



The Oasis

News from First Community United Methodist Church
Medford Massachusetts

November 2021

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"Beautiful Fall Colors"

Dear Friends & Family,

Cooler winds, later sunrises, earlier sunsets and the change from green to multi-color leaves on trees are the telltale signs of an approaching change among us. As Mother Earth prepares for transition, the bright red leaves remind us as a warning sign of the cold weather we are about to experience.

At this time of year, we begin to ask about Thanksgiving plans, look for Christmas decorations, prepare gift lists, and think of ways to celebrate the upcoming holidays. We wonder how cold it might be this winter, how much snow we might have, and for some, we consider how we can escape to warmer weather!

One of my favorite activities this time of the year is to see the beautiful colors of leaves on the trees. I take several drives up north and to the west of Boston to experience the beauty of what I used to think was merely a painter's imagination and wondered how an artist could imagine so much beauty in this part of the country. It was not until I moved to New England that I realized this was not just the rendering of an artist's fantasy, but this is truly the creative force and wisdom of mother earth.

(Pastor's letter continued next page.)

Church Information

To join us for Sunday Worship via Facebook Live, follow the link below:
<https://www.facebook.com/firstcommunityumc>

Pastor De La Rosa Email: pastor@firstcommunitymedford.org

Our newsletter is published by the Church Administrator. Advertisements and submissions for next month's newsletter are due to office@firstcommunitymedford.org no later than the 23rd of the current month.

Church Office Hours: Mon, Thurs and Fri 9:30am-12:30pm
Phone/Voicemail: 781-396-5436 | Address: 55 Otis Street, Medford, MA 02155
Website: www.firstcommunitymedford.org

Photo Credit: K.Aluia



When I take my drives and stop to take pictures, I tell myself that all these colors and this beauty was imagined and created for our enjoyment, as part of our particular living space so we could experience the beauty of changing seasons. These days, I think about how it will be a year since I came to serve with you at First Community UMC. I reflect upon our time together, our own changes and shift in ministry. I think about our diversity, hopes and commitments as a community of faith and it is as beautiful as the diverse colors of leaves on trees.



Photo Credit: A.Burden @unsplash.com

May you enjoy the beauty and designs of this time of year. Take time for a drive or a walk in the woods. I encourage you to explore ways to see, reflect and tune in to the changing seasons of your own journey as we prepare for the upcoming holy days and new year in the Christian Calendar.

*Blessings,
Pastor De La Rosa*

FCUMC's Annual Charge Conference – Monday, November 8



Photo Credit: K.Aluia

All are welcome as we take time as a church to pause and reflect on the past year...and plan for the future.

- **Save the Date! Monday, November 8 at 7pm via Zoom**
Zoom Meeting Link: <https://zoom.us/j/3939464300>
Via Landline (audio only): +1 646 558 8656 US
Meeting ID: 393 946 4300
- District Superintendent, Rev. We Cheng, will preside.
- Annual Reports have been prepared to include:
 - Leadership Team
 - Nomination/Leadership
 - Pastoral
 - Staff/Parish Relations Committee
 - Trustees
 - Financial
 - 2021 Proposed Budget
 - Retired Minister
 - Membership

MUSIC FROM THE CHURCH 🎵

By Luci Rexroad, Music Director

“We Gather Together”

The Methodist Hymnal, 1935, was the first denominational hymnal to include this hymn.

Michael Hawn writes this in *History of Hymns from UMC Discipleship Ministries*: “In many hymnals, “We Gather Together” appears as a Thanksgiving hymn. Perhaps this is because of the opening line and the general idea that God is with us regardless of our circumstances. However, the hymn speaks more about God’s providence throughout the trials of life. The story behind this hymn clarifies its text.

“This hymn is a late 16th-century expression of celebration of freedom by The Netherlands from Spanish oppression. Like many older hymns, it finds its way to us through a circuitous route.

“It was first published in *Nederlandsch Gedenckclanck* (1626), a collection by Adrianus Valerius in Haarlem. Austrian Edward Kremser (1838-1914) included it in *Sechs Altniederländische Volkslieder* (Six Old Netherlands Folksongs) in 1877 for his men’s chorus, all six anonymous songs taken from the Valerius collection 250 years earlier.

“According to *UM Hymnal* editor Carlton Young, the performance of these tunes led to their popularity and the inclusion in many hymnals.

“The story extends to the U.S. through Theodore Baker (1851-1934), a New York-born musicologist who studied in Leipzig and authored the famous *Biographical Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. Baker translated the hymn from German for an anthem entitled “Prayer for Thanksgiving” published in 1894. It is from Baker that the hymn gets its traditional Thanksgiving connection.

“*The United Methodist Hymnal* has placed this hymn in the “Providence” section rather [than] with other traditional Thanksgiving hymns, broadening its use for thanksgiving during any difficult times.”¹

Trivia question: This hymn has been sung for many years during the Thanksgiving episode of what U.S. soap opera?

We Gather Together

TEXT: *Nederlandsch Gedenckclanck*, 1626; trans. by Theodore Baker, 1894

TUNE: 16th cent. Dutch melody; arr. by Edward Kremser, 1877. KREMSER

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. We gather together
to ask the Lord's blessing;
he chastens and hastens
his will to make known.
The wicked oppressing
now cease from distressing.
Sing praises to his name;
he forgets not his own. | 2. Beside us to guide us,
our God with us joining,
ordaining, maintaining
his kingdom divine;
so from the beginning
the fight we were winning;
thou, Lord, wast at our side,
all glory be thine! | 3. We all do extol thee,
thou leader triumphant,
and pray that thou still
our defender wilt be.
Let thy congregation
escape tribulation;
thy name be ever praised!
O Lord, make us free! |
|--|---|---|

Trivia answer: *General Hospital – the Quarantine Family Celebration*

¹ <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-we-gather-together>

NOVEMBER'S GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

by Paulo Llanco Zavaleta

Student Stories: What ministry is calling you? Our work is our ministry. Some of us are spiritual leaders, while others are called to be architects, teachers, musicians, glassblowers or pharmacists. Later in life, our ministries may change or we may have more than one...as we become parents, caretakers of our parents, community volunteers and church leaders.

Each month, we ask a seminary student to contribute to the newsletter. Each student is asked to share his/her calling and key memories that formed the path to becoming a spiritual leader in the church.

This month's contributor is Paulo Llanco Zavaleta. Paulo is in his first year at Boston University's School of Theology where he is studying for his Masters in Divinity.

A Call to the Practice of Love

I believe that the meaning of finding my vocation is centered on the passion of what I have been doing in my life. I have tried to understand God in my life, and I believe that I continue to learn much more every day. My family's ongoing interaction with the Church has been one of the foundations of my faith experience. My father, as a Methodist pastor, was required to change cities every four years. This allowed me to live many experiences with different ways of living in Peru. When I was a teenager, I decided to get baptized, and I began to understand what it meant to follow God. But this was not enough because there were always contradictions in the process of my life. I felt an emptiness in my heart for something not clear in my life with God and daily activities. I thought God would grant me whatever my heart wanted if I behaved well, but my understanding of God changed when this didn't happen. Despite that, my willingness to believe in God prompted me to continue in the Church; in this case was the Methodist Church.

My time at the university allowed me to consolidate some principles in my relationship with God and my neighbor. Interacting with students and living in a community of Christian reflection enabled me to learn to develop my leadership skills and discover how to reach out to others through dialogue and counsel. When I was attending a group of Christian youth at the University, I had the opportunity to dialogue with other young people about their problems and needs. I realized that my words encouraged them, and they made sense of their problems. These experiences enriched my life because I felt that I could be of help to them. I understood that in addition to having faith, it was also necessary to act with greater precision in the life of the human being, which was one of my conclusions throughout this stage. I understood that faith and social action have to go together, that idea grew in my life to make sense.

All these experiences allowed me to discover my vocation to serve God directly as a Pastor to support people to become aware of their reality. My second and last action of pastoral focus was my work with children in a very poor area of the capital of Peru called José Olaya, located in Ventanilla. I had never thought of interacting with children, which broadened my understanding of service to God and fellow man. Meeting their needs was an act of social justice for them. I was so happy to understand and live that combination of faith and social action with very humble people; it all started to make sense to me. Human beings need God's love.

Also, in my opinion, having a good relationship between people is a wonderful good experience where faith and love can be combined; I find God's will for my life in that interaction, in the spaces with the youth of the university, with the village children and then with the adults.

Paulo Llanco Zavaleta, Student of Master of Divinity | Boston University - School of Theology

NOVEMBER NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Upcoming Meetings | Events:** Please ✓ your calendar.
November 7 | 1pm: Trustees
November 8 | 6:15pm: Staff/Parish Relations Committee
November 8 | 7pm: Church Charge Conference
November 16 | 7pm: Leadership Team
November 17 | 7pm: *New* Bible Study Series
November 28: 1st Day of Advent
- **Community Organizations:** In October's Oasis issue, we announced a new COVID building policy as well as efforts to invite community organizations back into the church. To date, these groups have returned under our COVID guidelines and protocols: Boy Scouts of America Troop 416, Girl Scout Daisy Troop 64376, Girl Scout Junior Troop 62969, Girl Scout Cadet Troop 69039 and Monday 12-Step Program.
*There are still several groups who are working out scheduling details. We hope to see Cub Scouts Pack 416 and a 12-Step Program return soon as well.
- **Church Email List:** Would you like to receive newsletters, bulletins for Sunday worship or other church news via email? To add your name to list, email your info to office@firstcommunitymedford.org.
- **Church Website:** Need to check details for an upcoming event or meeting? Visit www.firstcommunitymedford.org.

Sunday, November 28

United Methodist Student Day

About UMC Special Sundays: Special Sundays are designated throughout the year and provide opportunities for giving. These special offerings are earmarked and support designated ministries.

You may donate directly Student Day at www.ResourceUMC.org/SSGive



"Fall Back" on Sunday, November 8

Daylight Savings is Sunday, November 8. Before Sunday's service, remember to turn your clocks back one hour.

Photo Credit: O.Ng @unsplash.com

November is Stewardship Month

Help us tend the vineyard and care for our church, neighbors and planet.



Photo Credit: M.Petric @unsplash.com

First Community Approaches Its Bicentennial!

Almost two hundred years ago, in 1823, a Methodist Society of forty members was organized in the city of Medford. We will celebrate our bicentennial in 2023.

People who were around in 1976 probably remember the Bicentennial Celebrations held both nationwide and locally to mark 200 years after the American colonies declared their independence from Great Britain. Queen Elizabeth II visited Boston and spoke from the balcony of the Old State House, where on July 18, 1776, the people of Boston gathered to hear the Declaration of Independence read. I don't think there will be any royalty in Medford in 2023, but please watch for an announcement about a Bicentennial committee and how you can be part of the planning for our celebration.

Luci Rexroad is our Organizing Committee Chair. We are currently seeking volunteers to organize historical records and photos. To assist, contact Luci at music@firstcommunitymedford.org.

OUTREACH MINISTRIES

By Luci Rexroad, Outreach Coordinator

NOVEMBER MINI-MISSION: INGATHERING FOR FOOD PANTRIES

One of my first childhood memories of activities at First Methodist Church in Medford (as First Community UMC was known then) is of people bringing brown paper bags with cans and packages of food to church on the Sunday before Thanksgiving. I later learned that the fancy name for this is “ingathering.” It’s been a long time since I’ve heard that word at First Community, but it’s still used in a lot of other places.

One group that uses this term is the Iowa Conference of The United Methodist Church. They will hold their 41st Annual Mission **Ingathering** on Saturday, November 7, 2021. In their information about this event, they state that “The Purpose of Mission **Ingathering** is to show the love of Christ to the world’s people by ministering to their needs.” They partner with the Midwest Distribution Center, an UMCOR-cooperating depot near Springfield, Illinois, to “collect and distribute to those in a time of crisis as quickly as possible.” In 2017, they loaded two UMCOR trucks with 64,000 pounds of kits on their way to Baldwin, Louisiana.

The Iowa Conference has eight districts. For this event, they use five sites throughout the Conference. Check-in starts at most sites at 8:00. The morning activities, in addition to collecting kits from the local churches, may include a bazaar and bake sale, mission presentations, a worship service, lunch, and an auction with quilts and woodcraft contributed by the churches in the conference. The churches also have an opportunity to donate cash gifts to Church World Service, Heifer Project, and several local organizations.

In October, we announced that our mini-mission would be collecting items for UMCOR¹ Cleaning Buckets and Hygiene Kits. That was to fulfill a recommendation from New England Conference’s emergency coordinator. Admittedly, we didn’t promote it very well; so for November, we’re going to have a do-over **ingathering** and try to involve more of the groups who use our building.

And we will also have a food ingathering during November for Medford’s food pantries, with emphasis on the week before Thanksgiving.

You may put your items in the plastic bin in the sanctuary on Sunday morning; bring them to the church office during regular office hours; or contact me at music@firstcommunitymedford.org to make other arrangements for drop-off or pick-up.

¹ United Methodist Committee on Relief.

As friends and members of First Community UMC, volunteerism and outreach are woven into the fabric of who we are as we devote time and energy to serve, support and in many cases, provide meeting space for our neighbors and community programs. In addition to our current mini-missions, we support...

- Boy Scouts of America Troop 416
- Cub Scout Pack 416
- Girl Scout Troops
- 12-Step groups
- Justice for Our Neighbors (JFON)
- Christmas gifts for Medford families in-need
- “Sox for Socks”, Boston Health Care for Homeless Program
- Local Food pantries

For more information about our Outreach Ministries, visit www.firstcommunitymedford.org/ministries

ADULT BIBLE STUDY

By Claudia Alvarez

Our Bible Studies Return!

Since September 15th the congregation of the First Community Methodist Church, have joint weekly to our Bible Studies sessions, which were called “*Theological and Biblical Sharing from a Latinx Perspective.*” During six weeks, our community was able to be spiritually enriched by the voices, the faith experiences and the theological perspectives of Latinx seminarians who belonged to Schools of Theology at Boston University, Drew University, Oblate University and Toronto University. Through this journey, we heard and learned about liberation theologies, such as Feminist, Mujerista, Latin American, Campesina, and Postcolonial, which represent newer and deeply contextualized approaches to the Bible, in order to find alternatives ways to relate with the message of the gospel, challenging traditional interpretations that for many centuries have excluded the women, the poorest ones, the peasants of the so called Third World countries and the LGBTIQ+ people, from the prophetic promise of the Scriptures.

In that sense, we thank all of you who have given you time, energy, mind and open heart, planting your seed so that our weekly meetings flourish the way they have done, bringing joy, learnings, powerful insights and spiritual companionship to all who gather every Wednesday.

Then, is it a pleasure to announce that, after two weeks of resting, our Bible Studies will return the next November 17th every Wednesday for 5 weeks, at 7:00 PM by Zoom. This new season, we invite all of you to hear and engage with 5 stories of encounter with God, that will be starring by LGBTIQ+ people that will share with us their path of self-acceptance and faith building, not just in our denomination, but in others as well, bringing us the possibility to approach theologically to Queer life experiences and to ecumenical dialogues. Thus, this encounters will be inspired by the value of human diversity, acknowledging that each one of our differences is a gift from God, who wants us to celebrate and learn from them.



Photo Credit: M.Nohassi @unsplash.com

This new cycle of Bible Studies, will be guided for theological and spiritual approaches that will help our church (as a *coming and affirming* one) and its members, to navigate through the mission of creating safe spaces for people who have been rejected and judged because of who they are or who they decide to love. We consider that this new season of our Bible Studies, will contribute to make stronger the prophetic duty of our Church, that is, to embody and express the accepting and unconditional love that God have for each one of us, not in spite of our many differences, but because of them.

With us, there are going to be people who identified themselves as lesbian women, trans-men, trans-woman, non-binary folks and gay men, all them with the common experience of feeling God’s love in their process of accepting who they are, and in the spiritual and ethical commitment of building more inclusive churches. We hope you all feel the calling of joining us to this wonderful journey! Do not miss the opportunity to growth in compassion, knowledge and love.

Claudia Alvarez, Intern of Adult Formation / Master of Divinity Student at BU STH



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 Sales Associate
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Commonwealth Real Estate
 39 Church Street
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 339-219-0825 fax
 tim.garvey@commonmoves.com
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November 2021

First Community United Methodist Church, Medford MA

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Ben & Jessie Killilea <i>All Saints Day</i>	2 Finn Killilea & Rowan Killilea	3 Tom & Peggy Kirkpatrick	4 Eleanor & Paul Kulakowski	5 Terran & Susan Rati Lane	6 Autumn Lane
7 Daniel Laskey 10:30 AM Worship In-person & via Facebook <i>Daylight Savings Ends</i> 1PM Trustees Meeting Trustees Meeting Link	8 Donna & Fred Laskey 6:15PM SPRC 7PM Charge Conference Charge Conference Link	9 Matthew Laskey & Geoffrey Laskey	10 Lauren Laskey & Richard Laskey	11 Charlotte Luscombe & Frank Cassetteri <i>Veterans Day</i>	12 Donna & Joe Maguire	13 Bill Mason & Billy Mason
14 George & Sheila McCleery 10:30 AM Worship In-person & via Facebook	15 Emily & Matthew McDonald	16 Samuel McDonald 7PM Leadership Team Team Meeting Link	17 Meaghan Morris & Connor Wilson 7:00PM Bible Study Bible Study Link	18 Chloey Wilson	19 Cayden Maleszyk	20 Cheryl & Keeley Murphy
21 Nathaniel Murphy & Alexander Murphy 10:30 AM Worship In-person & via Facebook	22 Aarion & Katelyn Perez	23 Neville & Egaline Pottinger	24 Luci Rexroad 7:00 PM Bible Study Bible Study Link	25 Ana Maria Rodriguez & Dan Hauge <i>Thanksgiving Day</i>	26 Jim & Kim Ryan <i>Church Office Closed</i>	27 Joan Saniuk & Sharilyn Steketee
28 Dorothy & Frank Seamster 10:30 AM Worship In-person & via Facebook <i>1st Sunday of Advent</i> <i>United Methodist Student Day</i>	29 Kevin Seamster & Owen Seamster	30 Ebiye Seimode				

Reminder Checklist: Please pray for our friends daily on the designated day.
 November is Stewardship Month