

The Messenger

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

February 2015

Reflections from Pastor Xia

Dear family and friends of Fisk Church,
Greetings to you in the holy name of Jesus Christ our Lord!

Our Spiritual life will be enhanced during this month because we begin celebrating Lenten season. Yes, it is that time of year again. Lent will be arriving early this year.

Lent has 40 days, not counting Sundays (Sundays are always a mini-celebration of Easter each week), but it hasn't always been 40 days. Prior to the seventh century, Lent lasted a week. By the seventh century, the church decided that it would be beneficial to count back from Easter forty days to represent the forty days our Lord spent in the wilderness enduring starvation and the temptations of Satan. So, counting back forty days from Easter, we wind up with Ash Wednesday, the official beginning of the Lenten season.

On February 18th, we are going to have an Ash Wednesday service at 7pm. And during the six weeks of Lenten season, you all are invited to attend worship services and Bible studies, walk with Jesus our Lord in the wilderness, reflect upon your relationship with God, and prepare your hearts.....

Some may ask, "Why Lent?" Because Lent is so important in our spiritual life. With Christ's wilderness temptation in mind, as well as the forthcoming suffering on the way and upon the cross, Lent has become a time for us to meditate, to focus upon the deep price our Lord paid for

our sin, to confess, repent and follow Christ Jesus with a new life.

Many have practiced fasting, or giving up something they treasure during Lent, so they can in some small way experience sacrifice as our Lord did. The forty days of the Lenten season is the same length as the days Jesus spent in the wilderness where he fasted and was tempted by the devil at the beginning of his public ministry. The word "Lent" comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *lencten* which means "spring". So the word in and of itself really doesn't literally hold much spiritual meaning. But Lent is more than the word. For us, Lent is a season—a spiritual season of the year. Lent is a time set aside for us to take a trip to that Cross, sit down, feel the grace and love from God who is on the Cross for us, and reflect upon our own relationship with God. While you're there, consider what it was that brought you there, and what you can do to prepare your hearts and minds to walk with Jesus Christ on the journey. Together let us prepare our hearts for this meaningful spiritual Lenten season!

Peace and blessings,

-Pastor Xia

Staff of Fisk Memorial United Methodist Church

Pastor:	Rev. Xia Jiao-Chur
Deacon:	Rev. Cheryln Gates
Choir Director /Organist:	Eric Mazonson
Admin. / Newsletter Editor:	Judy Bortolotti
Youth Minister:	TBA

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Church Website: www.fiskumc.org



Worship Service Participants for

Liturgists

February 1 – Rev. Cheryl Gates

February 8 – Joanne Billo

February 15 – Susan Carney

February 22- Jennifer French



Greeters:

February 1– Jan & Carolyn Carlson

February 8 – Bingxin & Tian

February 15 – TBA

February 22- TBA

Coffee Hour Hosts

February 1– Souperbowl Luncheon

February 8 – Susan Carney

February 15 –Terry Ames

February 22- TBA



Canceling Worship due to inclement Weather

When we need to cancel Sunday morning Worship Services due to snowstorms or power losses, we will communicate that information via email, or on our website. It will also be posted on channel 5.



Family Bio Sheets

In the January edition of The Messenger, we included a Family Bio Sheet to be completed and turned into the Church Office. If you haven't filled one out yet, there is still time! Please pick one up in the Church Office and turn it in to either the Church Office or Sherry Culver.

March Messenger Deadline- February 25 @ 8:30am

\$ \$ Finance Update – February 2015

We have finalized our 2014 results, and we are working diligently on the 2015 Budget Plan. The good tidings of our year-end giving now officially extend to our spending for the year. As a congregation, we have turned a projected \$7,000 deficit into a small surplus due to the following:

- a) a very positive response of giving to our financial concerns,
- b) spending savings of \$9,700 in most spending categories,
- c) continued financial support by planned borrowing from our Fisk endowments, which no one wants to have to do, or to continue to do.

We were able to pay 100% of our Mission shares to the Conference,

Our giving increased substantially in December:

- December pledges were 19% over budget,
- November/December giving was 9% more than last year,
- Our special appeal to increase awareness provided a very blessed \$3,700,
- Our special fund raisers were well supported, well attended, and provided much needed support.

	<u>Year</u>	<u>Plan</u>
Income	\$253,557	\$252,323
Expense	250,042	259,740
surplus (deficit)	3,515	(7,417)

We do not yet know what 2015 will bring. We do not yet know all of our challenges for 2015. We DO know that we will need everyone's prayerful and giving support in 2015. But, let us pause to say thank you, and recognize our blessings.

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.



Sunday School Mission Project

There has always been a jug to collect labels for education in the kitchen but from now until June, the Sunday School is making it their mission to collect 1,000 points to give to **Cooper Community Center – a mission site for children in Boston.**

There is a bulletin board on the way to Whipple Hall where you can pick up a sheet that outlines what products carry these labels. The jug in the kitchen will be joined by a box in the back of the church. Although Campbell's Products were the original labels ... many cereals like

Post Raisin Bran, Pop Secret popcorn, BIC pens, and Pepperidge Farm Breads have labels as well.

Help our kids to reach 1,000 labels for Cooper Community .

We can do it !!!!

Questions to Susan Carney (and thanks in advance)

Altar Flowers - January Thank You!

The Altar Guild thanks the following for donating flowers to beautify our sanctuary and giving praise to God for lives that have touched their lives!

In loving memory, flowers were given in January by **Barbara Naser & Family** in memory of her Uncle Dick and her brother Tommy;

Judy Hyotte in memory of her father, George Filmore;

Amy Bruns in memory of her sister, Genie Eason; and

Debi Henry in memory of Hazel Graham.



The Council of Ministries is organizing the Soup and Bread Lenten suppers on Wednesday evenings. This has been an annual part of our Lenten journey together.

We gather for supper each Wednesday ... February 25, March 4, March 11, March 18 and March 25. Come at 6:00pm for a simple supper. There will be a choice of soups and breads followed by an optional Lenten Study. We are pleased that Pastor Xia will be leading the study.

We will conclude by 7:30pm for children to get home. Child Care provided. No cost.

If you would like to contribute a pot of soup or your choice of bread...just give me a call.

Marcia Hoyt 655-0077

Put these dates on your calendar and plan to deepen your Lenten experience! Join the fellowship of our Fisk congregation. Bring a friend...great opportunity to introduce someone to the experience and meaning of Lent.



LADIES AND TEEN GIRLS

You are invited to attend a special morning
on February 14th at
Fisk Methodist Church 106 Walnut Street Natick.
Please prayerfully consider doing this for yourself.

Prayer and Meditation Workshop

Saturday, February 14

9:30am - 11:00m

Sponsored by UMW

What will happen ? Whether there are 5 or 50 of us ...
we will have 5 stops on our mini workshop journey.

Who is invited? All women and teen girls who would
like to grow their prayer life.

What is admission ? An open heart and curious mind-

What will you leave with ? New ideas, a prayer bead
bracelet or ring or chain, and info. to read at home.

Come and add to this morning of **female fellowship** ...
we are not experts ...we are facilitators as we feel
everyone's prayer life is so very personal and unique.

We are praying for you right now.

Pre –registration is not needed but if you know for sure
that you are coming please leave a message on the
church answering machine or with our secretary ...
at 508- 653-1674.

Please pray for me as I coordinate this morning.

Susan Carney

(this will be the UMW meeting for February)



An Offering To My SUNDAY SCHOOL

*This gift is the result of my belief about what
God's Word, (1 Chronicles 29:14), says to me*

Name _____ Date _____
Envelope No. _____ Amount _____
Canaanbury

God Loves a Cheerful Giver ***2 Corinthians***

Last Sunday, I brought some small Sunday School offering
envelopes to our opening sing. I explained what they were and
told the children that I would be giving them to those who were
members of the group and it was up to them if they wanted to
use them.

Immediately, two of the children had big smiles on their faces.
Sebron asked for one and put his coins in it and wrote his name
on it. Sarita had Lemonade Stand money.

We talked about what would happen to the money.
One of our three year olds said it would help other people who
needed things. Someone said that we would buy food for people.

I had to explain to them that we also had to pay for lights etc. to
make God's church work. They were very interested. These
envelopes will be going home to ALL students in February. There
will be enough for two months. If you would like to continue in
the following months please see me and I will provide them.

Envelopes should be put in the offering plate in church.
Some students just come to Sunday School and they will have a
chance to pass their envelopes in there. These envelopes are an
effort to develop good stewardship in our children. Just as they
give through their helping efforts in church – monetary giving is
another option for them. One of our best chair movers is little
Adrienne ... doesn't it make your heart smile to watch this
preschooler in action for her church family!

Let's teach our children to "serve with gladness". Psalm 100
Susan Carney – Sunday School Supt.

Youth Activities

For youth and their friends in Grades 6 – 12

MYF Activities in February

Feb 1st - Souper Bowl Sunday - Help serve soup at the soup luncheon after worship. This annual day focuses awareness on the needs of local food pantries. Fisk MYF will be assisting the Mission Commission with this luncheon - \$5 supports the food pantry and gets you soup, bread and dessert. All proceeds go to Natick Food Pantry.



February 8th - Winter Party at the Currie's. 11:30am - 2:30pm. Lunch and winter activities. Friends are welcome to attend the party as well.



Feb School vacation - a youth event is being planned - more details to follow.

Looking ahead to March - plans include travel to the Heifer Project Farm in Rutland for pancake breakfast and visit the farm.

Remember: The program needs volunteers of all kinds including drivers, bakers, crafters, and the support of the entire congregation. And that means our youth need You!

If you have an idea for a youth program or wish to volunteer, contact:

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

Evangelism Ministry

Health Kits!

During February, March, and April, we are collecting items to make health kits for UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief). UMCOR is the not-for-profit global humanitarian aid organization of the United Methodist Church that works to alleviate human suffering caused by war, conflict or natural disaster. UMCOR responds to natural or civil disasters that are interruptions of such magnitude that they overwhelm a community's ability to recover on its own. Item donations can be left in the box marked "Health Kits" in the hallway outside of the church office.



Health Kit Items

- 1 clear gallon Ziploc bag to put all items in
- 1 washcloth
- 1 hand towel (no kitchen towels) 15" x 25" up to 17" x 27"
- 1 bath size bar of soap in wrapper (3 oz. and up)
- 1 comb (large and sturdy – not pocket sized)
- 1 fingernail clippers (no toenail clippers or emery boards)
- 6 adhesive plastic strips (band-aids)
- 1 adult toothbrush (single brush in original wrapper)*

**No toothpaste needed as UMCOR distribution facility buys and adds date sensitive toothpaste to these health kits.*

For more information, please contact a member of the Evangelism Commission.

Zachary Gates, Chairperson

Michelle Drolet, Eva Garrouette, Debi Henry,

Mark Owen, Ken Reynolds, Bingxin Xu, Tian Zhang

UMW Hannah Circle

The Hannah Circle will meet on

Tuesday, February 10th - 12 noon to 2 p.m.

This meeting is all about You! You - You - You!

Join us as we look at different ways about how we look at ourselves. Women are invited to bring their lunch.

Dessert and beverages are provided.

Contact Nancy Parece or Nancy Swan if you can come!

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL – LENTEN STUDY

40 Days with Jesus – Celebrating His Presence

By Sarah Young



This book is written as if Jesus is speaking to you personally. 40 Days with Jesus is designed to help you deepen your relationship with God. Various adults from Fisk will facilitate each week's discussion.

The sanctity of Easter...how do you approach and honor this holy time of year? Now you can spend 40 days with Jesus - from leading up to His death on Good Friday, to celebrating His resurrection on Easter Sunday - and draw into worship and praise as never before.

Select devotionals from Sarah Young's bestselling "Jesus Calling" are compiled into this book to create an experience of closeness with the Savior during the Lenten season.

If you are interested in this class, please pick up a booklet from Susan Carney before Ash Wednesday, February 18 so that you can begin.

The first Sunday in Lent, February 22, will focus on the 5th reading supported by scriptures:

John 11:25, Matthew 11:29-29, and 1 Peter 1:8-9.

All adults and college students are invited to attend!



Once again the Mission's Commission is supporting the Souperbowl of caring on Sunday February 1st. Help us stamp out hunger in our community!

We will be hosting a soup and bread luncheon after church on February 1st. The cost of the lunch will be \$5 per-person (maximum of \$20 per family) and all of the money will go to support the Natick Food Pantry. We need volunteers to make Crock-pots of soup, or to bring brownies or bread.

Another way to help, is to fill a bag with non-perishable food items, condiments such as canned goods, ketchup, cleaning products or personal care items and bring it to the church on February 1st. These items will also be donated to the Natick Food Pantry.



Young children are invited to our FREE Music and Movement class! We have musical instruments, guitar music, parades, singing with active movements. Everyone has a great time! The children and the parents love this time together on Saturday mornings. This is geared for toddlers through grade two.

**Saturday's February 7 & 21
11:00am -12:00pm**

Ministry of Caring

FISK is a *praying* church. We pray for individuals and our world.

FISK is a *helping* church. We help bring food to those in mourning.

FISK is a *loving* church. We forgive those who have hurt us.

Be all that God wants you
to be! Praying, helping,
and loving opens our hearts
and our souls...just as God
intended. Watch God work
in your life!



Current Caring Projects:

Coordinating car rides to church, checking in with home-bound church members to chat and say hello, sending greeting cards to those who might need a little cheer, managing a prayer list, sending colorful and fun homemade art or baked goods to those who could use a smile. Have another idea? Let's do it!

To submit a name for prayer or to join a caring project, contact Ministry of Caring at Sarahgates4@gmail.com