

The Messenger

Fisk Memorial United Methodist Church

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December 2017

Pastor's Note

As we enter the Season of Advent and anticipate the birth of the Christ Child, believe that God already made it plain and simple how to live and what to do. That is, do what is fair and just to your neighbor, be compassionate and most of all, embody real love.

Micah was a prophet who had strong opinions all the time. For example, he would say that a person who does no harm is fulfilled, and he was intolerant of persons who acted unfairly, took advantage of, who were self-centered and who thought it was all about him or her. And though his words sometimes sounded extreme, he reminds us to live each day with justice as our rod and staff.

This time of the year is filled with events, gift-giving and sometimes sharing from the heart but there is always that hidden message of, "Fear not". That was the message from the angels when they said, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people" (Luke 2:10). That message still exist today because during the holidays, I am amazed how strangers reach out to each other with kind words, a smile, a gift or some goodies. For this, I have hope in what God can and will do through us.

So, as we reflect on how we can work together, let us remember Micah's words in order to promote hope and not fear. Let us promote love and not hate. Let us promote justice and not injustice. Let us promote unity and not division. Let us promote the peace of God. Most of all, let us go out to extinguish the fire of fears, dig a grave for hate, destroy bigotry, advocate for justice as we light a bonfire for Jesus Christ for others to follow.

Now, I know that this is not always easy but we can try by increasing our spiritual connection to God and connections to each other. We can also be active participants, a listening presence as we continue to live with hope, joy, love and peace this season and all the seasons ahead. Bless us as a community of faith as we continue to do God's will.

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY HOLIDAYS! *-Pastor Alecia*

Pastor's Announcements

ADVENT - "Because of Bethlehem"

Bible Study with DVD by Max Lucado

"In the midst of receiving the gift God offers in Jesus Christ, God also understands our struggles and our challenges. But we can know and believe that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). Therefore, this season, can we surrender all the obstacles that affect relationship with God and all God's creation as we receive the Christ Child? I will say, yes, we can. So, come and experience a God who understands.

Sundays - December 3, 10, 17 & 24 at 9:15 AM in the Parlor with Pastor Alecia.

Special Worship Services (with Caring Ministry's support)

Fisk Memorial UMC offers two services every month: The first Wednesday of every month at 1:30pm at Whitney Place, 3 Vision Drive, Natick, MA; the second Tuesday of every month at 2:00 pm at Eliot Center for Health and Rehabilitation, 168 W Central Street, Natick, MA. **All persons are encouraged to come, share or participate with the residents.**



Christmas Eve Service.-There will be no service on Sunday Morning, December 24, 2017 at 10:30 am. But all persons; with family and friends are invited to a combined celebration service for Christmas Eve on Sunday, December 24th at 5 p.m. Please feel free to leave the cares of the world behind and join us to celebrate the birth of the Christ Child.

December 2017 – Bible Readings

For continuous learning and reflection please find time to read the following.

12/3:	I Corinthians 1:3-9	Mark 13:24-37
12/10	Isaiah 40:1-11	Mark 1:1-8
12/17:	Isaiah 61:1-4	1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
	Psalms 126	John 1:6-8, 19-28
12/24:	Isaiah 9:2-7	Luke 2:1-20
12/31:	Luke 1:26-38	Luke 2:1-7
	Luke 2:8-14	Matthew 2:1-12
	Luke 2:21-38	Matthew 2:13-15

Coming in December-Save the date!

- Hanging the Greens Service is Sunday, December 3rd
- Advent Bible Study "Because of Bethlehem" by Max Lucado (Begins December 3)
- United Methodist Women's Christmas Open House is December 5th
- Church Conference is December 14
- "Live on the Lawn" is December 16

The Christmas Story.....

Live on the Lawn!

Saturday - December 16, 2017

4:30 p.m.



Experience the true meaning of Christmas....Hear the story with narration and music with actors – including Joseph and Mary with baby Jesus in the Manger, and the Three Kings who come to honor the newborn Savior.

Then, join us indoors!

- Old-fashioned carol sing
- Hot chocolate and cookies
- Fellowship time with family and friends

Come! This is an event for everyone! We look forward to you being with us!

2017 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.



It is that time of year again! If you are interested in ordering a poinsettia, please complete an order form and give it with payment to Barbara Beekman, Joanne Fitzgerald in the church office, or Debi Henry. Order forms will be in the Sunday bulletins on December 3, 10, & 17, and will be available in the church office or in the literature rack outside the nursery.

United Methodist Men

Are you looking for a hostess gift . . .
a stocking stuffer . . .
something to add to a gift basket . . .
or just something sweet for your pancakes?



Our UMMen have a supply of
Maine Maple Syrup from
UMEM

(United Methodist Economic Ministries)
Call Gary Hoyt 508-655-0077

In December, the UMM will meet for breakfast at 8:00 a.m. on Sunday, December 17th at Eli's Restaurant, 12 Washington St, Natick.

Missions

MISSION POSSIBLE by Marcia Hoyt

At this time of being Thankful and expressing our Gratitude we remember those without the comforts we expect. There are so many ways to show our thankfulness. Sometimes it may feel like there are many “requests,” and fortunately we are given free will to make choices. As the Mission Committee we feel committed to these important areas, so we make these opportunities available to you. It is up to you to make your choices.

UMCOR – United Methodist Committee on Relief This is the major arm of mission work for our denomination.

- **Bucket Tree! Cleaning Kits!** Have you ever heard of a Bucket Tree? We are using the Fisk Christmas tree to collect specific items for UMCOR Flood Buckets/Cleaning Kits. These have been so necessary in Puerto Rico and the southern states needing cleanup efforts following the recent hurricanes. There will be tags on the tree in December for you to take and purchase that specific item(s) and return it to “under the tree.” Can we fill 2-3 buckets for families to continue the cleaning and re-building process?



- **White Socks for Homeless Vets—** We will be stuffing white cotton socks with small items for veterans. Wrapped candy bars, deodorant, shampoo, pens, cards, small games, hand cream – anything that fits into a sock. The “stuffing party” will take place at Coffee Hour on December 10. Please bring socks and small items to be added. The committee will also purchase some items.



- In recent months we have sent mission funds to Project Smile at Forsythe Dental Program helping children without proper dental care.
- We have been distributing **UMCOR Starter Kits** for the **Health/Hygiene Kits** during November and hope they will be returned soon. Did you take one?
- Fisk also supports two Missionaries...Dr. Belinda Forbes, a dentist in Nicaragua and Mat Pelletier working at a seminary in South Africa.
- The United Methodist Economic Ministry in Salem Township, Maine, thanks Fisk for their wonderful support of their Christmas Shoppe. We delivered a

full van of NEW toys, clothes, gifts and about 20 winter jackets for the Christmas Program. They set up a store-like space and their clients are able to choose their gifts and things for their family with a coupon system, depending on their ability to pay. Our good used clothing will continue in the early spring. Thanks for all that you donated to their Thrift Shops.

- Are you interested in being trained as an Emergency Disaster Response Worker? You are required to attend a training day to be a UM Certified Response Person and equipped to help in flood and hurricane disasters.

Looking ahead to 2018—moo, oink, quack?

Marcia Hoyt, Chair of the Mission Committee
Janis Cail, Susan Carney, Pat Price & Janis Townsend

Missionary Mail

MISSIONARY NAME AND ADDRESS---Send a card or message from yourself and/or Fisk Church. Offer prayer and emotional support as Elmira approaches the holidays and her birthday.

Send greetings to:

Elmira Sellu

The United Methodist House

31 Lightfoot Boston Street, Box 523

Freetown

Sierra Leone

Elmira’s birthday is November 25, or send a Thanksgiving greeting and prayer.

We highlight a Missionary each month. Ask about the work they are doing, what led them to this work, how long have they been in this position etc. If you receive a response, feel free to post it on the bulletin board entitled MISSIONS, in the hallway.



JFON—Justice for our Neighbors is a national organization of Immigration Ministry connected to the United Methodist Church to help assimilate immigrants into their new country. One of the services offered is legal help to work through the legal process and the paperwork. Sixteen people from Fisk attended the 3rd Annual Dinner to support JFON in November. The evening consisted of an international dinner, Silent Auction and two testimonies from young people and their struggle to remain in the United States.

(Excepts from the second speaker)

The evening's final speaker was Elizabeth, who also spoke at last year's event. She is one of the 800,000 young people seeking to regularize their status through the DREAM Act, i.e. Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors.

Since she was last at JFON, Elizabeth, who came to the U.S. as a 5-year-old, has graduated from nursing school, passed her licensing exams, and gotten a job. But she is not as hopeful as she was just a year ago. "Today, I don't come here with a hopeful heart. I come with a heart in mourning for a future that I had planned," she said, adding that the uncertainty has tinged all of her accomplishments.

For some covered by the DREAM Act their status could end as early as March 2018; others have a year and some, like Elizabeth, two years. "People keep telling me have faith, but it's hard," she said. "It's been 23 years waiting for something to happen. So today I come here to tell you a little bit about what's going on in my heart and to ask you to speak up, to have a voice and to use it, because I can't anymore."

"We need you to speak up, to fight for us, to love us, to hug us, to give us words of encouragement and to treat us like human beings," she said. "We need you to be our strength right now and our voices."

The Mission Committee voted to support this important work with a gift of \$150.00 from our portion of the Rental Income from the parsonage. How can we help? Letters and calls to government officials and/or write a check to Fisk marked JFON.

Hannah's ??????????

Finance Update

We must report that we continue to find ourselves behind in Pledge support by 10% as of October 31st. The faithful support of you the congregation continues to be a blessing, but our ministries are in need. Our position is:

Support and other income	\$ 155,000
Expenses of ministry	\$ 162,000
Deficit (10 months)	\$ (7,000)

As a result we are spending wisely, and carefully managing our resources:

- Our giving support remains 7% below Budget through October,
- We are spending less than our budgeted expenses to compensate, but expenses continue, and we may not be able to fully fund our valued ministries at our current rates. We have only paid 7 months of mission shares.
- We continue to pray for improvements in our financial position.

We urge you to do all you can to get your pledged commitments in for 2017 in order to avoid a deficit. Every person's effort matters. If you have not given in the past, we would urge you to consider supporting our ministries. If you are current, we thank you, and ask that you consider increasing your support this year. We may be forced to utilize our reserve "savings" in order to fund all of our planned ministries this year. We need your prayerful assistance.

The ministries of Fisk touch so many people in so many ways. As we enter this joyful advent season, we must prayerfully and purposefully work to grow our church...and our finances will follow.

The Finance Committee

From the Financial Secretary

Sherry Culver, Financial Secretary
sherrycd@comcast.net or 508-651-1876

We are accepting online donations! Visit fiskumc.org and click on the Donate button located on the right side of the webpage.

Donate to Fisk UMC Ministry

or go directly to : <https://onrealm.org/fiskumc/Give>.

You can set up your pledge to be sent regularly to Fisk or make a one-time special gift on a specific date. Donations may come from credit cards, or your checking

or savings account. And info may be saved so that the next time you don't have to enter in the account or credit card information.

From time to time you'll see a QR code like this one in our Sunday bulletin and Messenger. This is a quick way to access the site and make your donation. The QR code for our donation page looks like this:



Try it out – make that special gift to ministry you've been thinking about today!

Thank you for your continued support of ministry at Fisk.

Special Note about Year-End Giving:

Are you unsure about whether you have made your pledge? Do you want to know what you have given to ministry in 2017? If you'd like an up-to-date contribution statement for year-end gift planning, contact me and I'll send one along to you.

And ... If you haven't made a pledge to ministry at Fisk, there is still time to do so. Call the church office and request a pledge card be mailed to you or let me know directly.

Thank you for your continued support of ministry at Fisk.



Offering Envelopes for 2018 will be available to pick up starting on Sunday, December 17th. If you do not see a set of envelopes for your name and you would like to use them, please contact me and

I will assign you a set. Envelopes not picked up will be mailed.

For those of you who do not use offering envelopes – Please note your giving number on your check. This simple notation helps our Sunday morning tellers properly record your gifts to ministry. You may also have your gift mailed directly to Fisk from your bank using an on-line bill pay system. Just be sure to have the giving number added to the check. Or use the new donate online button from the website or the QR code.

Thank you for your continued support of ministry at Fisk.



United
Methodist
Women

Christmas Open House *Tuesday, December 5 at 6:00pm*



Appetizers and Desserts
at Marcia Hoyt's 8 Bacon St. Natick
Bring a NEW book of any kind, style, size or
price. You will go home with a different book.
Bring your World Thank Offering
Come and relax with other women of the
United Methodist Women at Fisk

RSVP and Rides available
Call Susan Carney 508-655-6148 or
Janis Cail 781-894-1730

Thank You all for your help and support of our Annual Country Fair. It is always a great day at Fisk. We welcome the community to our church, enjoy lunch with friends, while earning funds for missions. Our total is closing in on \$5000.00 to help women, youth and children locally and globally. *Gracias Merci Thank You*

CONGRATULATIONS to Sherry Culver!

Sherry was recently elected as the Coordinator of Education and Interpretation at the Conference level of the United Methodist Women. We know she is the appropriate person for that position and we will support her with our prayers.

Fisk United Methodist Women

UMW Hannah Circle update logo with UMW



The Hannah's will meet on Tuesday, November 14, 12 noon to 2 p.m. in Ogle Parlor. All women are invited. Bring your lunch. Dessert & beverages are provided.

Parece or Nancy Swan if you can come. Linnea Fisher and Florence Young are our hostesses for this meeting.

Fisk Youth

For youth and their friends in Grades 6 – 12

Youth Fellowship Leaders: Bingxin Xu and Tian Zhang
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. Regular meetings will be held at the church:

On Saturday, November 18th, our youth group
visited the residents at Whitney Place, Natick, MA to
bring holiday blessings, goodies, sing, share stories and
laugh together. This was a life-changing event at an
inter-generational level. Thanks to Tian and Bingxin for
their leadership.

Dec 2

Godspell at Natick High

Dec 10 –MYF

Dec 16 - Church Christmas play

Dec 15 or 17

Nutcracker at
Walnut Hill

https://www.walnuthillarts.org/about/calendar?cal_date=2017-12-01

How to contact Bingxin and Tian: For youth-related
activities, email to fiskyouth@gmail.com. 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

**Creating
holiday
greeting
cards**



Music & Movement Time For Kids Ages 2 To 7

December 2 and 16

The event is FREE! No registration is required.
For more information and pictures of past classes, visit:
www.fiskumc.org/music-and-movement.html

PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR INFORMATION

FOR THE JANUARY ISSUE OF

THE MESSENGER BY

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27 AT 9:00AM

DUE TO THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY,

THIS IS A FIRM DEADLINE

