

The Messenger

Fisk Memorial United Methodist Church - 106 Walnut St., Natick, MA 01760

January 2015

Reflections from Pastor Xia

Dear Fisk church family and friends, New Year greetings from your church home!

By the time you receive this, much of the traditional excitement that accompanies Christmas will be over, and a new year begins. Before you know it, the Christmas decorations will come down. On a personal level, I don't like taking decorations down. There is something about the anticipation that is in the air before Christmas Day, along with the special 'happenings' that seem to fill us with a wonderful spirit! January, then, seems more like a time to get back to normal and return to all of our routines.

The good news is that while the 'official' Christmas season must come to an end, the true joy and meaning does not. It makes all the difference when you and I can hold before us the thought that this is really about the Christ Child born in Bethlehem. It is about God acting in a miraculous way to come to us in the person of His son. The trappings of the season may have to be put away, but not the heart of Christmas; our Savior born in Bethlehem! When we keep this and treasure it in our hearts, then each day becomes a celebration of his presence in our lives, filled with love and new possibilities.

As this New Year begins, let one of your resolutions be to celebrate Christ's birth, life, death, and resurrection on a daily basis. Take time to remember the difference he makes in your life; let each day be a witness to the trust and confidence you have because of him. And even better, share this Christmas joy with those around you! I cannot help but think of the magi who came to Bethlehem seeking the baby Jesus. It was an incredible journey, but they found him and

worshipped him. Yet, the time came for them to leave and return to their own country. We do not know their story after this, but I am confident that they returned and shared all that they had experienced. As you reflect the light of Christ, as people see the light of Christ in you and through you, you *do* make a difference in the lives of others. My prayer is that the wonder of Christ's birth will fill your life, and that you too will share it with others ... every day.

Deep blessings,

Pastor Xia Jiao-Chur



Staff of Fisk Memorial United Methodist Church

Pastor:	Rev. Xia Jiao-Chur
Deacon:	Rev. Cheryln Gates
Choir Director /Organist:	Eric Mazonson
Admin. / Newsletter Editor:	Judy Bortolotti
Youth Minister:	TBA

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Eric's Email: amazonson@verizon.net

Church Website: www.fiskumc.org

February Messenger deadline: January 26

Worship Service Participants and

Volunteers for



Acolytes

January 4 - Kelli

January 11 – Sarah & Rebecca

January 18 – Rose

January 25- Sarah

Liturgists

January 4 – Rev. Cheryl Gates

January 11 – Diane French

January 18 – Mark Owen

January 25 – Amy Bruns



Communion Servers

January 4– James & Dorothy Phillips

Greeters

January 4 - Marcia Hoyt & Terry Ames

January 11 –Terry Ames

January 18 - Leo & Julia Jaco

January 25- Diane French & Susan Carney

Coffee Hour Hosts

January 4- Leo & Julia Jaco

January 11 – Tom and Susan Carney



Coffee hour hosts are needed for the rest of January. Please sign up on the bulletin board outside of Whipple Hall if you can help!



\$ \$ Finance Update – January 2015

“And the angel said unto them, “Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy...” Luke 2:10 KJV

We all love the Christmas story, and those good tidings. We are pleased to report that we at Fisk are blessed with a very positive response to our financial concerns. In an effort to share this good news, on a preliminary basis, here at press time on December 30, we know that:

- December pledges were 13% over budget,
- November/December giving was 7% more than last year,
- Our special appeal to increase awareness provided a very blessed \$3,400,
- Our special fund raisers were well supported, well attended, and provided much needed support.

So, let us all say thank you for a wonderful effort and commitments to giving. We do not yet have the final results, especially on the spending side of supporting our ministries. We do not yet know what 2015 will bring. We do not yet know all of our challenges for 2015. We DO know that we still need to hear from a few of our faithful supporters who have not yet had the chance to complete their 2015 Commitment of Giving. We do know that we will need everyone’s prayerful and giving support in 2015. But, let us pause to say thank you, and recognize our blessings, and celebrate the good tidings of the angels.

Members of Finance Committee, which includes representatives from other committees at Fisk:

Michael Bruns (Chair), Pastor Xia, Dorothy Phillips (Lay Leader), Thom Townsend (Chair-Admin Board), David Cail (Treasurer), Sherry Culver (Financial Secretary), Jen Garran, Geoff Del Sesto (Trustees), Tom Currie (SPRC), Frank Foss, Larry Drolet,



United Methodist Women

...we are women focused on mission.

Our mission initiatives include:

- Providing opportunities to grow spiritually
- Equipping women & girls to be leaders
- Providing transformative educational experiences
- Organizing for growth & flexibility
- Working for justice through service and advocacy

From its beginning, United Methodist Women has focused on ministries with women, children, and youth. As we begin another calendar year we continue to focus on these statements while we fellowship and grow together

Our next meeting is a Luncheon on Sunday, January 4

We will witness the Installation of our Officers for 2015 during the Worship Service...then host a Luncheon for all women of Fisk interested in our focus. Plan to join us.



Prayer and Meditation Saturday, February 14th from 9:30am – 11:00am

We have planned a morning of Prayer and Meditation. Experience many types of prayer and varied ways to meditate. Something for everyone, plan to join us.

We have scheduled more daytime meetings to accommodate those not wanting to drive in the evening during the winter months. We also offer rides to those not able to get to the church. Call Barbara Beekman.



The UMM group includes all men connected to Fisk who choose to gather for fellowship, to share a meal and to decide how to focus our energies. Come and share your ideas.



Men's Breakfast

January 10th @ 8:30am Fisk Church

Contact: Gary Hoyt 508-655-0077

United Methodist Economic Ministry Salem Maine

...is an extension ministry of the [New England Conference](#) of the [United Methodist Church](#). Their work is grounded in the desire to embody God's heart for the poor by addressing economic injustice, and by maintaining a compassionate, visible presence in the lives of the people of the region.

UMM supports this mission site by selling wreaths and Maple Syrup. We (the UMM) THANK YOU for your support of these projects and helping to make a difference in the lives of these families.



A Note from the SPRC:

Our Youth Minister, Marcus, has taken a position elsewhere and has resigned as Fisk's Youth Minister. We wish him the best in his future endeavors. *The SPRC is working to fill the open position as quickly as possible.*

We are updating our Church Family records!

Somewhere in this Messenger you will find a biographical information sheet for you to complete for your family. We want to be sure that we have your current mailing address, email addresses, ages of children and birth-date information for our church family records.

The form may be completed and returned to Fisk via regular mail, email or left in the office for our Admin Assistant Judy.

You may also complete a form during Time for Fellowship on Sundays during January. See Sherry Culver or Marcia Hoyt with questions or to complete a form.

A Special THANK YOU!

A special Christmas greeting was mysteriously presented to us all before Christmas! The sign at the front entrance to the church, written

in Chinese said:

"Merry Christmas!" and "Chinese spoken here"

It was a great idea to spread the WORD... and our thanks to Kai Jiao-Chur for the thoughts, the creativity, and the gift!

WORSHIP - TEAM NEWS!

What a wondrous time in the life of the Church! We have journeyed through Advent, preparing our hearts for the commemorating the birth of Jesus.

In January we will be following Jesus through his life up to the beginning of his ministry.



January 4 -- Epiphany -- The arrival of the 3 Wise Men and their warning to Mary and Joseph to flee from Herod. Why?.

January 11 -- The baptism of Jesus by John and God's declaration of Jesus as Son and Heir. How does John feel?



January 18 -- Jesus travels to Galilee. While there, he begins the choosing of his disciples. Peter and John are NOT the first!!! Who are?

January 25 -- Jesus announcing the good news of God's Kingdom and chooses 4 more disciples. Who else does he choose?

These are merely the highlights of the first 30+ yrs in the life of Jesus. We encourage you to fill in the blanks. Find a comfortable Bible, one that fits where you are in your spiritual journey. Check with Pastor Xia and Cheryl Gates, Deacon for suggestions.

We look forward to seeing you on Sundays and during the weeks at gatherings.

Serving the Lord,

The Worship Team



Your help is requested.

We are in need of someone to teach the Grade 2-5 Sunday School Class for the months of January and February. There are about 6 students who attend. The Curriculum is provided and it is great curriculum! Do you have 8 hours to give to these students? Any questions --- please speak to Susan Carney.

Since our Youth Pastor has left, we are in need of a middle/ high school Sunday School teacher. Again, there are about 5-6 students and we have great curriculum. I am not sure how long of a commitment this would be But let's say a month at a time. It is a wonderful way to get to know our youth.

We are also in need of someone to lead the Adult class. I can tell you that I was very blessed to have led a discussion of Women of the Bible during the fall. It is a super group. The month of January can be a topic of your choosing or Men of the Bible and material will be provided. You will learn so much by being the discussion leader!

Please pray about these needs and speak to me at susanjcarney@gmail.com with questions.

2015 Altar Flowers



The 2015 flower reservation calendar is up on the bulletin board next to the church office. The fresh flowers placed on the altar each Sunday beautify the sacred space of our church to honor God and they are a gift to those attending morning worship. The altar flowers can be dedicated to commemorate a special event, birthday or anniversary, or to remember a loved one. Please contact Debi Henry for more information or to reserve a Sunday.

UMW Hannah Circle

*The first meeting of 2015 for the Hannah Circle will be Tuesday, January 13th - 12 noon to 2 p.m.
This first meeting falls on International Skeptics Day!
Amazing! Women are invited to bring their lunch.
Dessert and beverages are provided.
We will celebrate this special day appropriately!*



Did you know we have a wonderful nursery for our youngest members? I am sure you see it as you walk by it coming in the Whipple Hall door. While it is staffed professionally at the present time, there are times that numbers require an extra pair of eyes and hands. What a great problem to have!

If you are interested in helping out once or twice during the year – please let me know.

Please let folks that have young children know that we provide this service during Sunday School and during our Sunday morning Worship Services.



The nursery could use some additional books and puzzles for our youngest learners.

If you are doing spring cleaning, please keep us in mind!



keep



UMW 2015 Reading Program

All Women at Fisk! The UMW Reading Program encourages members to think critically about current issues through an annual selection of member-reviewed books. It offers an excellent opportunity to deepen your spirituality and to broaden your understanding of our mission work. For 140 years, United Methodist Women have been involved in mission that includes prayer, study and action. The UMW Reading Program is a study opportunity, but it also can lead to action! You never know what God may ask you to do!

Children and Youth! A new and exciting part of the reading program has begun here at Fisk! We know moms and dads are reading to children, sometimes selecting books from the UMW Reading Program lists. Now, we want to give children and youth an opportunity to read these books, receive credit when criteria are met, and then receive a Reading Program certificate. Since United Methodist Women – and United Methodist Men - are concerned about ALL children, we want to involve any child wishing to participate. The reading lists offer a wide variety of subjects that not only increase awareness of global concerns, but enhance spirituality, self-esteem and leadership development.

There are six different reading programs for 2015. Reading lists and registration forms are available in Ogle Parlor by the bookshelf. These shelves hold UMW Reading Program approved selections that can be checked out. Books from the 2015 list will be ordered shortly. Group Book Discussions will begin in March. For more information on the Reading Program, please contact *Debi Henry, UMW Resource Coordinator*.



Young children are invited to our FREE Music and Movement class! We have musical instruments, guitar music, parades, singing with active movements. Everyone has a great time! The children and the parents love this time together on Saturday mornings. This is geared for toddlers through grade two.

Saturday's January 3 & 17

Church-wide Leadership Retreat/ Planning meeting and Pre-Retreat Survey

Planners: Visioning Team

Dorothy J. Phillips, Lay Leader

Pastor Xia Jiao-Chur, and the Visioning Team invite you to attend the Church-wide Leadership Retreat/Planning Meeting at Fisk Memorial United Methodist Church on Saturday, January 31, 2015 from 9 AM to 12 Noon (registration begins at 8:45 AM).

We will look ahead with a focused vision for year 2015! Come together to brainstorm what we can do to support outreach ministry and extend our hospitality to the wider community. Continental Breakfast, snacks, child care and great fellowship while we ALL look ahead for Fisk

In preparation for the church-wide retreat, your input is needed to successfully expand outreach ministries and start new programs that enthuse and attract others to this faith community.

The Visioning team would like to hear from you via the simple questionnaire enclosed in this January 2015 Messenger, (which will also be available during the Time of Fellowship on Sunday's in January).

Please send the completed survey to the church office or give it to a member of the Visioning Team.

After completing the survey, please take the next step with us! Join your brothers and sisters in Christ at the church-wide Leadership Retreat/Planning meeting on January 31st.

If you have any questions, please ask a member of the Visioning Team: Michael Bruns, Pastor Xia Jiao-Chur, Zackary Gates, Deborah Hernandez, Marcia Hoyt, Dorothy Phillips, and Thom Townsend.

