

# The Messenger

Fisk Memorial United Methodist Church

[fiskoffice@fiskumc.org](mailto:fiskoffice@fiskumc.org)

106 Walnut St., Natick, MA 01760 (508) 653-1674

[www.fiskumc.org](http://www.fiskumc.org)

## December 2020

### Pastor's Note

#### *Beloved sisters and brothers!*

As we travel through Advent to Christmas, let us have hope in new and better persons, places and things. Most of all, let us be ready and willing to accept the Christ Child with hope. I say hope because the basis for our living is found in the way God has kept his promises in the past by giving us Jesus Christ.

You see, hope **does not put us to shame**, because God's love is guaranteed. God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives, the church, and the world. Hope is vital to human existence. It is particularly important because it motivates Christians to be and do better as we are driven by the power of the Holy Spirit to endure difficult times; the isolation by the coronavirus pandemic being one of those times.

The bad news is, if we do not have hope, we die hopeless. But even amid sometimes hopelessness, there is still the good news to be told and heard. The good news for us this season and all the seasons ahead is, God loves each of us as individuals and all of us together as the faithful community. Because of that love, we have been saved by grace; free and undeserved.

Therefore, as time draws us nearer to the lowly manger, let us rejoice and sing with joy for the world. Having joy can turn many "not-so-good times" into a time of "joy comes in the morning". Until that time comes with the birth of the Christ Child, live with **HOPE, LOVE** deeply, find **JOY** in simple things, and you will find **PEACE** with each person you encounter, each place you go, and in each thing that you do!

For these, we are encouraged to never give up. As we prepare for the Christ Child, be open to welcome the least, lost and last as our neighbors and celebrate with hospitality!

A Very, Merry and Healthy holiday Season!

x 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

#### For Personal Reflection & Spiritual growth

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

|             |                      |                   |
|-------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| November 29 | 1 Corinthians 1:3-9  | Mark 13:24-37     |
| December 6  | Psalms 85: 1-2, 8-13 | Mark 1:1-8        |
| December 13 | Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11  | John 1:6-8, 19-28 |
| December 20 | Romans 16:25-27      | Luke 1:26-38      |
|             | Psalms 29:1-11       |                   |



#### 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. We are a phone call away (508-653-1674). Thanks, and be blessed.

## From the Pastor's Desk

### Advent Bible Study

#### **MAKING ROOM: SHARING THE LOVE OF CHRISTMAS**

by Rev. Ed Robb

Senior pastor of Woodlands United Methodist in Texas

Advent is always an exciting time of preparation and participation. With Covid-19 and as we anticipate greater and better persons, places, and things, let us never give up but remain in a spirit of hope during this unprecedented time of uncertainty, fears and anxiety. As we do, we prayerfully can continue social distancing but be faithful in remaining connected. For when we stay connected, we can walk with each other, look to the hill for hope in the promise of Jesus Christ's coming. Therefore, no one will walk alone.

To this end, this Bible study will keep us connected, united even when we cannot participate in all the rituals and traditions normally associated with this season. Therefore, join us for a joint study with Rev. Dr. Charlotte Pridgen Randolph and members of the UMC of Newton, MA, to feel connected and blessed as you become a blessing to all our neighbors.

**When:** Wednesdays

December 2: Making Room  
"The neighbor next door"

December 9: Stranger in a Strange Land  
"The people new to community"

December 16: Leave the Light On  
"The oppressed and marginalized"

December 23: Walking Each Other Home  
"The church & how we live out our call"

**Time:** 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.

**Where:** Join ZOOM Meeting:

<https://umcom.zoom.us/j/99303533116?pwd=d2lvdFQ5Ri82TTINSgzSGNFSGp5QT09>

Meeting ID: 993 0353 3116 Passcode: 322485

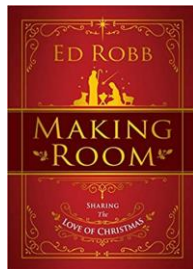
Dial by your location

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)

Same codes as above.

**Purchase a book online  
at Cokesbury.com**



## WHAT WILL I LEAVE TO THOSE I LOVE THE MOST?

### **Planned Giving for the Living**

*Wills, Trusts & other Love Letters*

Join us on ZOOM

**Thursday, December 3, 2020 / 7:00 pm**

#### **PRESENTER:**

Gary Melville / Foundation Director of Development

#### **TOPICS:**

- *How to Begin the Planning Process*
- *Maximizing Income for Retirement, Family & Charity*
- *How the Charitable IRA Works*
- *Giving Through Wills & Trusts*
- *The Foundation's Role in the Process*

to Join the Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86188393320#success>

## Worship Team

***"Come Thou Long Expected Jesus  
Come to Set Thy People Free"***

December 29 will be the First Sunday In **Advent** this year. Advent is the season of the Coming of Christ which culminates on Christmas. It's a time to celebrate Hope, Joy, Love, and Peace.

Due to Covid-19, we will not be holding services in our sanctuary this year but, ZOOM services will be projected from the sanctuary. You will see the lighting of the Advent Wreath by Pastor Alecia. The stable scene will be prominent. The Chrismon Tree will be up with its pretty lights. You will hear Advent Carols played on the organ and the piano.

You will feel a sense of holiness and expectation during this month of waiting for the Christ Child. So, log in or tune in each Sunday at 10:30 a.m. for these services meant to inspire and enlighten you during this dark time.

On Christmas Eve, we will hear and see a service presented by our Bishop and District Superintendents. This service will include Lessons and Carols for Christmas and promises to be inspiring for all.

Diane French, Worship Chairperson

## REFLECTIONS

by Dorothy J. Phillips, Lay Leader

### "For Such a Time as This"

Mordecai addresses Queen Esther

<sup>14</sup> "For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?" Esther 4: 14

The Tuesday morning Bible Study led by Susan Carney has been discussing the book of Esther. While studying Esther I heard a sermon on her at the virtual Church of God in Christ Women's Retreat (Dr. Jennifer Adebanyo, speaker). Have you focused on Esther? Is she one of your favorite women of the Old Testament? She is now high on my list of favorites.

God's plans are often not clear to us until they are fulfilled. God selected a poor, orphaned Jew, Esther, to save her people as a queen. He assigned her a mentor, helper or guardian, Mordecai, God's servant, who helped her carry out God's plan. She listened to Mordecai. She spent a year being prepared by God for her role as Queen Esther. With courage she faced the King to ask him to decree that the Jews who had been given a date for annihilation be saved. They were saved; she saved her people.

Today we feel that our world is crippled as we know it from the COVID 19 pandemic. Yet as dark as it seems, God has someone who will rise and shine. Who does God have or who is He preparing to save his people in such a time as this? Who are the Esther and Mordecai working to reverse the heavy weight of this pandemic? But be assured, my dear brothers and sisters, God is preparing someone(s) for such a time as this. Let us trust our Lord and Savior to bring an end to this pandemic; he raised Queen Esther to save the Jews and He will fulfill his plan to end the pandemic.



If you have any questions, please reach out to Crystal Mayo at 1-774-287-1705, or email her at [crystaljp@yahoo.com](mailto:crystaljp@yahoo.com).

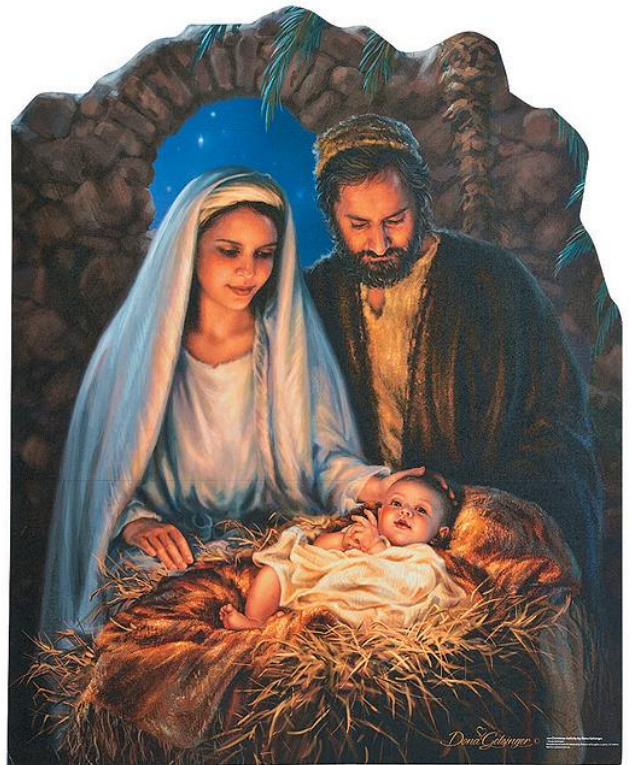
# SAVE the DATE December 20, 2020 Sunday about 3:00pm Celebrate

The Council of Ministries is in the planning stages of a Community Celebration in the Spirit of Christmas.

HOPE PEACE JOY LOVE

This will be a safe, masked, socially-distanced event. We are talking about a "drive-by" with Christmas music, a Nativity, fire pit, gifts, and goodies. So, SAVE the DATE and we will send more information in December.

Questions: Sherry Culver or Marcia Hoyt



### Women's Bible Study Journey

Tuesday morning and Thursday night will find very active women's studies on God's word. We are wrapping up Micah and Esther. We will be moving into Colossians and the gospels as we prepare for the new year and the celebration of the birthday of the Messiah.

As always, the groups are open to women who are looking to walk with our Lord via the study of his word. Contact me through email [susanjcarney@gmail.com](mailto:susanjcarney@gmail.com) Preparing as always to Make a Joyful Noise Unto the Lord. ( Psalm 100)

#### Sunday School

We are continuing to meet for 20 minutes at 9:30 on Sunday morning for Sunday Together as children of the Lord. It is a blessing just to see each other. All kids are invited whether they go to this church or not. Have a grandchild or a neighbor to bring aboard? Get me their name and email and I will send them a ZOOM connection. We sing, read stories, and worship our Lord together.

[susanjcarney@gmail.com](mailto:susanjcarney@gmail.com)

### The Book of Esther

#### A list of facts

1. Esther is one of two books named for women in the Bible. Ruth is the other book.
2. God is not mentioned by name in this book but is there in every move.
3. Mordecai is Esther's cousin.
4. They love the Lord.
- 4a. Haman is their nemesis.
- 4b. Xerxes is the king and his name may appear differently in various interpretations.
5. The Jewish celebration of PURIM is based on this book.
6. In the Protestant Bible - Esther appears between Nehemiah and Job.
7. Esther was married to the King of the Persian outreaches which had 127 far flung locations.
8. It is a great book to read if you are just starting Bible Study.
9. Remember to read many opinions --- it will open many doors.
10. Pray first—study second. God bless your interests.



### Christmas Tidbits from Germany

1. Christmas tree tradition comes from Germany.
2. Apples were the first decorations in that country.
3. Frohliche Weihnachten (Merry Christmas)
4. Pickle ornaments or a real pickle are hidden in trees. The child that finds it on Christmas Eve is rewarded.
5. Lebkuchen hearts / gingerbread hearts are favorites.
6. Advent wreaths, advent calendars and decorating trees on Christmas Eve
7. Christmas carols on January 6.
8. Tannenbaum - O Christmas Tree

What are your traditions? This is the year to start a new tradition (maybe ring a bell or jingle bells) when you wake up on Christmas morning). Thank God for sending His son. Amen.

From the Education Committee

## Ministry of Caring

### "Almost Thanksgiving"

There are about 362 days until Thanksgiving 2021. Why do we count days until \_\_\_\_? This poem was shared with me last month, before Thanksgiving 2020. Giving thanks is an action and prayer that we can all do each day, and all year round.

*"When I have food, help me to remember the hungry.  
When I have work, help me to remember the jobless;  
When I have a home, help me to remember those  
who have no home at all;  
When I am without pain, help me to remember  
those who suffer.  
And remembering, help me to destroy my complacency;  
bestir my compassion; and be concerned  
enough to help, by word and deed,  
those who cry out for what we take for granted."*

It is December, and Mary will deliver a present to the world. A gift. We all have to take care this season, and do things differently, and have that same, wonderful Christmas spirit that carries us through. Bake for those you love, send a card to someone that you pick out of the Fisk Family Directory, watch Christmas movies, decorate with treasured memories and smiles, pick up the phone and make someone's day. May your Advent season, and Christmas bless your spirit, and help your soul sing!

*Christmas Blessings, Pat Price*

## From UMCOR 2020 is one long emergency

ATLANTA (UM News-Linda Bloom) — In a year when one disaster seemed to follow another and the pandemic and other health concerns took center stage, the United Methodist Committee on Relief's longtime investment in training and support — both in the U.S. and globally — is paying off.

*For release: IMMEDIATE*

Media contact: **Mary Lou Greenwood Boice**  
Director of Communications and the Advance

The late Bishop John K. Yambasu spoke to attendees during the ‘Multiplying the Loaves: The Church and Agriculture in Africa’ summit held in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2019. The summit addressed topics surrounding Africa’s agricultural sustainability and explored best practices for the future.

Bishop Yambasu was the vice president of Global Ministries, the worldwide mission, relief and development agency of the denomination, and president of the denomination’s Africa College of Bishops.



An agriculture initiative has been renamed in memory of the late Bishop Yambasu of Sierra Leone. The bishop, who died in August 2020, following a traffic accident in Freetown, was instrumental in starting the effort to improve food security and strengthen farm communities across the continent.

The work of the Bishop Yambasu Agriculture Initiative will evolve from a pilot project underway in Sierra Leone, according to Roland Fernandes, general secretary of Global Ministries and the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). Fernandes said “It also provides a way for us to accompany farmers as they strive to support themselves and their communities. It extends our efforts to connect the church in mission through care of the creation and sustainable development.”

You can help—note the Advance #982188 on the memo line of your check.

<https://umcmmission.org/advance-project/982188/>

## About the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church



Global Ministries is the worldwide mission and development agency of The United Methodist Church. Founded in 1819, Global Ministries today supports more than 300 missionaries in over 70 countries, including the United States. It has personnel, projects, and partners in 115 countries. Learn more about Global Ministries by visiting

[www.umcmmission.org](http://www.umcmmission.org) or  
[www.facebook.com/GlobalMinistries](https://www.facebook.com/GlobalMinistries)

Fernandes reported “There’s been a decline in income, that’s one reality we’ve got to face,” he said during the Oct. 28 meeting, where UMCOR directors approved \$1.15 million in new grants and authorized \$6.4 million in disbursements.

In the U.S., the largest disaster response grant was \$370,000 to the Alabama-West Florida Conference for its response to the damage left by Hurricane Sally in September.

### How to help

1. To make a donation to UMCOR’s International Disaster Response, use Advance #982450.
2. Give to the UMCOR’s U.S. Disaster Response and Recovery through Advance #901670.
3. Send a check payable to Fisk Church, designated for UMCOR and we will send it along.

How can we do Mission work?

## Who can we help?

## Where can we serve?

As a committee we usually plan to educate, serve, give, do hands-on work...this year these things have not been possible. All of the mission programs that we have traditionally supported along with a few new initiatives are struggling to survive. The *people in need*—still need help and the numbers have increased due to lost jobs, homes, insurance etc.

We have decided since we currently cannot hold programs, collect clothing or food right now, and cannot serve at the Natick Food Pantry...we would just send our financial support. This is the best way to help our neighbors and those struggling around the world. Please continue to support the Fisk Mission Budget. You can always give through your pledge envelope—just designate any extra giving for Missions...or even a particular project.

Among the local programs we are supporting include Family Promise, Natick Service Council, and the Natick Food Pantry. We also reach-out to the United Methodist Economic Ministry in Maine (they are ready to launch a Capital Campaign for some much-needed projects at the center), The Homeless Veterans in Boston, Cooper Community Center, the Pelletier's in South Africa and Dr. Belinda Forbes in Nicaragua (put her name on your check's memo line if sending in a donation). We are also reaching out to a new endeavor mentioned on another page...Sustainable Agriculture in Sienna Leone.



Missions Committee: Janis Cail, Susan Carney, Mary Greenwood, Janis Townsend, & Marcia Hoyt (chair)  
**NICARAGUA**--Many have asked about Belinda and how they are doing in Nicaragua having suffered

two hurricanes in a short period of time. This small country is in need of PRAYERS and support. Here are portions of her email to me this week.

*Hi Marcia,*

*So good of you to reach out. Gerardo and I are fine in Managua, our worst problem is a leaky roof, absolutely nothing compared to the damage all across the country and the region. It has been difficult to post a lot of information, Accion Medica Cristiana is just getting going from Hurricane Eta and now Iota hit. We will have more concrete details in the coming days and weeks about where AMC can respond.*

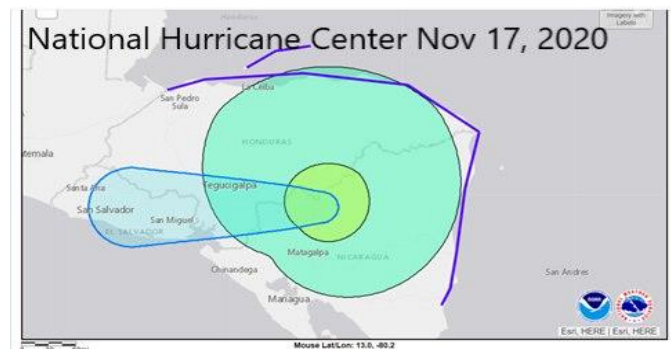
*I hope to get a newsletter out soon and in the meantime there are a bunch of photos on my Facebook page in the albums and other posts.*

*My prayers for you to for health and safety. My greetings to Gary, to Pastor Alecia and everyone at Fisk Memorial UMC!*

*Grace and peace.*

*Belinda*

We encourage you to send Belinda an email or



note anytime. [belindagbgm@gmail.com](mailto:belindagbgm@gmail.com) you can follow her on Facebook Belinda Forbes Gbgm. Her mailing address is:

Dr. Belinda Forbes  
Apartado C 224  
20502 Managua  
Nicaragua



United  
Methodist  
Women  
FAITH•HOPE•LOVE IN ACTION



*You are cordially invited  
to join us to celebrate with a  
Christmas Holiday Tea  
December 12, 2020 at 2:00pm*

This will be a Zoom Tea Party. Wear your fanciest hat—maybe your pearls. Have your favorite tea cup ready. Prepare your own cup of tea—or your (sandwich or goodies) to enjoy. We will connect on ZOOM or your phone. We also suggest if there are women you feel safe to be with, join together for this Tea Party with someone's computer. We will

visit, show our hats, if you choose to, share a Christmas tradition and play a game or two ... and have a great time of fellowship.



*Chairs for this Tea will be Janis C.-Vice President and Janis T.- Coordinator of Membership, Nurture and Outreach*



Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://umcom.zoom.us/j/93565643067?pwd=d1BkLzZQSFDQVNPQ3MybWVslZl5QT09>  
Meeting ID: 935 6564 3067

Passcode: 642785

Dial by your location  
+1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)  
+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)  
Meeting ID: 935 6564 3067 Passcode: 642785

### Last month we highlighted some our United Methodist Women— here are a few more!

Deborah Friscino – Deb has held many leadership roles in our church. In recent years she has been the coordinator of our connection to Family Promise. She attends their board meetings and works with the Wayland UMC to do see that this program continues as part of Fisk. Thanks Deb

Amy Bruns is our current chair of Evangelism, caretaker of the front garden and the person keeping the lawn cross inspiring and seasonal. After she retired from Natick Public Schools she agreed to teach folks learning English as a second language. Important work! Gracias!

Mary Lou Greenwood Boice grew up at Fisk and yes, she is Mary Greenwood's daughter. Did you notice her name on the page in this Messenger about a Sustainable Agriculture program in Sierra Leone? Well, she is the Director of Communications and the Advance for UMCOR in Atlanta. We are proud of you Mary Lou!

*More next month.*

*Marcia Hoyt—Education & Interpretation*

**UMCOR Health/Hygiene Kits...**We have about 70-80 kits ready to ship to the UMCOR Disaster Coordinator. Can we make it 100 by the end of December?

I do have a supply of combs, soap, bandaids, and some nail clippers. **Needed** are Hand towels, facecloths, toothbrushes (single wrap)



### A Star, or An Angel?

The Hannah's will meet on their "normal" second Tuesday of the month by telephone, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. We will check in with each lady to see how we are doing, share our Christmas season stories, share stories about past Christmas seasons at Fisk, write the lyrics for a new Christmas hymn, and fill Piggy with our World Thank Offering. All women are invited!

### UMW READING PROGRAM

Yes, we are still here for you with new books to read. Please make sure to email me with your list of books read for this year (2020) by Mid-December. You need to have read five books to be eligible for the Reading Certificate.

I now have a sampling of the 2021 books for the Reading Program. Here are the ones we have now in our library in Ogle Parlor:

- **Dinner by Candlelight** by Schaner, Kevin Louise
- **One Day I wrote Back** by Jane Herring
- **Sleep, Pray, Heal** by Fado Ivery, Donna
- **#Not your Princess: Voices of Native American Women** by Charleyboy
- **Gum Moon: A Novel of San Francisco Chinatown** by Staley, Jeff
- **Women Rise up: Sacred stories of Resistance** Zen, Katey
- **The Hate U Give** by Thomas, Angie

Please send me an email or call me, to request your books. This year I will be happy to deliver any of the books above to your home, and pick them up from you when you are done. I will keep track of who has which book(s) so we can move them along.

***\*\*I also have printed copies of the complete reading list for 2021, so you can check with the library or bookstore, if there is another book on the reading list you want to read. If you will leave your email, or address info I will be happy to send anyone a list. I'll also leave copied lists in Ogle Parlor.***

Don't forget you can still read from the prior year's books in our Library.... books from 2016-2021 are eligible for the Reading Program or just for your pleasure.

I'll order more books next year to add to our collection.

Happy Holidays, Be safe and stay warm with God's Blessings.

Terry Ames, Program Resources  
Home phone 508-653-1462  
Email is [amesterry61@gmail.com](mailto:amesterry61@gmail.com)



As President of the Board of FACE I asked Jane Theriault, the director, if there were any items that the UMW could collect to donate to FACE. She suggested four items and I thought why not ask, not only the UMW, but the church to donate these items.

Marcia Hoyt has put a container in room 2 to collect any donations. If you cannot get in the building just leave them in a bag by the Whipple Hall Door labeled Face donations.

The items are:

**Holiday wrapping paper** – the kids love to wrap up items and give them to each other.



**"Scotch" Tape**



**Catalogs** – with pictures appropriate for children to be cutting out such as toy or seed catalogs.



**Used envelopes** – like ones that bills, or ads come in as long as they do not have your name or address



Thank- you for your help with the Day Care Center.  
Janis Cail

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

## Update from Family Promise

While hosting families onsite won't happen until 2021, the work of supporting families in need continues. Fisk's continued participation in this ministry remains important. There are a number of ways to help from donations of \$25 gift cards (Target, Walmart, grocery or gas stations) to participating in Keeping the Promise concert and auction. Contact Debbie Friscino for more information. Family Promise is a part of Fisk Outreach.

Here's information about the concert from Carole A. Brodrick, Development Director

Dear Friends,

We are so excited for the [Keeping the Promise](#) concert on **December 5 at 7:00pm**. Grab your front row seat to take in the fantastic lineup of musicians that will be joining us for an evening of uplifting music and stories of families in our program.

We've also partnered with two local restaurants for take-out dinner and drink options to make your night even more special. [Lombardos To Go](#) and [Burtons Grill of Framingham](#) have special offers on tap for you! Instructions for ordering are on our [event website](#).

Since 2015, our Keep the Promise food tasting and auction has raised vital funding to bring our services to families who are facing homelessness. Thanks to the success of this event last fall, we were well-positioned to serve additional families when the pandemic first hit in March. Year to date, we have already served a record number of **46 families** across our programs, including **81 children**, who need us now more than ever. Your dedication to our mission has made this possible.

Here are two ways to support our work:

- Join us on December 5 for the [Keeping the Promise Concert](#)
- Place a bid in our [Keeping the Promise Auction](#) (opens on December 23)

Wondering why we are calling this concert [Keeping the Promise](#)? Family Promise Metrowest has made a commitment to our families that we will keep them together and stand by their side until they are back on the path to a sustainable, joyful future. This promise is more vital than ever during these uncertain times. Although the pandemic prevents us from gathering in person, we are confident that our community spirit and collective desire to create change will prevail on this night. We have seats on your couch reserved for just you and all your family members!

To learn more and register to join us, please visit our website.

<https://familypromisemetrowest.salsalabs.org/keepingthe/promise/index.html>

## From the Church Office

### December Fisk Calendar—link below

*Please note: All meetings are on Zoom unless otherwise indicated.*

<https://www.mychurchevents.com/calendar/73801616/month/2020-12-01/2020-12-01?printView=True>

**January Messenger deadline: Thurs.  
December 17**

**Mailing Date: Weds., 12/23**  
**No late submissions due to the**  
**Christmas holiday.**

**For all church office business, at this time, please contact Pastor Alecia directly.**

**fiskpastor@fiskumc.org**

**phone: 508-653-1674**

**email: [fiskoffice@fiskumc.org](mailto:fiskoffice@fiskumc.org)**

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

## NE UMC CONFERENCE INFORMATION

**District: 6**

**Name: Commonwealth East**

Website: [www.neumc.org/CE](http://www.neumc.org/CE)

Address: 2600 Massachusetts Ave., Lexington, MA 02421

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

District Superintendent: **Rev. We Hyun Chang**

His email address: [CEDS@neumc.org](mailto:CEDS@neumc.org)

Administrative Assistant: **Allyson Printz**

Her address: [CEDistrict@neumc.org](mailto:CEDistrict@neumc.org)

### **Adventus: Ancient Practices for an Advent at Home**

Zoomed out? Tired of technology? Can't stand to look at a screen for one more minute? We get it. This Advent, go back in time and engage with ancient spiritual practices designed to help you find more hope, peace, joy and love in your life.

*Adventus: Ancient Practices for an Advent at Home* includes five lessons: one for each week of Advent plus an extra lesson for Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. Each session of *Adventus* (Latin for "coming" and the origin for

the word Advent) follows the ancient monastic practice of *Lectio Divina*.

There are so many published Bible studies available at our fingertips. The most common studies requested from the conference Resource Center feature an “expert” teaching about the Bible while we follow along with a study guide or small group discussion. Through *Adventus*, we invite you into the ancient practice of *Lectio Divina* and ask you to invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you through meditative reading of scripture.

*Lectio Divina* is Latin for “divine reading.” This ancient practice was established in the 6th century by Saint Benedict of Nursia and provides a guided format for reading scripture. As you read each scripture lesson, you'll practice the following five steps or movements:

- ***Lectio*** (Reading): What does the scripture say?
- ***Meditatio*** (Meditation): What does the scripture say to me, specifically, today?
- ***Oratio*** (Prayer): What do I say to God in response to this text?
- ***Contemplatio*** (Contemplation): What is God asking of me through this scripture?
- ***Actio*** (Action): What am I going to do in light of this scripture and meditation?

*This study was designed to be utilized in a variety of settings:*

- ***For individuals:*** Follow the prompts, as is. You can simply reflect upon your answers to questions/prompts throughout the study or use a journal to record your thoughts.
- ***For small groups:*** Invite individuals to read the scripture aloud at each step and engage in discussion using the questions/prompts.
- ***For families:*** Depending on children's ages, you can follow the above recommendations for small groups. If you have younger children, you might need to read the scripture for them. Use the scripture lessons provided in this study or utilize a child's Bible or Bible storybook.

Ready to get started? Download the *Adventus* study!

<https://www.wnccumc.org/files/websites/www/Adventus.pdf>