



The Oasis

News from First Community United Methodist Church
Medford Massachusetts

February 2020

Dear Friends,

I would like to introduce you to Papa. She is a tall African American woman. She loves funky blues. She loves baking bread and making salads. She dances a lot and has a lovely smile. Finally, she loves us because she is our Creator. Papa is the God-the-Creator figure in William Paul Young's *The Shack* (2007), one of the textbooks that we use for our Wednesday Bible study group.

The depiction of Papa is surprising and unique. The author liberates God's image from the box that the church has created. Indeed, God is not a white male with a brown or white beard and blue eyes. God is female, male, and non-binary; God is white, brown, black, and yellow. Young's description of Papa reminds us that our limited conception cannot capture the full nature of God.

In addition to her fascinating characteristics, Papa produces a number of inspiring quotes. Here is one:

Lies are a little fortress; inside them you can feel safe and powerful. Through your little fortress of lies you try to run your life and manipulate others. But the fortress needs walls, so you build some. These are the justifications for your lies. You know, like you are doing this to protect someone you love, to keep them from feeling pain. Whatever works, just so you feel okay about the lies.

(Young, *The Shack*, 191)

Papa reveals and makes us face our habit—building walls of justifications. We often say we made a *white lie* to protect others. But Papa is challenging us to see if that is really the case. It is not that there are no white lies. There could be some lies with good intentions. However, we need to check ourselves if we are making that lie for someone else or we are trying to make us feel okay about the lie.

Depicting God as a white male was a lie. Some say it was the best option to help people understand who God is by adapting a familiar figure with power and authority. They say it was for others, but it wasn't. It was a wall of justification, built to make the white male church leaders feel okay.

God is not in a box. God hates lies. God loves us. Amen.

Pastor Suji



UPDATE ON THE OPEN SPIRIT TASK FORCE

At its meeting last June, The New England Annual Conference approved commissioning The Open Spirit Task Force (OSTF) "to examine whether and how United Methodists of New England might align with, create, or form a new church body in the Methodist tradition (independently or in collaboration with others)." This was in response to the actions of the General Conference of the United Methodist Church last February when it voted to maintain its traditional stance against same-sex marriage and non-celibate gay clergy.

Our lay leader, Stephanie Finley, was selected to serve on this task force and is a member of the Communications Team. She will be our guest preacher on February 23 and will include sharing about the work of the OSTF as part of her message.

The OSTF recently met at a retreat with the members of the New England Conference delegation to General Conference 2020. Stephanie wasn't at the retreat, but is sharing this information from other members of the task force.

A Congregational Letter: It was recommended that the OSTF send a pastoral letter to be read on what we are calling *Open Spirit Sunday, February 23*, by all United Methodists in the New England connection. This letter will:

- clarify what has happened in the general church and specifically name the charge of the New England Annual Conference for the Open Spirit Task Force.
- name the recommendations that have come from our work and our joint retreat with the Delegation.
- give links to the Educational Material (posted on Conference website) for congregations to use to study our recommendations prior to Annual Conference.

District Presentations: Beginning in March, over an eight-week period, there will be a series of District Presentations that will share what the Task Force and Delegation are committed to and what we will be recommending to the Annual Conference. The presentations will be based on PowerPoint slides and will have the same message for each meeting. Our District – Metro Boston Hope - will meet April 5, from 3-5 p.m., at Crawford Memorial UMC in Winchester. All are invited to attend. Presenters will be Sara Garrard, pastor at Old West UMC in Boston; and Kathryn Johnson, pastor at Parkway UMC in Milton.

If you have any questions or want to learn more please reach out to the Task Force through their email OpenSpiritNE@mail.com or visit their web site at ostfne.org



SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

February 2

First Community has participated in the Souper Bowl of Caring since 2003. In that time, we have collected over \$2,600 for Medford's Community Cupboard Food Pantry. On Super Bowl Sunday, February 2, we will put out a soup pot to collect money (checks or cash) and a couple of baskets to collect non-perishable food items. **We will continue this collection throughout February as our mini-mission.**

Here's some information from the Souper Bowl of Caring web site.

Mission

Empowering youth and uniting communities to **#TackleHunger** using the energy of the Big Game.

Vision

Transforming the Big Game into a nation-wide movement inspiring people to give locally and make a collective impact on hunger.

Souper Bowl of Caring is a youth-inspired, youth-led movement working with other groups across the nation including: schools, churches, local businesses, corporations, passionate individuals and NFL teams to tackle hunger in their local communities during the weeks leading up to the biggest celebration in football, Super Bowl.

NOTE: In 2019, nearly 5,000 groups collected over \$9.6 million in dollars and food donations for hunger-relief charities across the country. Over \$150 million has been collected since Souper Bowl of Caring began in 1990.

from www.superbowl.org

WORSHIP LEADERS, GREETERS, & USHERS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Worship Leader</u>	<u>Greeter</u>	<u>Ushers</u>
February 2	Stephanie Finley	Theo Koo	To Be Announced
February 9	David Twiddy	Stephanie Finley	To Be Announced
February 16	To Be Announced	Donna Maguire	Stephanie Finley
February 23	Dot Seamster	Mimi and JJ Twiddy	David Twiddy

Dot Seamster (781-391-5154) is in charge of finding worship leaders, ushers and greeters.
If you would like to volunteer for a week, please contact her.



BASEBALL OPENING DINNER

Saturday, April 4 - 6:00 p.m.

Celebrate the start of the 2020 season of our national pastime.



DISTRICT GATHERING - Sunday, April 5

3:00 PM to 5:00 PM - Crawford Memorial UMC in Winchester

The New England Delegation to the 2020 General Conference and the Open Spirit Task Force (OSTF) have been moving forward with their work and will be holding information sessions in each district.



The OSTF was formed last year "to examine whether and how United Methodists of New England might align with, create, or form a new church body in the Methodist tradition (independently or in collaboration with others)."

At the district gatherings, facilitators will share the options that will be presented at the Annual Conference in June 2020 and provide educational materials that will help facilitate congregational conversations about these options. *For further information, please see the article on page 2 of this newsletter.*


DELLO RUSSO
FAMILY FUNERAL HOMES
Family Owned & Operated

374 Main Street Wilmington, MA 01887 (978) 658-4476	306 Main Street Medford, MA 02155 (781) 396-9200	60 Pleasant Street Woburn, MA 01801 (781) 933-0083
---	--	--

www.dellorusso.net 

BETSY DUSSAULT KATHIE HUNT

Merry-Go-Round



55 Otis St.
Medford MA
02155

Nursery School

781-396-1711

 **Benjamin Moore** Paints **MODERN** 
Hardware & Paint Company

440 Salem Street • Medford, MA 02155
Tel: 781-395-0731 • Fax: 781-395-0732

Agents for Benjamin Moore and California Paints

Monday through Friday - 7:00 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.
Saturday - 7:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.
Sunday - 9:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M.

David Spector George Thurrott

Work: (781) 391-7390 Home: (781) 721-2255
Fax: (781) 391-2024

JACKSON FUEL CORPORATION
FUEL OILS & GASOLINE
Heating Specialists

377 Salem Street
Medford, Mass. 02155

DEAN E. JACKSON

Joel J. Magliozzi



Beals-Seake
MAGLIOZZI FUNERAL HOME
Cherishing Life. Honoring Memories.

29 GOVERNORS AVENUE
MEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS 02155

TEL: 781.395.0128 FAX: 781.391.8780
WWW.MAGLIOZZIFUNERALHOME.COM

AFFILIATED WITH
ALLURE TRAVEL
By CTM

Sheila McCleery
Professional Travel Planner

d | (781) 496-3712

w | alluretravel.com p | (888) 781-5200 x3712

101 Edgewater Drive #110, Wakefield, MA 01801
CST# 2129700-40; Iowa: 1284; Washington: 603-561-512; Hawaii: TAR 7279

BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY
HomeServices



Tim Garvey
Sales Associate
Realtor®

Commonwealth Real Estate
39 Church Street
Winchester, MA 01890
781-369-7145 direct
339-219-0825 fax
tim.garvey@commonmoves.com
www.commonmoves.com

Member of the franchise system of BHH Affiliates, LLC

Please support our advertisers!

FEBRUARY 2020

First Community United Methodist Church, Medford, MA

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
						Liz & Richard Grzla
						4:00 PM Community Cinema at Community Baptist Church
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Catrina Hayden & Jorge Patino	Maya Inzerillo & Tonya Hicks &	Bianca & Erik Hegre	Oriana Hegre & Serena Hegre	Ben & Jessie Killilea	Finn Killilea & Rowan Killilea	Tom & Peggy Kirkpatrick
9:30 AM Adult Class 10:30 AM Worship & Sunday School 12 NOON Trustees Meeting SOUPER BOWL OF CARING				7:15 PM Choir Rehearsal		
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Elsie Jacobson & Autumn Lane	Eleanor & Paul Kulakowski	Terran & Susan Rati Lane	Donna & Fred Laskey	Daniel Laskey & Matthew Laskey	Geoffrey Laskey & Lauren Laskey	Richard Laskey & Samuel McDonald
9:30 AM Adult Class 10:30 AM Worship & Sunday School BOY SCOUT SUNDAY				7:15 PM Choir Rehearsal		10:30 AM 1 st Community Singers at Courtyard Nursing Home
16	17	18	19		21	22
Charlotte Luscombe & Frank Casseterri	Donna & Joe Maguire	Bill Mason & Billy Mason	George & Sheila McCleery	Emily & Matthew McDonald	Meaghan Morris & Connor Wilson	Chloey Wilson & Cayden Maleszyk
9:30 AM Adult Class 10:30 AM Worship & Sunday School <i>Special Preacher: Frank Seamster</i>	PRESIDENTS DAY			7:15 PM Choir Rehearsal		
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Neville Pottinger & Luci Rexroad	Cheryl & Keeley Murphy	Nathaniel Murphy & Alexander Murphy	Aarion Perez & Katelyn Perez	Jim Ryan & Kim Ryan	Joan Saniuk & Sharilyn Steketee	Dorothy Seamster & Frank Seamster
9:30 AM Adult Class 10:30 AM Worship & Sunday School <i>Special Preacher: Stephanie Finley</i>			Lenten Program begins. <i>Details to follow.</i> ASH WEDNESDAY	7:15 PM Choir Rehearsal		

Please pray throughout the month for the people listed on this calendar.