

The Messenger

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

December 2015

Reflections from Pastor Xia

Dear Fisk church family and friends,

Warm greetings from your church home!

It is December. Advent is here, Christmas is around the corner. And along come the pressures of the holidays—the obligations, the commercialism, and the rush on the malls.

The “holidays,” as the Christmas season has been renamed in recent years, is not a bad expression. Perhaps it is a good thing that we can now separate the two concepts in our minds. For they have very little in common.

Whatever else Christmas may stand for, the angels sum it up for me when they proclaim to the Shepherds:

“Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom God’s favor rests.” —Luke 2:14

Peace on earth—beginning with the birth of the Christ child!

Peace on earth. To me, it is the kind of peace in the midst of the storm. In Christ there is available inner peace despite war, crime, violence; despite stress, losses, illnesses, and loneliness, and there is peace amid the “holiday” rush.

I wish upon every one of you this year that you may experience true Christmas peace in your heart. I pray that your Christmas experience may not be compromised by the “holidays.” With a prayerful and thankful heart, let us prepare the way for a blessed new church year.

Advent and Christmas Blessings to all!

Rev. Xia Jiao-Chu



Jesus is the Reason for the Season!!!! Our Advent Worship will surely prove that statement true.

Dec 2, 9, 16, 23 ~ Advent Bible Study

In the Pastor’s Study at 4:00 pm

Dec 6 ~ Communion

Check out the additions to the Sanctuary décor since the Hanging of the Greens Service

Dec 20 ~ Lessons and Carols

A time to enjoy some of your favorite carols

Dec 24 ~ Christmas Eve Service at 7:00pm

The Sanctuary will be aglow with candlelight

Dec 27 ~ Carols and Meditation

What is this season all about?



Financially, we need everyone’s help to compensate for several challenges this year. If you are perhaps behind in your planned giving, please consider catching up. If you have not given in the past, we would urge you to consider supporting our ministries. If you have the ability to do something extra, consider the benefits to your church family. We continue to spend wisely, and carefully managing our resources, as our financial giving remains 15% below Budget.

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), Geoff Del Sesto (Trustees), Tom Currie (SPRC), Larry Drolet, Frank Foss, Jen Garrant, Crystal Mayo.

Missions Giving Tree

Please visit the giving tree and select a name for a needy family. See the sign up list for the date to return the gift.



CMA Resource Day in Sudbury UMC, on February 27, 2016

Description and registration:

http://cmdresourceday.com/?epl_event=spiritual-leadership

2015 Poinsettia Orders

The plant's association with Christmas began in 16th century Mexico, where legend tells of a girl commonly called Pepita or Maria, who was too poor to provide a gift for the celebration of Jesus' birthday and was inspired by an angel to gather weeds from the roadside and place them in front of the church altar. Crimson blossoms sprouted from the weeds and became beautiful poinsettias. From the 17th century, Franciscan friars in Mexico included the plants in their Christmas celebrations. The star-shaped leaf pattern is said to symbolize the Star of Bethlehem, and the red color represents the blood sacrifice through the crucifixion of Jesus.

December 12 is National Poinsettia Day!
December 12 is A Night In Bethlehem at Fisk!
December 14 is the last day to place your order for a poinsettia in honor or in memory of someone and help beautify our sanctuary on December 22 and Christmas Eve.

It is that time of year again! Each poinsettia is \$10. If you are interested in ordering a red or white poinsettia, please complete an order form and give it with payment to Barbara Beekman, Joanne Fitzgerald in the church office, Debi Henry, Deborah Hernandez, Julia Jaco, or Lois Potter. Order forms will be in the Sunday bulletins on December 6 & 13, and are available in the church office or in the literature rack outside the nursery.



For all committee chairs and laity leaders

Please give your name to the office before 1/22/2016, that we may register as a group. (7 or more). Our advance registration (before 2/1/2016) will reduce the registration fee from \$20 per person to \$12 per person.

Did You Know?

- That the UMW Fair made \$6,000 in profits.
- That the following local missions will benefit from all of our efforts:
Natick Food Pantry , Natick Service Council Fuel Assistance, Family Promise, Jane Doe Inc., Cooper Community Center in Roxbury , Salem Economic Ministry in Maine , FACE Children's Center and many others.
- Speaking of FACE Children's Center = This Thanksgiving 80 sweet breads were made by families and in school for the Natick Service Council baskets.
- There are new signs out on the roads of Natick directing folks to Fisk and they look awesome. Thanks David Cail and Thom Townsend for your efforts.
- That in January most of the commissions will be led by new leaders and your prayers are always appreciated for the incoming and outgoing.
- That there is a sign up list online to volunteer in greeting, ushering and fellowship coffee.
- That the Sunday School teachers love their time with your children. Give them a "thanks" when you get a chance.
- God loves you.

-Susan Carney



Saturday - December 12, 2015

5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Fisk Memorial United Methodist Church

Have you ever wondered what it was like to be in Bethlehem during the birth of Jesus? At Fisk Memorial UMC in Natick, we transform the church into the city of Bethlehem during the time when our Savior, Jesus Christ, was born into the world. The sights, sounds, smells, shops and people are set up to re-create how life was in Bethlehem over 2,000 years ago!

Our church members dress-up as Biblical characters in the marketplace. We also have Joseph and Mary with the baby Jesus in the Manger. You can hear Bible stories, smell the freshly baked bread, make a clay pot, string beads, experience weaving/spinning and the true meaning of Christmas. Many other activities offered also. Watch for the *shepherd and his fire pit* to welcome you into this wonderful event.

This is an event for your entire family! No costs. Bring your family and friends to experience this wonderful evening!

Fisk Memorial United Methodist Church looks forward to seeing you at
"A Night in Bethlehem."

Would you like to participate? There are many opportunities...volunteer in a craft booth (we have supplies), bake bread during the evening, be among the town folks...all dressed in costume (we have those too).

Invite your family and friends!

This is a wonderful event and a perfect time to introduce Fisk to those not yet attending.
More information from Marcia Hoyt 508-655-0077

As we anticipate the Celebration of the Birth of Christ the United Methodist Women invite all women of Fisk to attend our December 9 meeting.

We invite you to join us

Tuesday, December 8 at 7:00pm

Christmas Angel Celebration!

Carols—to be sung

Angels-- to be exchanged

Dessert-- to be served

Fellowship to be shared

*Rides provided, if needed call Joanne Billo
508-653-3074*

We just ask that you bring an ANGEL, any kind, size, shape, material, homemade or store-bought, it does not matter. Suggested costs-not to exceed \$10.00. Questions: Janis Cail 781-894-1730

Prayer Shawls are still needed. Some of us meet on Wednesday mornings at 10:00 to knit together while others knit, crochet or quilt at home. If you are available, please join us on a Wednesday. Thanks you for all the Prayer Shawls that have been given to this ministry. Many were blessed on Sunday, November 22 during worship.

The Reading Program is alive and well! Terry Ames is tending to this part of the United Methodist Women's programming. Take a look at the selection of books in Ogle Parlor.

Sunday Luncheon-watch for the date of a UMW Luncheon following worship in January.

Your PLEDGE Have you paid your 2015 UMW Pledge to Mission yet? As United Methodist Women we should be pledging to the mission work of our organization.

Fisk signs around Town

Have you seen our new **Fisk Church** road signs around Natick? Our old signs had gotten tired, and in most cases faded and damaged. Recently, seven (yes 7) large road signs were installed to replace the old ones. Two of the previous generation signs were OK and left in place. (In addition, there are a few smaller signs around town, too.)

We are offering a prize to anyone who can correctly identify the location of all 7 new signs. Can you find them all? (*Due to their involvement in the project, people with the last name of Cail, Hoyt and Townsend are ineligible.*) See Thom T if you think you've found them all or need a hint.



Charitable Giving and Taxes

Remember, all contributions to Fisk are tax deductible, and you may save as much 20-30% of your donation in taxes...to receive in your refund in February...or add back to your contribution!

The last opportunity for you make your 2015 tax-deductible contributions to Fisk will be Sunday, December 27, or by mailing to arrive before Wednesday, December 30. All contributions are required by the IRS to be paid by December 31st of each year.



Thank you for your support throughout the year that you showed me and Missions initiatives. Your prayers, presence and faithfulness mean a lot. I am grateful for all of you.

-Heather Oluwole

Stewardship Reminder and Update

Have you taken the opportunity to prayerfully consider your stewardship and your Covenant of Giving with our Lord and Savior? You have received a personal letter from a member of the Stewardship team, sharing their personal thoughts on stewardship.

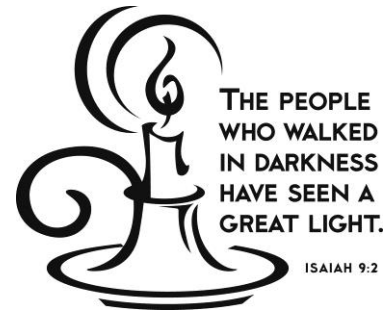
"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms" – 1 Peter 4:10

We have received 70% of last year's commitments as of press time on November 23. Remember, all Covenants of Giving are treated with the utmost confidentiality, and not individually shared with any committee. Thank you, and God bless.



*"Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him." Mark 1:3*

**MESSENGER DEADLINE:
DECEMBER 28**



For youth and their friends in Grades 6 – 12 Youth Fellowship Leaders:
Bingxin Xu and Tian Zhang

- DECEMBER -

Plans are to hold regular MYF meetings after Sunday services and host special activities periodically for all youth. Friends are always welcome to attend MYF meetings and events.

Reminder: see <http://www.fiskumc.org/youth-and-children.html> to view MYF pictures and schedule updates.

December 5th, 6PM, Sushi and Movie night at Xu's home (date moved to Saturday)

December 12th A Night in Bethlehem

December 20th TBA

December 27th No MYF meeting

How to contact Bingxin and Tian : For youth related activities, they will be using fiskyouth@gmail.com. If you have an idea for a youth program or wish to volunteer, contact them or:

Sherry Culver, Youth Council Chair,
sherrycd@comcast.net