

The Messenger

Fisk Memorial United Methodist Church - 106 Walnut St., Natick, MA 01760

February 2012

Reflections from Pastor Mark

Snow outside the window falling
Cataract over my eyeseverything milky white
Blurred in this case wonderful.

Yeah, winter has finally arrived – just in time for the AFC championship game (which the Patriots won!) – and New England looks like New England again. I can't say that I enjoy driving in the snow – or that my back enjoys my shoveling sidewalks! – but the white stuff certainly is beautiful to look at.

Almost ironically, we are just now planning for Lent as the first real snow of winter has arrived. *Lent* – the 40 days (minus Sundays) between Ash Wednesday and Easter – actually means *springtime* in an old Teutonic language. *For Christians, Lent is springtime of the spirit.*

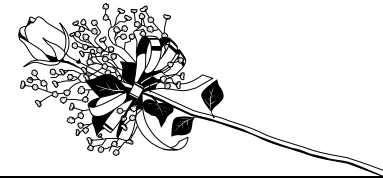
That idea probably takes some getting used to as we may habitually think of Lent as a sad time of penitence, self-reflection and fasting – all leading up to the crucifixion of Christ. That is of course true: *Lent is* a serious matter, one of the best spiritual opportunities provided each year of our lives for growing and maturing in Christ. *Lent is* the season for self-discipline. . . and that sounds heavy indeed.

We might want to think of it this way, instead: Remember what it is like to open the windows of your house on the first beautiful day of spring: Can you smell the clean air? Smell the earth reawakened after winter? See the crocuses pushing their

heads toward the sun? Feel the sun on your face and the breeze now gentle and warm? Wonderful, isn't it? As spring is a celebration of life, so, too, is Lent: A celebration of new life, life released from sin and pain and death, accomplished (we learn after our 40 days in the wilderness) in the astonishing Resurrection of Christ Jesus our Lord!

Lent 2012 begins on Ash Wednesday, February 22. We begin our journey together with a *Service of Ashes at 7:00 pm.* On Sunday mornings I will teach an *adult class* dedicated to the spirituality of our Lenten Journey. And I am especially excited to be a leader in a one-day *Lenten Retreat on Saturday, March 3*, to be held at the church. I hope you'll participate.

I am looking forward to Lent with real excitement. I've always loved the season, especially, I suppose because I know what it is leading up to! May God grant you excitement, anticipation and joy as we look forward to our Lenten journey together. Peace and joy,



Staff of Fisk Memorial United Methodist Church

Pastor:	Rev. Mark Goad
Admin. / Newsletter Editor:	Judy Bortolotti
Deacon:	Rev. Cheryl Gates
Youth Minister:	Deanna Leedy-Andreozzi
Choir Director /Organist:	Eric Mazonson

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Church Website: www.gb-gm-umc.org/fiskmumc

Finance Update - February 2012

We were blessed in 2011 with a prayerful and generous response to our 2011 financial needs, and we thank you. Your increased support in December reduced our large projected deficit to only \$1,124. However, after carefully utilizing our cash savings from prior years to maintain the vital ministries our church, we were forced into the very undesirable position of not fully paying our New England Conference Mission shares, the support which all churches provide to the Conference. We made that decision prayerfully and carefully, and reserved the possibility of paying those mission obligations in July of 2012 if our financial position has improved.

In 2012, we face significant financial challenges as a congregation. The initial deficit gap was significant, but we have worked together with the Trustees to utilize the full resources of the congregation. We have reduced some expenses by asking the Trustees to assume the facility maintenance and other costs in 2012, and level funded or reduced other expenses. This cooperation was essential and significant, and we have reduced the Budget deficit to \$3,900 for the year. This deficit is due to our continuing trends in the last few years of loss of membership, absence of meaningful growth, a reduced pledge base, and the critical need for continued funding of our essential ministries and support. The Administrative Board has met, reviewed our recommendations, and has made important decisions on our 2012 Budget Plan. The final Budget will be available in the Church office, and published in summary next month here in the Messenger.

The ministries of Fisk touch so many people in so many ways. Those ministries, as always, depend upon the financial support of each and every one of us. As a congregation, we have responded in the past, and with prayer, cooperation, intentional dedication to growing our church, and HIS grace, we will respond and succeed in 2012.

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

Michael Bruns (Chair), Pastor Mark Goad, Debi Henry (Lay Leader), Thom Townsend (Chair-Admin Board), David Cail (Treasurer), Sherry Culver (Financial Secretary), Tom Carney (Trustees), Ernest Acquah-Harrison (SPRC), Greg Dickinson, Larry Drolet, Jen Garrant, Dave Longworth.

United Methodist Women

Our Purpose

The organized unit of United Methodist Women shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.

As we continue to develop our own supportive community, we support missions—local and worldwide. Our February meeting is “at the Natick Mall” on **February 4**. As a group we will support the **Metrowest Interfaith Hospitality Network** by walking with the many people who have agreed to raise funds for this local program. MIHN supports those families in transition...housing, employment and life skills.

Join us....Sign-up at Coffee Hour....Call Debbie Friscino

Book / Reading Group-

Leader this month is Joanne Billo
Date TBD—call Joanne
Book- Lacey and the African Grandmothers. Copies are being shared. Check with Joanne or Winnie. If you have a copy and have read it...please put it in the Ogle Parlor Library for someone else.



Prayer Shawl Ministry-

Meets each Wednesday at 10:00 AM Drop in and share some knitting time and / or prayer time.

Health Kits-

Continue to assemble Health Kits. More information on the UMW Bulletin Board.

The “Look and Feel” of Fisk

An evening of exciting discussion!

Wednesday, February 15th

7:30PM

At Gary & Marcia Hoyt’s Home
8 Bacon Street, Natick

Please join your church family for an informal enjoyable time to consider new programming and “entry points” to the church that will keep Fisk a relevant witness to God in this community.

Light snacks and coffee will be provided.

Please RSVP to the Church Office by February 13.

Daily Scripture Readings

Lent 2012

Ash Wednesday, February 22 - Luke 18:9-14

Thursday, February 23 - John 17:1-8

Friday, February 24 - John 17:9-19

Saturday, February 25 - John 17:20-26

Sunday, February 26 - John 12:44-50

Monday, February 27 - Mark 1:1-13

Tuesday, February 28 - Mark 1:14-28

Wednesday, February 29 - Mark 1:29-45

UNITED METHODIST MEN

Tuesday, February 14

7:00PM

Join us for dinner and a speaker.

Larry Drolet will talk about the Internet and his experiences in the computer industry.

Call Brad Vining or Gary Hoyt for reservations.

(Cost is \$12.00)

I encourage ALL MEN to sign-up for the Walk at the Mall...to help WALKAWAY HOMELESSNESS.....See you there!

Laity Lines from our Lay Leader

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”

Lenten Devotions! If you have not signed-up yet to write a devotion or meditation for our booklet – hurry up! Writings need to be submitted by February 10th. Thank you to all who have agreed to share their thoughts with us.

CMA District Lay Speaking Classes will be held at Wesley UMC in Framingham on Saturday’s – March 3, 10 & 17, 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Basic Class and the Basic Class for Youth will be held for first timers and Advanced Classes – Lay Speakers Lead Bible Study and Lay Speakers Lead in Worship will be held. Information and registration forms are located in the church office. Pastor Mark and the Administrative Board must approve your taking of a class. Information for youth and registration forms are located in the youth room. Registration Deadline: February 21st.

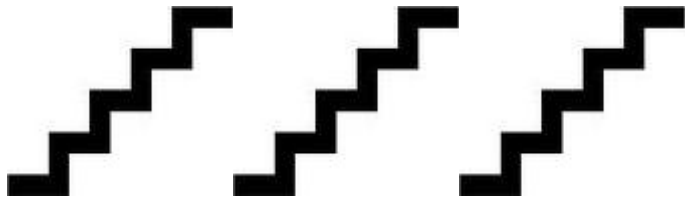
?? Twenty Questions! How many days are there in Lent? Which came first – the chicken or the egg? If heaven was custom designed for you, what would heaven be like? Is Christ at the very center of your life? Do you have one blessing that you did not count yesterday? What has been your purpose for your life? Do you pray to God like God can do the impossible? Are we too serious about ourselves? If you could change “history,” what would you change? If you could change *your* “history,” what would you change? What makes life precious? Is it more productive for your soul to look back or to look ahead? How do others come to know we love them? What do you hold within you? Have you ever wanted to be someone else? What makes changing our life so difficult? Why doesn’t McDonald’s sell hot dogs? What is holiness? What word appears exactly 773,692 times in the King James Bible? How many books in the Bible are named after women?



His Blessings, My Prayers,

Debi Henry

Fisk Step-Up Kids – Grades 3-5
Fisk Pop-Up Kids – Pre K-Grade 2



Sunday, February 26
Coffee Hour Hosts
Lenten Lock-In
12 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Lent Lesson, Movie, Games

PRAYER PARTNERS
FOR OUR YOUTH!



Our Youth are heading to a weekend at Camp Berea for Deep Freeze 2012 Underground! Would you like to be matched up with a youth as their prayer partner for February 2012? Support our youth and adult chaperones as they share God's love, experience God's love and know Jesus Christ through worship, fellowship and fun. Please contact Debi Henry, Lay Leader or the church office to sign-up! You will be matched up with one of our youth!

Pretzel Sunday
Coffee Hour - February 26

The Story



In about 610 A.D. a very creative Alpine Monk decided to make use of the pieces of dough left over from baking bread. The Monk formed them into thin strips folded into a looped twist to represent the folded arms of children in prayer. This yummy treat was given to the children as they learned their prayers. They began calling the treat "Pretiola", which is Latin for "little reward". Soon it was known the world over as a pretzel. The secret of making great pretzels is not only in the baking but also in the shaping. We, like pretzels, are made from the best ingredients, by the best hands available, the hands of our loving God!. Have you ever seen a broken pretzel, or one that's lost its shape? We too, can lose our shape when we don't pray always to keep our spirituality intact. Even in the midst of our greatest trials, we must remember, as did Job, to call on the Lord. The simple shape of the pretzel, arms folded in prayer, reminds us to pray each day. Our "Pretiola" or "little rewards" are the blessings we receive. Every time you see a pretzel, remember prayer. Check to see if your arms are often folded in prayer and have not lost their shape. *If you would like to bake pretzels for coffee hour, there are recipes in the literature rack outside of the nursery!*

What's New in Sunday School ?



Children from age 3 through Grade 5 are starting their Sunday School time in the Choir Room. They are singing some favorite Christian songs together.

Listen for their joyful noise at 9:10am !!

The Early Childhood Class is being taught by Crystal Mayo and Deborah Hernandez. If you walk by their class you will hear lots of chatter and see busy hands.

Our Upper Elementary Class is being taught by Meagan Rjordan and Loreen Coraccio. A peek into their room would show you some enthusiastic faces and lots of hands in the air.

Deanna and Joshua Andreozzi head up our Jr. / Sr. High Class. They always seem to have a full house !!!

Debi Henry is teaching the Adult Class using a Max Lucado study book. You can't go wrong with that combination.

All classes welcome new members. Besides the early sing, classes start at 9:20. Nursery Coverage rotates among faithful teachers. See Jen Garrant or Jen French with questions or concerns.



Our children are blessed by wonderful teachers!

Susan Carney
Education Chair

From the Missions Commission:



This month is our big food drive for the Natick Food Pantry. Now that the holidays are over, we want to support the food pantry during these lean times. Please find grocery bags in the back of the sanctuary, printed with the most needed items on the bags. We will be collecting all month long.

We are still in the planning stage for the coming year. Please feel free to join Missions, or speak to us about projects you would like to see supported. Upcoming projects include: Dress for Success clothing drive which supports women in need of interview (professional) clothing. We also would like to support men in need of professional and regular clothing as well as other local groups in need.



Projects under discussion: Habitat for Humanity, international students - school supplies, uniforms, clothing for returning veterans, continuing support for our Missionaries, MIHN, Economic ministries in Maine.



We would love to hear from you
or have you join our committee!

Please contact us:
Heather Oluwole, Michelle Drolet Mission Co-Chairs

Email: heatheroluwole@hotmail.com, or
michelled@towerwall.com or speak to us at church



Team Fisk!!



We have had a great response to the request for Fisk members to participate in this year's Walk-a-thon, and at press time we have 32 men, women, adults and youth signed up !!!!!!!!

This is the largest fundraiser of the year for our local mission, ... Metrowest Interfaith Hospitality Network (MIHN). But there is still time to join us, either as a walker or as a sponsor.

Let's Walk Away Homelessness !

Saturday, February 4th – 8:30am

Indoor at the Natick Mall



TAKE A HIKE with us, or sponsor one of us who has already signed-up for the walk. 100% of your contributions will go towards supporting the housing, job placement, childcare, tutoring, health services, clothing and transportation for Homeless

Families, right here in Natick.

Members of our Fisk Team will be asking for donations during this final week before the walk. Make checks payable to MIHN, - or to Fisk UMC with a notation of "MIHN Walk-a-thon".

If you have questions, or to sign-up to walk or to donate to our team, please contact Debbie Friscino, our Fisk-MIHN liaison, Thom Townsend, our Walk-a-thon team captain, or log onto www.metrowestihn.org.

Together we can help Walk Away Homelessness.



Soup is on!

Soup and bread will be served on Wednesday evenings during Lent. This time will also include a Lenten Study with Pastor Mark. We have planned to have a choice of two soups (and the breads) for your family to enjoy together. Child Care will be provided for children through grade 8. Put these dates on your calendar and plan to deepen your Lenten experience in the fellowship of our Fisk congregation. *No cost.*

Dates are: February 29, March 7, March 14, March 21 and March 28 at 6:00PM

Questions: Marcia Hoyt for Council of Ministries