuesday nights to clear our records and historical documents. If you would like to join Kathy and Julie on this mission, please contact her at kathypricewilliams@yahoo.com. And if you can help with inventory/cleaning out closets of trash and other 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. 3. A Direct cash/check donation to Louise would be very helpful. Your show of support will make all the difference... Thank you!

A Note of Thanks and Sweet Sentiments from Lorene Hegner and her Peer Group of Spiritual Directors:

*“For a long time we made our way around the hill country of Seir. Then the Lord said to Moses, “You have made your way around this hill country long enough; now turn north....—Deut.2
Peace on the journey.*

To The Congregation of CCWM, We wish to express our heartfelt gratitude for your gracious hospitality, not only for this year but for the past twelve years of our peer group meetings in the church living room once per month. How time has blown by....however, we will always remember your welcoming and kind spirit. Our prayers are also with you as you journey through new territory both planned and unplanned. May God’s grace and love, lead you into a bright future. Thank you again and Many Blessings.



—Monday’s Peer Group of Spiritual Directors, Eunice, Margie, Pam, Catherine, Susan and Lorene

Issued May 14, 2014
Call to a Congregational Meeting of the Governing Body of
The Congregational Church of West Medford, United Church of Christ
on
Sunday, June 1, 2014 (10:00 am)
at 400 High Street, Medford, MA

The Officers and Church Council of the Congregational Church of West Medford issue this call to a Congregational Meeting to:

1. Vote on a 2014 budget correction (a subtotal of \$ 45,150.00 itemized but not included in the total approved at January, 2014 Annual Meeting);
2. Vote on Church Council's recommendation to sell the property at 400 High Street, Medford, MA to the Evangelical Haitian Church of Somerville for the sum of \$2.9 Million (See Addendum I);
3. Vote to approve a special draw down of up to \$100,000 from CCWM's invested funds to cover financial obligations incurred between June 1, 2014 and Jan 1, 2015. The actual spending will be approved by church council and may include (but not be limited to):
 - a. expenses required to close the sale of the property; (i.e.: remediation of any environmental concerns, surveyor and attorney's fees);
 - b. moving and storage expenses;
 - c. capital expenses to open the ministry center (should you approve the model for ministry);
 - d. additions to the operating budget to implement (should you approve the model for ministry).
4. Vote to approve the "Vision for a New Model for Ministry" (See Addendum II) The proposal includes:
 - a. A Mission Statement and Vision for our Future;
 - b. A New Model for Ministry—which will entail the development and eventual implementation of new Bylaws, Name, Location/Operation, Mission, Worship, Partnerships, Leadership Development and Income, all of which are to be determined going forward;
 - c. A Plan to Establish Measureable Goals and Milestones for the New Ministry;
 - d. A Budget to Support the Model for Ministry.
5. Present a Proposed Time Line for the Implementation of the Decisions Made (See Addendum III);
6. Consider other new business as brought forth by members or friends of the congregation.

Signed,
Rich Carle, Co-Moderator
Paul Roberts, Co-Moderator

Watch for Changes as our Exploration Continues Upcoming Schedule for Worship		
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

More Important Dates

- 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.
- Sunday, June 15—Celebrating CE Programs, Senior Scholarship Awards, Music Sunday
- Sunday, June 22—Honoring our History—the Stories of our Stained Glass
- Sunday, June 29—Taking Leave of the Sanctuary



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 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.*

MISSION AND OUTREACH



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,

PARTY FOR A GREAT CAUSE!!! Friday, May 30 -- 6:30-8:30 pm; at *First Congregational Church in Winchester, 21 Church Street* jointly sponsored by the *Congregational Church of West Medford* Please join us for an awareness and fundraising event to support our summer adult mission trip to the Lakota Reservation in Pine Ridge, South Dakota! The evening will include:

- tasty food prepared by mission trippers
- moving stories and slides from CCWM members who have been to Pine Ridge
- sponsorship opportunities to help cover the cost of vans, program fees, airfare, etc.
- social time, including fun and games for all

The purpose of our trip is to meet and learn about the history, culture and spirituality of the Lakota people, and to offer our hearts and hands in fellowship and service. We will be bringing your love with us. We also need your financial support. Please come on the 30th prepared to have a good time – and don't forget your checkbook. Thank you!!! RSVP/questions: Jena Roy (jenaroy@aol.com, 781-729-2520)

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!!!

Outdoor Church Sandwich Making, Sunday, June 29: Save the Date!!

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**

CONGRATULATIONS CONFIRMATION CLASS!

