

The Messenger

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

fiskoffice@fiskumc.org

www.fiskumc.org

August 2020

Pastor's Note

Each time I see a new born baby, I cannot keep thinking about of what hope looks like and what lies ahead. So I wonder what it would be like if we live without hope; for something new, something better, something different.

The life of a Christian is challenging and sometimes difficult. For this, many persons need inspiration and encouragement as they face uncertainty, transitions, or crises on this journey of life. That is, each of us has faced one or the other during this time of physical distancing. Though some of us might still be in doubt and some with fears, we must not forget that renewed hope is offered as a promise of Jesus Christ. We do not have to do anything except read words of wisdom from the Holy Bible and draw from the experiences of those who deeply care about us in our families, our churches, and our communities. As we do, call and speak with me about real stories and messages of hope so that your hope might be renewed for a better future. Especially, as we think about returning to the busyness of the world after months of physically distancing.

Psalm 89:8-9 states, "LORD God of the Heavenly Armies, who is as mighty as you, LORD? Your faithfulness surrounds you. You rule over the majestic sea; when its waves surge, you calm them."

We have been through a lot these past months, "And Are We Yet Alive". Yes, God's faithfulness to us as affirmed in this great hymn by Charles Wesley is food for thought when we are calm enough to come out. As we prepare now or later to return to the Lord's House of worship, we will also continue our sermon series on Psalm 23 with,

"Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for thou art with me. Thy rod and staff they comfort me"

Hence, whatever your decision is, know that "We Are Fisk" the faithful community that welcomes all, nurtures all, and stands by and with all persons.

Trust in the ONLY SUPREME GOD is vital for healing, health and safety. As we give up control and trust, it is my prayer that we re-enter the world with the confidence of David, the shepherd boy who found himself sometimes with uncertainty and in unfamiliar places. But he still had HOPE!

May we be blessed individually and as a community of God's own creation as we keep hope alive!

-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,
April 2019, Fisk UMC

For Personal Reflection & Spiritual growth

For continuous spiritual growth and reflection, read the following Scriptures that have been selected for our worship this month.

August 2	Psalm 23	Matthew 14:13-21
August 9	Psalm 23	Matthew 14:22-33
August 16	Psalm 23	Matthew 15:10-20, 21-28
August 23	Psalm 23	Matthew 16:13-20
August 30	Psalm 23	Matthew 16:21-28

From the NE Conference

Wanted: People who are called to anti-racism work

The New England Conference has formed a [White Privilege Focus Group](#) to address white privilege and help engage our Conference in vital anti-racism work in our Church and the wider community. By being a part, we care create opportunities for learning, witness, and advocacy that will dismantle racism. If we are talking about you and you are willing and ready for this once-in-a-life-time work, please send your name, church, email address and phone number to communicate@neumc.org. THANKS!

New England Justice for our Neighbors Program (NE JFON)

Attorneys facilitated the release from detention of Michael Langa, who is from South Africa, and has spent a year in a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention center. Further details are included on pg. 5 in Missions.

New Name Announced for United Methodist Federal Credit Union (UMFCU)

The United Methodist Federal Credit Union has officially changed its name to “**Interfaith Federal Credit Union.**” The new name was selected to represent the diversity of current members and support their goal of continued growth as they provide affordable financial services to all eligible members. You can also support them. For more information, call (800) 245-0433 or email memberservices@umfcu.org.

Our new District information:

District 6: Name: Commonwealth East

Website: www.neumc.org/CE

Address: 2600 Massachusetts Ave.,
Lexington, MA 02421

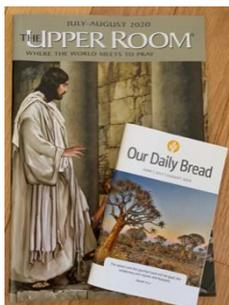
Phone: [\(781\) 861-0249](tel:(781)861-0249)

District Superintendent: Rev. We Hyun Chang

His email address: CEDS@neumc.org

Administrative Assistant: Allyson Printz

Her address: CEDistrict@neumc.org



If you would like to have an *Upper Room* and/or *Our Daily Bread* devotional booklet mailed to your home, please send an email to the church office fiskoffice@fiskumc.org or call to leave a message with your name and address (508) 653-1674. Please indicate if you prefer a large -print Upper Room booklet.

Council of Ministries

As the current situation in Massachusetts continues to remind us - The church is not a building. I do acknowledge that the sanctuary is a special place and one with meaning for all of us. And I look forward to the time when we can all safely join together for worship in the sanctuary. But unfortunately, today is not that day and we continue to worship virtually.

We are continuing to remain a connected congregation. It seemed improbable many months ago that we would still be in this virtual worship service space but here we are. We are still here – a faithful community doing God’s work as we are able during the social distancing requirements of COVID-19.

Here are a few quick notes from our July Council on Ministries meeting.

- No changes were made to the time and format of the Worship service. Services will remain on Zoom and will be at 10:30am into the fall months. If anyone has issues connecting, please let me know and we will work to get you re-connected to Fisk for Worship.
- The Worship Team will be adding a few more pre-recorded pieces into the worship service for variety, clarity, and to improve the experience. This includes possible changes to the music and recording some portions of the service from the sanctuary.
- We are working on getting some programming on the local cable channel – Pegasus. This may be portions of the Zoom service (scripture and sermon) as well as a monthly spot highlighting what we are continuing to do during this time. More sermons will be posted on our Youtube channel for anyone who misses a service or wishes to hear the pastor’s message again.

If you have any ideas or comments for us – please let us know. Blessings and good health to you all.

Sherry Culver, Chair of COM, sherrycd@comcast.net

Wednesday Prayer Shawl Ministry – Social Distancing



Winnie Sinclair, Joanne Billo, Pat Price & Mary Greenwood

Worship

Hymn of Promise - Natalie Sleeth

In the bulb there is a flower,
in the seed, an apple tree,
in cocoons, a hidden promise:
butterflies will soon be free!

In the cold and snow of winter
there's a spring that waits to be,
unrevealed until its season,
something God alone can see.

There's a song in every silence,
seeking word and melody;
there's a dawn in every darkness,
bringing hope to you and me.

From the past will come the future;
what it holds, a mystery,
unrevealed until its season,
something God alone can see.

Shared by Diane French, Worship Committee Chairperson

Ministry of Caring

We Are Fisk!

"I am the church, you are the church, we are the church
- together!" YOU are Fisk!

So, here we go. Name groups, things, pieces. and doings that you have been a part of at Fisk since you walked through the doors, however long ago that was. Now, start thinking about the people that you have served God with at Fisk. How long has it been since you have been in touch with them? We are "church people" and we are God's children. We have been asked to do the "unfamiliar" by keeping our distance from others, from those that we love. and care about. 140 days since the building was closed. And - church continues with worship, prayer, compassionate caring, giving, receiving - all continue, just in different ways. You can still do many of the pieces that you love to do.

Dear God, help us to remember that you have the whole world in your hands. Every baby, child, person and every circumstance everywhere. You make the impossible possible. Sometimes, we get anxious about what may happen in the coming days and weeks. Continue to teach us how to be faithful people during this time of crisis, and to follow in the footsteps of our faithful shepherd. Show us with the peace Jesus promised to his disciples, and make us into steady and strong people for those around us. In these uncertain times, wake us up to the reminder that we are not alone. Amen.

August Awakenings

Last month, you were invited to July Journaling. It is now August and all are invited to awaken in a new way. Are you ready for your close-up? In August - here are 2 projects to choose from. **1. Hold your own Worship Dance Party!** You pick the hymn, chorus, kids Sunday School song - a song that moves the Spirit within you. You handle the choreography. Film it? Take pictures? Share it with others!

2. Sillyettes! You will need half of a poster board, tape, glue, art/craft materials, someone to help you, and a bright light. Time to make a fun self-portrait. Gently tape the 1/2 poster board to a wall or doorway. With the bright light, have someone trace your head - your hands, or another part of you but remember to leave space at the top for you to put your name in big letters with a bold marker.

Craft materials like ribbon, cotton balls, pictures from magazines, or macaroni can make these silly. Sillyettes will go into our church sanctuary pews. All tapes and pictures of Worship Dance Parties will be connected together to make one video for Fisk families.

For more information, please contact Debi Henry, Communications Coordinator at (508) 651-0256 or debraleighhenry@yahoo.com

Evangelism

"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'
—Matthew 25:40

What is EVANGELISM at this time?

Evangelism is a gift. It is the gift of faith-sharing and proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ to those we meet. *And how do we evangelize in these times of distancing?* We can reach out to our Christian friends, our neighbors and friends, our families.

Calls, emails, cards, and letters are all effective ways to check on someone, to share the love of Jesus Christ, and to be in touch in this time of masks and elbow bumps.

Prayer is an ever-available endeavor to connect. We can pray for our families and friends and for our church and church family. And, we might message or call someone to just let them know they were prayed for today.

God calls us to respond to nudges. In the days ahead, may we respond to those nudges, may we reach out in prayer, and may we remember to call or message someone who is on our hearts.

The Fisk Prayer Wall and Prayer Box

When you find the need to pray with the assurance that others are praying for and with you, leave a prayer in the prayer box on the front lawn of the church, on-line on our website, or just call and speak with Pastor Alecia. Remember that no one walks alone. We at Fisk UMC are willing and ready to travel the journey with you.

Therefore, if you are looking for a church home, we invite, welcome, and accept all persons. We are a phone call away (508-653-1674). Thanks, and be blessed.



In these times, we stand for justice, and with our message on the Cross, we remember and remind others that
Breath is God-given.

The Spirit of God has made
me,
and the breath of the
Almighty gives me life.
—Job 33:4

Education

Women's Bible Study

Thirteen of us from church and beyond have been gathering via ZOOM to hold a four-week study on the wonderful Book of Ruth.

It has been an honor for me to facilitate this group and we have learned so much about God's word for us. We have used WORDGO as a guide which is a free app. I encourage you to look at it for individual study.

We will be starting a new study the first Tuesday in August at 10:00am. I am not sure what we will study but I will keep you posted in the weekly announcements.

It is always amazing to me how alive God's word is for us. The Bible in itself is miraculous. Keep us in your prayers as we study together and consider joining us.

Susan Carney susanjcarney@gmail.com

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Starting at 9:30 a.m. every Sunday in August there will be a 15-minute Sunday school event on Zoom. The Zoom address will be posted in the weekly announcements. Please encourage your kids to join me and others for a

story and a few songs. Older kids.... we need you as role models, and no one is wasting time when gathering in God's name. Mr. Carney and I miss you all very much. The first song we will sing will be "I'm Inside, Outside, Happy All the Time." That's how I will feel to be able to see your faces. Mark it on a calendar and let's be together.

Susan Carney, Education

One July Day

I picked up three of the older Sunday school guys to work with us on Kate's lawn for a surprise as her family was down at the Cape. I picked up Danny and Nick first and they came running out of the house screaming "We miss you!" and "We can't wait to see Sebron!" We donned our masks and I said a little silent prayer thanking God for these awesome boys and in hopes that Sebron would be as happy to see them.

We got to his house 20 minutes later and he was standing outside. He had his mask on and so we could not see a smile but his body language said it all. He opened the door and let these boys know they had been missed. This happy crew had lots to talk about for the next 30 minutes and when I was sharing just a little with a friend — she asked where did you find these great kids. Sunday School.

Susan Carney

Local Community

Natick Interfaith Clergy Prayer for the Pandemic:

Dear God we raise our voices in prayer for those who are suffering--physically and mentally, directly or indirectly--from the current pandemic. Please help us to think not only of ourselves but also of those who we come in contact with, understanding that our perceived freedoms do not make us free if they rely on the suffering of others.

Please God open our eyes to the Divine image in every person, and to our obligation to protect their lives as we would our own. Help us to care for each other during this difficult time by strengthening us to put our own conveniences aside for the good of those who are most at risk, whether that risk is related to race, health, geography, economic circumstance, or any other measure.

We are well aware that this illness has not affected all people equally. We confess our privilege where we have it and pray that we keep our eyes and our hearts open as we join the fight for equal access to healthy communities.

Help us to see our place in the interconnected web that binds all of creation together so we might bring about a diverse community of mutual care.

Amen.

Mission



This is a recent article related to COVID-19 and UMCOR. UMCOR and its parent agency, the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries, has distributed 146 grants worldwide to help communities cope with the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as 32 solidarity grants. That brings the total amount awarded as of July 1 to \$1.56 million.

1-When the pandemic threatened their predominantly African American community in North Nashville, Tennessee, members of Gordon Memorial United Methodist Church knew what they had to do: Re-tool for the new reality and increase capacity. They fed the homeless and the elders in need. A Sheltering in Love grant from the United Methodist Committee on Relief's COVID-19 Response Fund has helped support this effort.

2-UMCOR also has funded a number of international requests for Sheltering in Love grants. In Liberia, for example, a grant of \$9,997 allows the Liberia Conference to provide food packages to 125 people in each of three vulnerable communities in the Monrovia area. Food distribution is just one part of the denomination's campaign against COVID-19 in Liberia.



3-While the church building has been closed, Smith said, "we continue to strive to go forward in In Framingham, MA; two small congregations about 10 minutes apart in this former mill town are keeping residents fed during the pandemic. A \$10,000 Sheltering in Love grant has provided support for that work. The Rev. Heather Kattan, who serves as pastor for both First United Methodist and Wesley United Methodist churches, said past connections with local hunger organizations and with students at the local university had helped show them how to assess need in the community. *Reporter Linda Bloom is the assistant news editor for United Methodist News Service and is based in New York.*

This was brought to our attention by Mary Greenwood, whose daughter Mary Lou Boise works for UMCOR in Atlanta. Thanks Mary and Mary Lou!

CHRISTMAS IN JULY AND AUGUST helps make a great CHRISTMAS IN MAINE in December

Each Sunday through August there is a RED Bucket on the "little porch" of the church. It is there from 12 noon to 4:00pm...just drop off your gifts — toys, packages of socks and underwear, books etc. All need to be NEW items. If you prefer, you may donate Gift Cards for Amazon, Walmart, iTunes, McDonalds etc. Please slide the Gift Cards through the mail slot marked MISSIONS.

The people of the Western Mountains of Maine will thank you for helping out during these sometimes-bleak days. We are sending HOPE and LOVE with each gift.

JFON-Justice For Our Neighbors

July 20, 2020

Michael Langa spent a year in a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention center under conditions he describes as "stressful and awful."

Thanks to New England Justice for our Neighbors (NE JFON), Langa was released from detention in June, and work on his case is moving forward. "I just want to really express how grateful I am for all the support I received from [NE JFON]," Langa said. "I want to tell the community how passionate, how compassionate you are. You don't know me. You don't have to do anything for me, but it shows the biblical connection with people during the difficult times of the community."



JFON is a United Methodist ministry that provides legal services to immigrants seeking to adjust their status.

Read Michael's whole story. www.neumc.org Click on JFON article. You can help others find justice. Checks to JFON can be sent to Fisk and they will be forwarded to the New England JFON office, working with many others waiting for JUSTICE.

In Appreciation and Thank You

Your prayers, cards, prayer shawl, letters, and other remembrances during my brother Dwight's six years of health challenges were greatly appreciated. He had many ups and downs since 2014 but the last three years were the most difficult; yet I could still get a smile or warm greetings on some visits with him. Just as he lived, he went peacefully to his heavenly home on July 18, 2020 at the age of 70 years old. His obituary is online at

Smith Brothers Funeral Home, Nashville, TN.
<https://www.articobits.com/obituaries/smith-brothers-funeral-directors-inc/>

Thank you for your prayers, condolences, and cards in his passing.



In Christ, Dorothy, Crystal, Elizabeth and Logan and the Wingfield family
 Dwight Charles Wingfield, sixth of eight children of Reverend and Mrs. Robert C. Wingfield Sr.

United Methodist Women

The UMW Yard Sale will be held outside at the church in October.



Details to follow, but continue saving your treasures to help us support Missions.
 May God bless our efforts.
 Susan Carney, UMW Chair

From the Church Office

AUGUST CALENDAR

Note: All meetings are via Zoom, unless otherwise indicated.

Sun	10:30am	Worship, every Sunday via Zoom
Wed	10:00am 7:00pm	Prayer Time, every Wednesday via Zoom
Wed	10:00am	Prayer Shawl Group on the lawn
8/3	7:30pm	Trustees
8/10	7:30pm	Finance
8/13	12:00pm	Susanna Circle
8/18	7:00pm	COM
8/21	9:00am	Messenger Deadline
8/24	4:00pm	UMW Executive Board
8/25	7:00pm	SPRC
Vacation: Pastor		Sunday, Aug. 23 – Saturday, Sept. 5
Vacation: Joanne		Week of Aug. 16-22

Summer church office hours continue in August.
Joanne is working
Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday
from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m
through Aug. 14
Starting August 24, her hours will be Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
 phone: 508-653-1674
 email: fiskoffice@fiskumc.org

Note - When you call the church, always leave a message. Messages are played and heard daily.

September Messenger deadline: Friday, August 21
Mailing Date: Wednesday, August 26

Bishop's Call to Conference

Beloved in Christ:

Greetings in the precious name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I praise our Creator God in and through the precious name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for the grace that enables me to be with you to write my revised call letter to the 2020 New England Annual Conference.

As you know, we planned to gather for our Holy/Christian Conferencing in June in Manchester, NH, around the theme *Vital Conversations: Building Beloved Community* using the scripture passage [Acts 2:42-47](#).

In my earlier call letter, I wrote: "The strength of the community of believers on the day of Pentecost was strong. 'The believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the community, to their shared meals, and to their prayers. A sense of awe came over everyone. God performed many wonders and signs through the apostles. All the believers were united and shared everything.' Not knowing the final decisions of the 2020 General Conference, this scriptural passage challenges us to be a replica of this community of believers in such a time as this. It is my hope and prayer we arrive at our Christian/Holy Conferencing with this spirit, so the whole world may look at us with awe."

While these sentiments and thoughts still hold, due to COVID-19, our ability to gather in person safely does not. We now plan to meet virtually as a Beloved Community for a one-day Annual Conference on Saturday, Oct. 17, 2020.

Let us be mindful that this one-day virtual conference must be limited to necessary and pressing business matters. To accomplish this task prayerfully and faithfully, please read and study all the materials ahead of time and be in deep prayer as we prepare ourselves for Holy/Christian Conferencing.

In my humble opinion, the church, meaning the people of God, is called to show deeper commitment to glorify our Creator God with a ceaseless passion to demonstrate the love of Jesus Christ, allowing the Holy Spirit to move us forward today more than ever before.

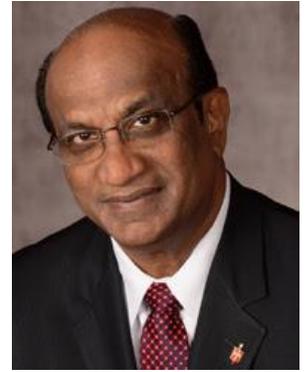
Every one of us is urged to proclaim boldly and fearlessly the demonstration of our answer to one of the questions that we hear at every baptism: "Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves?"

Though we meet virtually, may the prevenient grace of God occupy all the monitors and tools we use, along with our hearts and minds, so the world may see clearly that we are the church actively working for justice and peace for all the children of God.

We are also thankful to our Creator God in and through the precious name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for the grace that enabled us to gather for a virtual clergy session on June 11. Let us continue to pray that grace will lead us in our forthcoming [laity session](#) and Annual Conference as well.

In Christ's love,

Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar



Annual Conference members can now register for the 2020 virtual session. but first please read important information about the upcoming session:

<https://www.neumc.org/newsdetail/important-information-about-the-2020-virtual-annual-conference-session-14132416>

Here is the registration link:

<https://neumc-reg.brtaapp.com/2020VirtualNewEnglandAnnualConferenceRegistration>