

The Messenger

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

March 2012

Reflections from Pastor Mark

Today is Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the season of Lent, for me the most fruitful season of the year.

One of my annual Lenten traditions is to read T. S. Eliot's poem, *Ash Wednesday*. Like most of Eliot's work, it is a complicated piece and more than a little abstract. A few of the lines, however, are clear and particularly thought-provoking:



*Blessèd sister, holy mother, spirit of the fountain,
spirit of the garden,
Suffer us not to mock ourselves with falsehood
Teach us to care and not to care
Teach us to sit still
Even among these rocks,
Our peace in His will
And ever among these rocks
Sister, mother
And spirit of the river, spirit of the sea,
Suffer me not to be separated
And let my cry come unto Thee.*

Difficult reading, perhaps. Yet the poem speaks precisely (and beautifully) to the experience of disciples eager

to follow the Master into the wilderness of Lent, where:
We encounter the One who says,

"Be still, and know that I am God".

we reflect upon the meaning and purpose of our lives;
we find forgiveness of our sin and the renewal of our spirits;
we are strengthened for the time of trial -
and made empty in order to be filled with the glory of Resurrection.

To some, outside the Body, all of that might sound like a lot of difficult, even tiresome work. To me - to us - it is an invitation to peace, happiness, joy and hope, our invitation to walk the pilgrim path with the Lord Jesus, Himself. We believe and trust that Easter is coming. Let us also trust that the pathway to Easter is the wilderness season of Lent. Christ is calling. Won't you follow?

Pastor Mark



Staff of Fisk Memorial United Methodist Church

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Deacon:	Rev. Cheryl Gates
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Making Fisk an even stronger witness for Jesus Christ!

Fisk Memorial UMC has long stood as a Christ-centered, Spirit filled church with a caring community of believers. On the evening of Wednesday, February 15, 24 members of the congregation answered the open call to join together to build upon both our strengths and gifts, and to establish goals for what Fisk could be going forward.

We prayed, we read from the Bible, ...and we took the initial steps to re-evaluate our mission and role, while identifying what we do well (or not so well). We articulated why we belong to and attend Fisk, looked at how people have and might find us, and discussed what programs we have (or could have) to bring people to Jesus Christ and to Fisk.



During the evening we identified many Growth Opportunities that we should consider pursuing, and we began to compile a list of Goals that we as a congregation could adopt. Surely, we felt the presence and spirit of the Lord as we asked for His wisdom and guidance.

The meeting notes have been organized and typed, and are available to everyone. Our next steps will be to review and prioritize goals, and then to develop action plans and activities to help achieve those goals.

We ask you to keep the Future of Fisk in your prayers, and we invite EVERYONE to join us in the next session, at 7:30pm on **Tuesday February 28th** at the church. We would like to hear from everyone that loves Fisk Church. We know that each person has unique and valuable input, and that the church (our Church) is made up of many parts that can work together, ...to set the course for the "Look and Feel" of Fisk in the coming years.

Fisk: Who We Are and Who We are to Become

On Tuesday evening, everyone is invited to help set the course for Fisk. We will discuss what and who we are as a congregation, and what we could become as a witness for Jesus Christ here at Fisk and within the community. An initial list of Growth Opportunities and Goals has been developed, and at this meeting we plan to re-affirm and prioritize that list.

Please join us as we continue the process of determining the Future of Fisk.

Tuesday, February 28th, 7:30pm @ Fisk

The Second Thursday?

Yes, that is Fisk's night to staff the Natick Food Pantry. We have staffed that evening...the second Thursday of each month...for many, many years. It is a great way to do service work here in Natick—helping neighbors choose and bag their groceries. The residents have appointments, they can choose the items (quantities are suggested) and we assist in the process. Would you like to help? It is just 5:00pm to 8:00pm on that second Thursday. **Call Gary Hoyt to see where you can fit into the schedule. 508-655-0077 (Gary has been overseeing this outreach for 15 years, maybe more)**

Thank you for everyone's February Natick Food Pantry Donations. It was a great success! We would also like to thank Susan Carney for delivering all the items!
Together we can make a big difference!

Pot Luck Supper

Tuesday, March 13, 2012 at 7:00pm

The United Methodist Men invite all men and women to join them for a Pot Luck Supper and Program. (bring your favorite entree', salad or dessert)
If you would like to just join us for the program come at 7:45pm



"Downsizing for Many Reasons"
How to make the right choice—
What are my options—
What does it cost—



Come and hear Dight Crain explain the research and process they experienced and the choices they made.
Reservations to Brad Vining 508-655-1311

Remember to turn your clocks ahead one hour on Sunday morning, March 11th.



**CHURCH
YARD
SALE**

One of our major fundraisers for Missions is our Spring Yard Sale. Please start setting aside anything we can re-sell, re-use or re-purpose for our sale in May.

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.

All women are encouraged to attend any of our meetings.

- March 2—Friday **World Day of Prayer** is being held in Framingham at Wesley UMC at 6:30PM. Come and celebrate this annual service with the greater community. The focus is prayer and the service was written by the women of Malaysia. Sample Malaysia food.
- March 17—Saturday **Combined Luncheon in Wayland**
We are the invited guests of the Wayland UMW to a lunch and program. The program concerns Red Bird Mission. This is one of the largest mission agencies in the UMC. Red Bird is located in Appalachia and serves the under-served of that area. Come and hear first-hand from Marie Fraser about her trip to Kentucky.
- March 24—Saturday **Central MA District Meeting**
We will gather at St. Matthew's United Methodist Church in Acton for a special Lenten focus. The meeting will include Art, Dialogue, Liturgical dancers, Workshops, and Lunch. Reservation information of Bulletin Board.
A Spiritual Journey: The Life of our Lord

**Jurisdiction Meeting is June 14-17 in Hershey PA
Janis Cail and Marcia Hoyt are going- we would love to have you join us and we will give you registration information.**

Four great opportunities in addition to circle meetings, Prayer Shawl group and the Book Group. Join us at any gathering that appeals to you. Check bulletin board for details

Janis Cail-President Debbie Friscino—Vice President

Laity Lines from Our Lay Leader

*“All God’s people in All places, and in All times,
are called to love and to serve.”*

Twenty Questions! 1. On Sunday mornings, do you enter the sanctuary with an *open* heart, ears, mind, and eyes? 2. Do you pray during the service or before the service for Pastor Mark, the liturgist, our choir, Eric, the acolytes and cross bearer, ushers, greeters, yourself? 3. Before or after worship – do you reach out to a visitor or someone you do not know and introduce yourself? 4. How much time are you in worship Monday through Saturday? 5. How many people have you invited to church in the last 12 months? 6. At what point in worship are you changed? Growing as a disciple? Becoming a part of the body of Christ? 7. What does “passionate worship” mean to you? 8. Do you absorb the words that you sing in the hymns? 9. Were you in Sunday School last week? 10. How did you come into your faith? 11. What is the difference between faith and belief? 12. Where is God in your life? 13. How do you live your faith in the world? 14. What is your favorite beverage? 15. Can you describe the “spiritual geography” of your life? 16. How old would you be if you didn’t know how old you are? 17. What activities make you lose track of time? 18. What does your joy look like today? 19. What is your most “prized possession?” 20. What will you never do?

CMA District Celebration of the 20th Anniversary of The United Methodist Foundation of New England! March 4th, 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. at Aldersgate UMC in Chelmsford. Resources and testimonies celebrating faithful stewardship of congregations, individuals and donors. RSVP by Feb. 29 to (800) 595-4347, ext. 106 if you plan on attending.

Fisk’s Areas of Ministry! How is your area of ministry launching, setting sail, seeking new horizons or rolling with the waves of change? Is your ministry more like a safe harbor or a boat charting a new course for the future? Are we willing to be blown by the Holy Spirit winds? This is one of the areas to be explored at Annual Conference in June at Gordon College. Are you interested in attending Annual Conference this year? Talk to me!

***God’s Blessings, My Prayers,
Debi Henry***

One Great Hour of Sharing

UMCOR

March 18th



New Members Class

Tuesday, March 6th, 7:00pm

Gathering for all who want to become members of Fisk!

Discussion and Dessert

Contact the Church office if you plan to attend.



From Missions:

Missions will be collecting Women's interview appropriate clothing during the month of March. The clothing is to support women in need, through the organization **Dress for Success**. If you are willing to donate something, please see the list in the Church Office of most needed items. Please bring all your donated clothing and accessories to Fisk and hang in the hallway outside the Church Office.

The mission of Dress for Success is to promote the economic independence of disadvantaged women by providing professional attire, a network of support and the career development tools to help women thrive in work and in life. While we may be best known for providing suits to women, it is our employment retention programs that are the cornerstone of the organization. Soon after Dress for Success was founded we came to recognize that finding work is only one step in a woman's journey towards economic independence; remaining employed and building a rewarding career are essential if a woman is to become self-sufficient.



**Youth Mission Trip
New Jersey 2012
U.M. ARMY
June 24-30, 2012**

Members of the *Methodist Youth Fellowship (MYF)* and adults from Fisk Memorial United Methodist Church in Natick, MA will spend one week in June in New Jersey performing community outreach services. Tasks in the *United Methodist Action Reach-out Mission by Youth (U. M. Army)* program includes painting, cleaning, building/assembly of handicapped ramps and repairing homes of the underprivileged and handicapped of this New Jersey community. Our youth will interact with other youth from churches in Connecticut, Vermont, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maine and Massachusetts. In addition to the community work, U.M. Army participants will also engage in daily worship and spiritual growth activities.

What is the United Methodist Action Reach-out Mission by Youth? United Methodist Action Reach-out Mission by Youth (U.M. ARMY) is an opportunity for youth and adults to experience Christian growth through service to others. Participants combine their strengths to meet home repair and maintenance needs for those unable to pay for the work, or who cannot do the work for themselves. One of their founding principles is that real and life changing mission work can take place close to home. They are committed to putting their resources to work in local communities.

Our Mission

On June 24-30th, Fisk Memorial UMC, a local church in the Central Mass District and a member of The New England Conference, will sponsor and support our youth group and adults on a mission trip to New Jersey.

We hope to spread Christ's love to people in this area.

We'll be working with an established United Methodist Ministry – U. M. Army.



**Pasta Supper - Sock-Hop
Oldies Music and Trivia
Saturday, March 10**

6:00 p.m. - Fisk - Whipple Hall
\$10.00 per person

\$5.00 age 6-10, Free - age 5 and under
\$30.00 Maximum for a family



Help support the UMYF Mission



**YOUTH FOR HIRE
PROGRAM**

Need Help?

Do you have some odd jobs that need to be done around the house? Do you need a babysitter? House cleaning? Basement or Garage cleaning? Leaves raked? Snow shoveled? Garden weeded? Room painted?

Several Fisk youth are ready and willing to work for a donation towards their mission trip this summer. Contact Deanna Leedy-Andreozzi.

Quarterly Fellowship Luncheon
Sunday, March 25 - 12 noon - Whipple Hall

Biblical Foods

All are invited to come and bring a food item from the Bible to share!
Sign up in the Church Office.

Give Me Jesus
Fisk UMC Lenten Retreat
 Saturday, March 3, 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

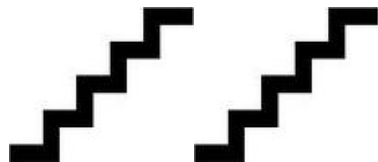


Join your faith family in a day of relaxation, prayer and meditation. Sessions will be led by Deacon Cheryln Gates and Pastor Mark Goad.

Food and child care are provided.

Please let Pastor Mark know if you plan to attend.

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



Sunday, March 25
Quarterly Fellowship Luncheon
Face and Heart Picture Project

April Messenger deadline: March 22

Fisk 2012 Financial Budget

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.

We were blessed in 2011 with a prayerful and generous response to our 2011 financial needs. 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.

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.

Summary	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012 Bud</u>	<u>Change to 2011 Final</u>	
Income	\$286,187	\$267,765	(18,422)	6.9%
Expenses	\$287,311	\$271,639	(15,672)	5.8%
Surplus (Deficit)	(\$1,124)	(\$3,874)	(2,750)	

In addition to the Budget, the Finance Committee also approved an Action Plan to address the challenges of 2012. The full Budget (8 pages) and Action Plan is available in the Church office.

January 25, 2012.

Fisk 2012 Financial Budget

	<u>Year 2011 Actual</u>	<u>Year 2012 Proposed</u>	<u>Change vs 11 Actual</u>	%
Income				
Pledges	\$178,926	\$162,882	(16,044)	-9.0%
Giving - unpledged	47,761	38,000	(9,761)	-20.4%
Other Giving, User Fees	42,005	45,180	3,175	7.6%
Prior Year and Faith Factor	8,726	0	(8,726)	
Trustee - operating loans	0	20,000	20,000	
Together for Tomorrow	8,769	1,703	(7,066)	-80.6%
Total				
Income	\$286,187	\$267,765	(\$18,422)	-6.4%
Expenses				
Salaries	\$131,119	\$131,553	434	0.3%
Facilities	88,356	76,426	(11,930)	-13.5%
Commissions	9,386	11,021	1,635	17.4%
Mission Shares	33,346	34,922	1,576	4.7%
Local				
Missions/Office	10,240	6,700	(3,540)	-34.6%
Loans and other	14,864	11,017	(3,847)	-25.9%
Total				
Expenses	\$287,311	\$271,639	(\$15,672)	-5.5%
Total (Deficit)	(\$1,124)	(\$3,874)	(\$2,750)	244.6%
Pledges - families	86	71	(15)	-17.4%
Pledges - average pledge	\$2,081	\$2,294	\$214	10.3%

- With prayerful discernment, Budget and Action Plan approved by FinComm.
And Admin Board on 1/25/12.

- A complete copy of the Budget is always available in the Church office.

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.



*It's time to order Lilies
and Tulips for Our Easter
Altar...*

Place your order now with the Altar Guild for one or more Easter Lilies (\$9.00 per plant) Or Tulips (\$7.00 per plant) in honor of/or in loving memory of those you wish to remember in this special way this Easter.

The Lilies and Tulips will be arranged on the altar for the Worship Service on Easter Sunday, April 8th. You may pick up your plant following the 10:30AM service. Or, if you choose to leave it on the altar it will be delivered to someone on the Fellowship of Concern.

Members of the Altar Guild will be collecting orders and money in Whipple Hall following Worship on March 18th, 25th and April 1st. You may also mail or deliver your check and order in an envelope to the church office. Please mark it: **Attention Altar Guild.**

The deadline for orders is Monday, April 2nd.

(Please clip and return this form with your order)

please circle flower wanted below:

I/we would like to place an **Easter Lily** or **Tulip** on the Altar on
Easter Sunday:

() in honor of () in loving memory of

By _____

**Please word exactly as you wish it to appear in the
Easter Sunday bulletin. Thank you,
Linnea Fisher, Blanche Ciccarelli,
Lois Potter, Nancy Swan**