

The Messenger

fiskoffice@fiskumc.org

Fisk Memorial United Methodist Church
106 Walnut St., Natick, MA 01760 (508) 653-1674

www.fiskumc.org

April 2024

Pastor's Message

We just celebrated Easter/Resurrection Sunday. As 'Resurrected People' and faithful Christians, we have always anticipated a resurrection after a tedious and tasteless Good Friday experience. Though some Christians would like to bypass the Lenten journey and celebrate Easter, the resurrection is the climax of the crucifixion story.

The truth is, there can be no resurrection without a Good Friday. The resurrection brings new life and gives hope beyond the empty tomb. It affirms that Jesus Christ conquered death and lives. And because Christ lives, we can live, and face all the tomorrows of pain, grief, loneliness, hatred, and other human conditions. "Jesus Christ is Risen!"

Knowing and believing that Jesus Christ is risen, that gift of forgiveness and the promise of new life is guaranteed. Therefore, as we claim this new life this day and the days ahead, let us be like butterflies, symbols of freedom, transformation, and new life. We can also be messengers and/or heralds of the good news of salvation and abundant life. Most of all, we can express our love for humanity and our passion to worship and serve God.

Since we are in the season of spring, let us spring up, spring forward to get wet with 'April showers' of blessings to become lasting butterflies that enjoy "May Flowers." As we do, we will be seen as God's favored butterflies to nurture relationships and a long-lasting commitment through eternity. So, why waste valuable time? Is it because of all the human conditions that we have no control over? Well, having no control means surrendering to someone. We have a God that we can surrender all, no judging, no blaming, just being you with grace and no self-pity.

The Resurrection experience of Jesus Christ continues and is important because it has withstood the scrutiny of all investigations despite some concerted efforts to disprove it. Rejoice each day because we can trust Christ with all human conditions. We can become the best butterflies that have the power of hope and determination to reach the final destiny of eternity. That power still exists today within each of us and among us. And that power is larger and greater than any power in the universe.

"BLESSINGS with LOVE and PRAYERS as the journey continues!

+ Pastor Alecia

We WELCOME All

Fisk United Methodist Church is a loving community of believers and servants with open hearts. We extend our welcome to all people, celebrating differences in age, economic reality, nationality, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, abilities, and limitations.

- We invite all to find a spiritual home with us and to share in the fellowship, worship, sacraments, ministry, responsibilities, and blessings of participation in our congregation.
- We affirm the gifts and graces of all persons.
- We are committed to be a fellowship in which all persons feel a part of our family.
- And, we invite you to work for justice with us.

Statement of the Administrative Board, Fisk UMC, 2019

All persons are invited to Fisk UMC Worship Service

Every Sunday at 10:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary.

To connect by telephone use either of these numbers:

+1 646 558 8656 US

Enter Meeting ID: **994 3325 8889**

+1 312 626 6799 US

Enter Meeting ID: **994 3325 8889**

By computer, tablet, or smart phone, use this

link: <https://zoom.us/j/99433258889>

Or visit www.Zoom.us and enter

Meeting ID: **994 3325 8889**

Worship

For Personal & Spiritual Growth & Reflection- April 2024

For continuous spiritual growth and reflection, please worship with us every Sunday. In addition, you may be touched and strengthened when you find time to study and reflect. During this month you can read the following scripture passages from the lectionary:

April 7 Acts 4:32-35 John 20:19-31

-Dr. Dorothy Phillips

April 14 Acts 3:12-19 Luke 24: 36-48

-TBD

April 21 1 John 3:16-24 John 10: 11-18

-Debbie Friscino

April 28 Acts 8:26-40 John 15: 1-8

-TBD

Note: Please email the Church Office at:

FiskOffice@FiskUMC.org to choose a date to be a liturgist. There is also a liturgist sign up sheet located in the back of the Sanctuary. Thank you!

Save the Dates!

Tuesday, April 2nd at 4:00 p.m. United Women in Faith meeting in rooms 8 & 9 at Fisk UMC. "Prayer and Self- Denial" will be led by Susan Carney.

Thursday, April 11th 12:00 p.m. The Susanna Circle will meet at Janis Cail's home

UWF-Northeastern Jurisdiction Quadrennial Event
– **April 18-21**

General Conference:

- April 23-May 3, 2024 Charlotte, North Carolina

April 22, is Earth Day. Let us celebrate the environment God has given and advocate for it.

Saturday, April 27th 9a.m.-noon. Simple Recycling Event in the Fisk Church Parking lot. Recycle textiles and old clothes with us!

On Sunday, May 5th, we will observe "Mental Health Awareness" during worship.

We recognize that love and compassion are life-giving elements in communities. Hence, we encourage all people to be sensitive and supportive

to those in need. And by doing so, we can be God's presence of the 'Balm in Gilead' to create spaces for healing, reconciliation, and wholeness.

And let us never forget that we as the church can learn more ways to reach out to those dealing with mental illness, support families, and advocate for improved local and governmental services. Stay Alert!

Saturday, May 11th – Fisk Yard Sale!

Our New England Annual Conference

June 20-22, 2024

Hybrid Session Zoom or in person

Boston North Shore DoubleTree, Danvers, MA

Clergy and Laity sessions and Preachers' Aid

Society Luncheon Wednesday, June 19, 2024

Theme: "Co-Creating Justice & Joy"

Guiding Scripture: Isaiah 58:6-14, The Message

Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference

- July 8-12, 2024
- OMNI William Penn Hotel Pittsburgh, PA
- **THEME: OVERFLOWING WITH HOPE**

Finance

Finance Update – April 2024

Our finances at Fisk remain consistent to the past months and the past few years.

The faithful support of our congregation allows us to collectively continue to support and participate in many missions both locally and on a broader scale. Praise God for his goodness and blessings to all of us.

However, we are operating for the 3rd year in a row with a deficit budget. Yes, our expenses exceed our expected income for 2024. As such, our cash reserves will continue to be depleted.

Please pray for our church spiritually and financially, and ask God for guidance in all that we do.

Please speak with any member of the Finance Committee if further information is desired.

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

Mike Bruns (Chair), Pastor Alecia, Dorothy Phillips (Lay Leader), Tom Currie (Chair-Admin Board), Jen Garrant (Treasurer), Crystal Mayo (Financial Secretary), Geoffrey Del Sesto (Trustees), Michelle Drolet (SPRC), David Cail (Trustees), and Thom Townsend (Trustees).

Please see the CONFIRMATION CLASS

schedule below, led by our United Methodist HUB Pastors, at rotating locations (Fisk, Wayland, and Weston). Thanks, as God blesses the youth with wisdom for generations to come.

Meeting Schedule

Sat. April 6, (3:45 p.m.) We will meet at 3:45 p.m. for the 4:00 p.m. Mass at St. Ann Church (Good Shepherd Parish) [124 Cochituate Rd., Wayland, MA](#) for a one hour worship service.

Sunday, April 7, (2:00 pm-3:30pm) - Community UMC

Sunday, April 28, (2:00 pm-3:30pm) - Fisk Memorial UMC

Sunday, May 5, (2:00 pm-3:30pm) - Weston UMC

Sunday, May 12, (2:00 pm-3:30pm) - Fisk Memorial UMC

Saturday, May 18, (10:00a.m.-12:00p.m.) Confirmation Celebration at Community UMC

Stewardship

Stewardship note

You have all heard many times that The Lord loves a cheerful giver.

This month lets add a verse from the book of 1st Peter where we read:

1 Peter 4:10

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of GOD’S grace in its various forms”

We are thankful for your support of all of our missions and ministries as you contribute your time, talents and tithes. We have entered this new year with many challenges and encourage each individual and family to keep current with their pledge. We have had a slow start to the Fisk 2024 giving. If you have fallen somewhat behind, we ask that you make April the month that we all get caught up with our giving.

Children’s Sunday School Classes



The Sunday School children did an amazing job parading down the aisle of Fisk Church at the Palm Sunday Service! They are all such blessings!



Join us as we learn all about God's Word and His love for us! We meet at **9:30 a.m. -10:15 a.m. on Sunday mornings in Room 2.**

-Carolyn DiSciullo and Susan Carney



The Fisk Church outdoor spring clean-up

The Fisk Church outdoor spring clean-up will be on Saturday, April 20 at 8:00 a.m.

-All are invited! (Raking, trimming, sweeping, sprucing up Gammons Memorial Park)

~ Sponsored by The United Methodist Men and Trustees

Bishop’s Day on the District



Bishop’s last District Day in 2024 before returning to retirement-Thank You Bishop Johnson!



United Women in Faith

Go GREEN- fill a PINK bag!

Members of UWF are sponsoring an **EARTH DAY recycling opportunity:**

Recycle textiles and old clothes with us on **Saturday April 27th between 9:00 a.m.-noon.** (no later please -this is a one-time scheduled pick-up)

Items do NOT need to be in a pink bag but they do need to be dry and free of hazardous materials as oil.

Don't forget shoes, pillows, blankets, drapes, hats, pocketbooks, sleeping bags, toys and towels too!

Simple Recycling will be onsite to collect our bags. Help us **FILL** the **TRUCK**.

In addition to being good stewards of the earth, this is also a fundraiser for us and all proceeds go to missions.



What's Next?

Tuesday April 2nd at 4 p.m.
Prayer and Self-Denial

Susan Carney will lead our yearly meeting on prayer and self-denial.

YARD SALE is coming!

It's time to start saving items for the yard sale Saturday, May 11th- You know the drill!



Did you know that Natick is part of two watersheds? Or that the toilet paper we use can negatively impact our water?

What you add to groundwater in part of Natick enters the ocean at Plum Island while in other parts of Natick it ends up in Boston! We are part of the Assabet-Sudbury-Condord River system as well as that of the Charles River. We were fortunate to have Dr Sarah Kwan and Alison Field-Juma from OARS join us for brunch in March to share what's going on with local waterways.

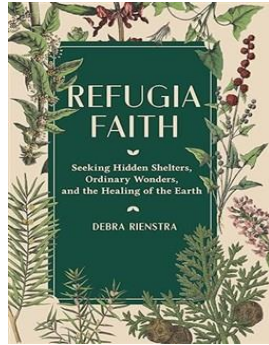
We learned that some of the challenges facing rivers and the wildlife that live in them are a result of pollution, interventions we've made (as dams) as well as climate change. We learned that there are **MANY** sources of PFAs in our household goods and talked about ways we can reduce the PFAs we introduce into our water supply. (Did you know that toilet paper is actually one source of them? And, did you know that we've started using coffee cups that are plastic AND PFA-free?)

In addition to limiting your plastic use, join us in choosing PFAs-free goods as well!

CLIMATE CHANGE and THEOLOGY

This event recurs Weekly from Wednesday, April 3, 2024 to Wednesday, May 8, 2024 by Zoom

This six-week inter-church book study on climate change and theology is offered by the Green Church Movement of the New England Conference.



The book: Refugia Faith: Seeking Hidden Shelters, Ordinary Wonders, and the Healing of the Earth by Debra Rienstra,

New England Conference Creation Care Task Force member Peggy Drew will lead the online study, which continues weekly until May 8. A UMC Global Ministries EarthKeeper, Drew is a lay servant at Main Street UMC in Nashua, NH. She has an MA Spiritual Formation and MA Theological Studies.

Participants are expected to be present for the six sessions (barring personal emergency) and have the capacity to read an average of 40 pages each week. To learn more or register, contact Drew at the email below.

“Debra Rienstra has hit on a truly powerful new metaphor for helping us feel our way through an almost impossible moment in our career as a species. Her idea of ‘refugia’ offers some combination of solace, realistic hope, and inspiration; one prays that, in particular, people of faith will use this as a goad and a help to take the actions we all know we must. This book is a small classic.” — Bill McKibben

Email peggydrew21@outlook.com
Contact Peggy Drew, study leader

If you feel the nudge to contribute to this agency, just “memo” JFON on your check. It is important work...caring for those underserved and looking for a better life.

WHERE THE MONEY GOES

Our Annual Mission Budget includes a line item for JFON. What is JFON?



For over 15 years, New England Justice for Our Neighbors has provided free, expert legal aid to low- and no-income immigrants, specializing in humanitarian-based cases. Our clients include unaccompanied minors, asylum applicants, and victims of violence. We currently serve immigrants across Western, Central, and Northeast Massachusetts, providing both in-person and remote appointments. We are proud to be an affiliate of the [Immigration Law & Justice Network](#).

Our work helps families stay together, victims of violence escape further harm, asylum seekers find a safe haven, and unaccompanied minors begin a new, more promising future. The effects of legal status ripple out from our clients themselves, who are often heads of household, to their children and eventually additional generations.

Our impact-We have served hundreds of clients, helping them obtain safety, security, self-sufficiency, and justice. Our clients have faced unspeakable hardship and exhibited extraordinary bravery and resourcefulness to reach our doors, and we are proud to be able to help them take this momentous next step in their journey. We serve asylum seekers, unaccompanied minors, and victims



of violence, such as gang violence, human trafficking, and domestic violence. Our clients came to us predominantly from the Americas (North America: 33%; Central America: 28%; South America: 25%). 17% of these clients are originally from Guatemala, 17% from Haiti, and 12% from Brazil. As the immigration state of emergency continues in Massachusetts, demand for immigrant services, including immigrant legal services, has only increased, and we are here to help as many people and families as possible.



Save the Dates

April 28 and May 5

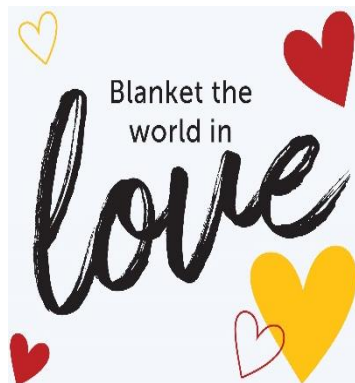


Traditionally, we have had Gift Cards for you to give as a gift to anyone who is a MOM, A MOTHER FIGURE TO YOU, A MOTHER-TO-BE, AN AUNT, A GRANDMOTHER. These cards are \$10.00 each and support this nation-wide ministry. Church World Service distributes BLANKETS to those in need...the homeless, those living on the streets. This is sharing LOVE in an act of kindness.

We're grateful for past your generosity and the desire to share the warmth, compassion and blankets with others.

"And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three: and the greatest of these is love."
- 1 Corinthians 13:13

Our Committee will have a table during Fellowship Time on these two Sundays ...choose your card and tell someone you covered someone with love...a warm blanket.



(We will also have cards that support other mission agencies.)

Missions Committee-Marcia Hoyt-Chairperson,
Janis Cail, Janis Townsend, Mary Greenwood

Prayer Box / Prayer Wall/ Prayer line

Prayer is the master key that can open and close all doors. When you find the need to pray with the assurance that others are praying for and with you, leave a prayer on the prayer wall, in the prayer box on the front lawn of the church, on-line on our website, or just call and speak with **Pastor Alecia at (617) 966-7048. The Wednesday night prayer line: Wednesdays 6:00-6:30 p.m. Dial: 1-712-775-7270, Access code: 580274# (Note: There will not be a prayer night on April 10th.)**

Remember that no one walks alone. We at Fisk UMC are willing and ready to travel the journey with you.

Fisk Church Staff

Rev. Alecia Reeves-Freeman, Pastor

Fiskpastor@fiskumc.org

Dr. Americo Motta, Minister of Music

Fiskmusicministry@gmail.com

Susan Carney, Director of Christian Education

SusanjCarney@gmail.com

Carolyn DiSciullo, Administrative Assistant

Fiskoffice@fiskumc.org

Office Phone: (508) 653-1674

Website: www.fiskumc.org

Church email: Fiskoffice@fiskumc.org

Church Office Hours: Mon., Tues., Wed., & Fri.

9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

New England Conference Information

What Local Church Leaders Need to Know about the Upcoming UMC General Conference (April 23-May 3, 2024) -BY KEN SLOANE

This month, you can experience both history in the making and time travel. That's right! United Methodists from around the world will gather in Charlotte, North Carolina, to conduct the 2020 General Conference that had to be postponed and then canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our church *Discipline* makes no provision for skipping one of the quadrennial legislative meetings, so we will hold it, well, a little late.

This General Conference also has historic implications, as we have moved through a period of disaffiliation in The United Methodist Church. This process has been painful as well as stressful for local churches and annual conferences across the church. This General Conference session will be a time for our whole denomination to come together and set our sights on the future, on what God is calling The United Methodist Church to be in the years ahead.

Every United Methodist has a stake in this General Conference and can be involved and engaged, thanks to a wealth of resources that are just a click away.

Unfortunately, when much of the secular media reports on our General Conference gatherings, they tend to spotlight our disagreements. Rarely will they report on beautiful worship services, delegates from every corner of the planet participating and celebrating God's love, and a choir of students from Africa University – a university that is reshaping Africa and wouldn't exist without the power of the connectional church working together!

If you want people in your pews to better understand how we are connectional and why that empowers your local church to make an impact like Africa University or UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief), encourage them to engage with the General Conference as we prepare for it and as it unfolds in Charlotte this month. Inviting your people to see and hear reports of the impact we make around the world can be a way to inspire generosity and see mission shares/apportionments as more than a bill, but an investment in powerful, world-changing work!

Here are some ideas with links with more information:

- [Powered by the Upper Room Prayer Ministry, local church members are being asked to be “prayer warriors” to support the delegates to the General Conference.](#)
- [Discipleship Ministries has provided tips for helping your congregation get ready for the General Conference.](#)

- [Explore how the general church agencies are adjusting to the financial realities facing churches like yours.](#)
- [Find resources to help your congregation learn the basics about what General Conference is and how it works.](#)
- [Read about plans to designate the U.S. as a region of the church the way areas outside the church have been designated.](#)
- [Consider having a group study of the proposed Revised Social Principles being brought to the General Conference for discussion and adoption.](#)

Follow the **[United Methodist News Service \(UMNews\)](#)** for updates as we get closer to the opening of the General Conference and bookmark **[this page](#)**.- Stay informed and engaged!

Our New District information: District 6-Hub #5
Commonwealth East and Commonwealth West District
Offices have combined and there is a new email address:
ce-cwoffice@neumc.org (NEW Email address!)
Website:www.neumc.org/CE
District Superintendent: Rev. Nizzi Santos Digan
Address: 2600 Massachusetts Ave, Lexington, MA 02421
Email address: CEDS@neumc.org
Administrative Assistant: Allyson Printz
Phone:(781)861-0249 Email address: CEDistrict@neumc.org

**The Messenger Deadline:
Please submit information by
Friday, April 19, 2024 9:00 a.m.**