

THE TOWER

SUMMER 2013

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United Church of Christ
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A NOTE FROM THE MINISTER

“Our Missions Budget”



It was wonderful to hear at the Annual Meeting in May that pledges to Park Congregational Church from members and friends were up by almost \$5000! We are a small, but faithful congregation that is truly committed to carrying out ministries for Jesus Christ.

This increase to the church's income allowed the Missions Committee to raise the 2013-2014 Missions Budget. Several line items in the Missions Budget received a boost and new missions were added. Some of you may not be familiar with the missions that we support in the church's Missions Budget, and so, I will briefly describe each one.

Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) of the Massachusetts Conference United Church of Christ (MACUCC) supports the staff of our state judicatory, including MACUCC Minister and President Rev. Dr. Jim Antal and retiring Associate Conference Minister, Central Association, Rev. Dr. Peter Wells. It also funds the MACUCC's website and weekly email newsletters from both the MACUCC and Central Association which are sent to anyone upon request. Frequently I borrow materials for the Youth Group and Sunday School from the large Christian Education library at the MACUCC headquarters in Framingham which is supported by OCWM. It also provides scholarship money for those studying to become clergy in the UCC. OCWM also supports the Super Saturday workshops that take place twice a year and other seminars and workshops held throughout the Conference that several of Park Church's members and I have attended over the years.

The Neighbors in Need (NIN) and One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) offerings help those in need both domestically (NIN) and overseas (OGHS). NIN is a special mission offering of the UCC that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the US. Eight different denominations, including the UCC, participate in the OGHS offering that goes toward refugee resettlement, relief and development, health care, education, agricultural aid, and emergency relief initiatives in 138 countries around the world.

The Massachusetts Council of Churches is the broadest ecumenical partnership of Christian bodies in the Commonwealth, represented by 16 different denominations. The Executive Director of the Council is Rev. Laura Everett, a UCC clergy. The Council

seeks to express our unity in Christ as fully and visibly as possible through joint planning, mutual counsel, and common programming among the member denominations.

Worcester Fellowship is a church for homeless men and women in Worcester. They meet behind City Hall every Sunday afternoon for worship. Our Youth Group has prepared lunches and worshiped with them on several occasions. Worcester Fellowship is dedicated to ending isolation through pastoral care and the nurturing of community.

The Odd Fellows Nursing Home in Worcester provides long-term care and rehabilitation services for its residents. I have been leading monthly worship services there since 2002. Always accompanying me is a deacon who assists in administering Holy Communion, Lee Bartlett who plays the piano, Jennifer Nodelman who donates her singing talents, Miss Linda, and frequently one of the members of the Youth Group or Sunday School with Miss Holly. The residents genuinely feel that they are part of our congregation at Park Church and it is a blessing to lead them in worship.

The Pastor's Discretionary Fund is for those who are sincerely needy who come to me asking for monetary help. I am very careful in handing out this money and do my best to make sure that the funds are used for the purposes stated by the needy person.

The Heifer Project seeks to end hunger and poverty by working with communities around the world. Heifer gives families a hand up, not a hand out, empowering them to transform their lives into self-reliance and hope. With gifts of livestock and training, Heifer activities offer families in danger of malnutrition and poverty the means to generate income in sustainable ways. Take a look at the poster on the bulletin board outside Davis Chapel and notice how many countries benefit from the work of the Heifer Project.

NEADS provides independence to people who are deaf or have a disability through the use of canine assistance. The funds in our Missions Budget that we give to NEADS is in addition to our Sunday School's financial support of a NEADS dog, Benny. Benny has come to visit us a couple of times in Davis Chapel and the children always look forward to seeing him. Benny works as a ministry dog assisting Rev. Kelly Harvell, a Methodist pastor from New Hampshire, on her visits to schools and nursing homes.

Our ecumenical Vacation Bible Camp with Wesley United Methodist Church each year

attracts over 100 persons, last year 127, mostly children of course, and offers a blessed time for our two churches for fellowship, learning, and fun as we come together as brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ. Our past Vacation Bible Camps have been among the most loved and memorable experiences of our Youth Group and Sunday School children, which they will take with them for the rest of their lives.

Our offerings for the victims of Hurricane Sandy and the Boston Marathon bombings were special offerings given to help those traumatized by those events. Every year we leave funds in the Missions Budget for unanticipated disasters such as the above.

Massachusetts Veterans, Inc., is a new mission added this year because of the extra money donated by our congregation. This is the shelter on Grove Street in Worcester for homeless veterans. We have had a relationship with this group for a number of years, frequently donating food and toiletries to them.

In addition to the Missions Budget, individual members and friends of Park Church donate each year for the Thanksgiving Project Gift Cards and YOU, Inc., Christmas presents. Also every month our folks bring non-perishable food that is distributed by the Carty Cupboard of Wesley United Methodist Church to needy families.

Wow! For a small congregation, we support a lot of missions, thanks to the generosity of our members and friends. Through your pledges and offerings, we are making a difference for Christ in our local community, our state, our nation, and around the world.

Blessings in Christ,

Pastor Gary

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VACATION BIBLE CAMP
"TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN"

June 25, 26, 27, 2013

To be held together for another wonderful year by
Park Congregational Church and Wesley United Methodist Church
5:30 PM - 8:30 PM

Hosting this year is Wesley United Methodist Church
Get ready to reach new spiritual heights in God's love and promise!

THANK YOU FRIENDS AT PARK CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,

We are grateful for your recent Missions donation to Worcester Fellowship and being part of our efforts dedicated to ending isolation by providing spiritual care and by nurturing community. Our ministry for the homeless and at-risk of Worcester continues because of you!

Sincerely,
Ellie Latham, Administrator Director, Worcester Fellowship

DEAR REVEREND SHAHINIAN AND PARISHIONERS,

On behalf of our Board of Directors, our staff, and most importantly, the veterans we serve, please accept our sincere appreciation for your kind contribution. With the help of generous supporters like you, we will continue on as one of the largest providers of services for veterans and their families in New England. Once again, we thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
Allison Alaimo, Director, Finance and Development, Veterans, Inc.



The Park Church family extends thoughts of loving comfort to Dee Dorsey whose brother David Christian was called to his eternal home in early June. May God continue to comfort the Dorsey, Lindquist, and Christian families at this sad time in their lives.

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DEAR PASTOR GARY, MEMBERS, AND FRIENDS OF PARK CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,

Just a line to say hi and hope everyone is fine. Winter is behind us and now looking forward to a beautiful summer. Enjoy the summer.

God Bless Everyone,
Doris Newlands



Discipleship

With joyful hearts, the Diaconate of Park Congregational Church has bestowed the honor of Deacon Emeritus upon Shirley Elbe. Shirley has served as a Deacon for almost 30 years and continues to serve in love and gratefulness. May God continue to bless Shirley in her discipleship.



CONGRATULATIONS to Josep Rose who graduated from the Advanced Math & Science Academy Charter School in Marlborough and will be attending Assumption College in Worcester this September. CONGRATULATIONS also to Matthew Proulx who received his GED and will be furthering his education at Quinsigamond Community College in the fall. May God continue to inspire and guide these young men as they enter this new and wonderful phase of their lives!



NOTE NEW ADDRESS

Kimberly Toney and Dennis Pelkey
11 Lee Street
Worcester MA 01602

NOTE NEW CELL PHONE #

Holly Proulx 774-289-5475

THE CHILDREN'S TOWER

June 2013



Plant Sale

Dear Children,

I NEVER go to that Walmart. I don't like that Walmart. I love my own little Walmart where I know where to find each and every thing on my shopping list. But, as I was driving right by "that" Walmart, I made an exception, stopped, and headed directly for (of course) the Garden Shop. It would be easy. I knew the plants I wanted for my garden and I would be in and out in a minute. And I was right! Wonderful. Carriage loaded with beautiful blooms and I am out the door.

The carriage being a noisy one (I hate that), I was not sure if I heard a voice say, "Excuse me . . . can you tell me if these plants grow inside or outside?" Turning around, I was face to face with a rather timorous gentleman who was frowning in confusion holding two potted plants, one in each hand. "Oh," I said. "Those are inside plants. You want outside. Come over here." As I moved toward the beautiful blooming plants of summer, just like the ones I was buying, the gentleman said, "Oh, no . . . I need INSIDE plants because I live in a small apartment and I live all alone and would like to have something that I can talk to. I cannot have a pet where I live and it is lonesome without anybody to talk to and if I have a plant, I can put it on my windowsill and talk to it. Do you think I am crazy . . . talking to a plant?" Not even sure that I was speaking loud enough for him to hear me I was so touched, I said softly, "No, I don't think you are crazy. I talk to my plants all the time. Come, and let's find a plant that you like. How about this fern? Ferns are so pretty and love a windowsill." Shaking his head, the man bypassed the fern and picked up a small plant that had variegated green and white rather tuberous leaves. "I like this one. Can you help me find a pot for it? Do I have to buy special dirt or can I take some from outside?" he asked. "You need potting soil," I said. "Okay," he said. "I guess when you love something, you have to give it the best that you can. Is potting soil expensive?" he asked. "No," I said. "Let's find a small bag." Together we went to the cashier. Smiling, his chosen plant, pot, and soil in hand, my "flower friend" said, "You answered my prayers. I will not forget you. Thank you."

As I picture a plant on a windowsill somewhere unknown to me, I thank God for the moments in life when we can unknowingly answer someone's prayer, and, in turn, our own.

Your friend.....Linda

IT'S ALL IN THE INTERPRETATION

Forrest Gump approaches the entrance to heaven. St. Peter greets him and says, "Well, Forrest, it's certainly good to see you. We've heard a lot about you. I must inform you that the place is filling fast so we have an entrance exam that you need to pass to get into heaven. You need to answer correctly two questions."

Forrest responds, "It's sure good to be here. I hope that the test isn't too hard. Life was a big enough test." St. Peter asks the first question, "What days of the week begin with the letter T?" "Well," says Forrest, "That would be Today and Tomorrow."

St. Peter's eyes open wide as he exclaims, "Oh, Forrest! That's not what I was thinking, but you do have a point, and I didn't specify what I meant, so you get credit for that one." St. Peter then asks the next question, "How many seconds in a year?" "Now that one's harder," says Forrest. After thinking for a while, he states, "I suppose the only answer can be twelve."

St. Peter shouts, "Twelve! Twelve! Forrest, how in heaven's name could you come up with twelve?" Forrest says, "Shucks, there gotta be twelve, January second, February second, March second . . ."

"Hold it," interrupts St. Peter, "I see where you're going. I will give you credit for that one too. I guess it's all in the interpretation. Welcome to heaven, Forrest!"



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