

The Courier

Semi-monthly Newsletter

July 19, 2007

Melrose
Highlands
Congregational
Church

www.mhcc-ucc.org

REV. VANDER HART ACCEPTS A NEW CALL

Wendy will begin as
Acting Associate Conference
Minister in September

Below are excerpts from a letter sent to
the Congregation by Wendy
on June 29th.

*I thank my God with every
remembrance of you.*

Philippians 1: 3

Dear family and friends in faith,

It is with a mix of sadness and excitement that I write this letter to you today. I have been recruited for and answered yes to a new call. Beginning in mid-September, I will begin serving as the Acting Associate Conference Minister in the Metropolitan Boston Association of the MA Conference, United Church of Christ.

Recently a friend spoke with me of the call to ministry in two ways. Sometimes a call is a “call from.” Sometimes it is a “call to.” A “call from” is often expressed as a move away from the current work. On the opposite end, a “call to” is expressed as an opportunity to move towards new work. For me, this clearly feels like a “call to” and will certainly be a new kind of work and ministry.

If I was still called to continue to serve a local church, there is no better place or better people with whom to serve than you. There is still so much strength and vitality to be built upon in MHCC. Only a different kind of ministry would draw me away from the pastoral role among you.

I have been Pastor at MHCC for nine and a half years and it has been among the greatest joys of my life to serve with you. As a people and staff, you have shaped my ministry and allowed me into your lives. You have enhanced my faith and strengthened my belief in the vital place of the church in our communities and world. The impact of our shared journey will be with me always and I am incredibly grateful to God for the gift you have been and are.

My last Sunday at MHCC will be September 16. I have met with our Moderator, Steve Calabro, and talked with key leaders who will use the summer months to identify Interim leadership to commence in the Fall. I will be fully accessible and available in August upon return from the New Orleans Mission trip on August 5th and welcome the opportunity to speak with you

and see you. The timing of this is difficult as we are in a scattered mode, but we will do all we can to create a faithful and fulfilling goodbye.

I know your future is bright with possibility because of who and whose you are. The God we worship is always doing something creative and new. I also trust that the leadership, gifts and energy with which MHCC is blessed will carry you forward in faith.

With a heart full of gratitude
and love,

Rev. Wendy Vander Hart

8th Grade Year End Celebration Dance



Over \$2,200 was raised this year from the 8th Grade Year-End Dance to go to the General Operating expenses of the Church.

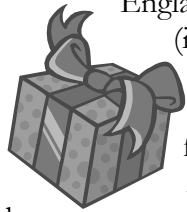
I would like to thank once again Joan Dunne and Harry Perkins for all their help and continued support of the 8th Grade Year-End Dance as I can always count on them. I would also like to thank Jim and John Dunne and the many Middle School Youth Group Members

for serving the punch and for the clean up. Also thanks to Kent Vienot, Harry Perkins, three 8th grade parents (Robin, Beth Shaffer and Sue Stoker) and my niece Jenine Leccese for all their help chaperoning and to Lisa and Jim Lyles who helped at the end when we needed it. Special thanks go to my family - Bob, Sarah and Kirby - who helped with the flower arrangements, decorating the hall, shopping, clean-up, chaperoning, lugging of all the drinks and decorations, for without them, this fund-raiser would not have happened.

- Marylou Graham

**“Around New England”
Mystery Gifts for the
Christmas Fair**

As you travel around New England this summer (including Boston and Melrose!), keep an eye out for interesting, inexpensive gifts that we can use for our new “Mystery Gift” table.



The gifts should have a value of \$20 or less. We will put the gifts in decorative bags, one gift per bag, with a label telling the value of the gift and who the gift is appropriate for (e.g., “boy, age 7-12” or “anyone” or “adult female”). Typical New England items such as Vermont maple syrup, blueberry preserves from Maine, or a Red Sox souvenir are ideal; however, any item *from* New England (such as an interesting gift from the Museum of Science) would be great.

Please call Anne Gilbert at 781-665-5064 if you have any questions. Happy Hunting!



Nancy Watts – at Salem Hospital.

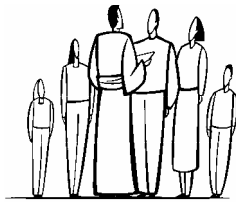
The family of George Foskitt – who died and whose life was celebrated in a service in Falmouth, MA.

Ken Kenworthy – at home.

Phyllis Greene – continuing with her recovery at home.

Lee Graves – recently hospitalized.

We welcome with joy John Brith, Sally Brith, Grace Pinkham, Anne Whelan, Ed Whelan into the fellowship of membership. Meet them in their own words!



Welcome New Members

John Brith - My Christian journey began in Jamaica Plain, where I was born and christened. We moved to Scituate, when I was young and that is where my Catholic principled foundation was set. In my 20’s as a young man, and later a father, I distanced myself from the Catholic Church and it’s teachings for reasons that are now common among converts. While I won’t get into the reasons, or the shortcomings of Catholicism, suffice to say I grew weary of the belief that there was a place in Hell with my name on

it. The United Church of Christ has been a refreshing and renewing compass in my life since I discovered its teachings almost 15 years ago. I have been a member of UCC North Prospect (Cambridge) since approximately 1996.

In the time that I have attended UCC services I truly believe I have learned more about what it means to be a Christian. I have always had a strong faith; however, I have not always had a sense of “home” for my feelings of faith. Through the welcome teachings of the UCC community I believe I have a home. Sally and I have lived in Melrose for the last 13 years, our son Nolan has attended church and Sunday School for the past year and truly enjoys his learning and experiences here. For us, the UCC Highlands Congregational Church is a natural and logical choice for us to call home. In the past year plus of regular attendance we have been welcomed and warmly treated by this family. It is my hope and aim to call Melrose Highlands Congregational Church our home for a long time.

Sally Brith - I was born in Fairfield CT and my baptism, Christian education and confirmation took place at Nichols Methodist Church.

As I moved on to Lesley College in Cambridge, I grew apart from the church until my mom passed away in 1988. I then attend North Prospect UCC to find some peace and again a home church. John and I became members in 1996 and were integrally involved in the church and took many opportunities to become involved.

We traveled from Melrose to church in Porter Square for many years until Nolan was born in 2000 and it became increasingly difficult to get to church. We missed our church family and visited different churches for several years before deciding to make a renewed commitment to ONE, permanent church home for us and for Nolan.

Melrose Highlands UCC has given our family a church home and spiritual center for our busy lives. We look forward to many years of calling MHCC home.

Anne Whelan - We began searching out a religious home after the birth of Ned and Autumn. Ed and I had enjoyed services at other churches but had stopped short of making a commitment. It was during this time that we came to the Melrose Highlands Congregational Church to see *Benjamin the Clown*. We came to Church that following Sunday.

What drew us into the Church community is the support of families such as the Moores, Darwins and Vienots in the nursery. They instilled a sense of community and welcome to a young family. MaryAnn, Tracy and Bonnie's Sunday School is also a dream. The children are safe, educated and inspired every Sunday. I've also enjoyed helping out as a teacher and shepherd. Now, during that time we are also able to fully enjoy Wendy's sermons.

Outside of Church, our days are filled with raising Ned and Autumn. Our lives are full and blessed and becoming a member of the MHCC is a wonderful part of that. I look forward to being an active Member of the Church.

Ed Whelan - My path to the Melrose Highlands Congregational Church has been with my wife and family.

With the birth of our first child, Ned, Anne and I realized the challenge and responsibility that lay ahead of us to raise our child with high moral values in a seemingly ever more complicated world around us.

Growing up in a loving family with strong commitments to church, I can now appreciate the effort and partnership between my family and church to raise my sisters and I.

Once finding the Melrose Highlands Congregational Church Anne and I knew we had found a partner to provide the support for us to be successful in raising our children with a sense of community, family, love caring and giving.

It will be a privilege to become a member of Melrose Highlands Congregational Church and to continue to contribute with other members to make our Church better in the year ahead.

Grace Pinkham- Grace joined the Church at the Melrose Care Center with Fellowship Board Chairperson, Barbara Bemiss, extending the right hand of fellowship. Grace transfers her membership from Colebrook Congregational Church in Colebrook, CT. In the past Grace was active in crafts, music, church veteran's activities and bake sales. She started a Valentine's for Veteran's program at Colebrook Congregational Church which still goes on today.



Dear MHCC Family:

My ever grateful thanks and appreciation to each one who has kept me in their prayers, sent cards, telephone calls, visits, gifts and well wishes; they have all meant so very much. My thanks too to Rev. Wendy for her many visits, support and prayers; to Jim Lyles and Irina for bringing the beautiful altar flowers to the rehab – the talk of the rehab and it sure was - and “PR” for our caring MHCC Church family; to Charlotte Swan for the beautiful red roses (altar flowers) brought to me on my arrival home. I love red roses, my favorite flower but I'm so allergic to them; so they journeyed to the Fitch Home so others could enjoy them.

Words cannot express my appreciation for all the blessing I have had and continue to receive. Rather than trying to write ‘thank you notes’ please accept in lieu of the note a donation to the Mission Trip on behalf of us all. Hopefully I'll see you folks in the fall. God bless!

With love, Phyllis Greene.

Dear Rev. Wendy,

Grace is so happy to be a member of your Church. She has a feeling of belonging and connectedness to her faith. We appreciate your friendship to our family. I believe God wanted Grace to be here with me, and with you. Thank you.

Love, Alice Skinner
(Grace Pinkham's sister)

NEXT COURIER DEADLINE
Friday, August 10th at noon.



Celebrate with us

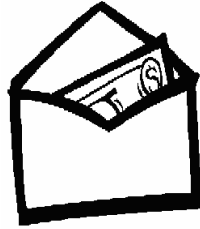
Jessica Harrison and Daniel Block were married by Wendy at the Colonial Center in Lynnfield on Saturday, June 30th. Our best wishes go out to them.

LUNCH BUNCH



Our next get-together is scheduled for Wednesday, August 8th at JJ Grimsby's at One Lynn Fells Parkway at West Wyoming Avenue, Melrose at 12:30 p.m.

Please call Virginia Shaw at 781.944.3573 for a ride or reservation. Everyone is welcome!



Pledge envelopes are ready for pick up!

STAFF

Church Office: 781-665-4200

Ministers: People of the church!

Pastor:

Rev. Wendy Vander Hart 781-665-4200

Emergency 781-643-6163

E-mail: Pastor@mhcc-ucc.org

Co-Directors Christian Education:

MaryAnn Barriss 781-665-3594

Bonnie Bowden 781-662-9671

Music Director:

Harold Prenatt 781-932-9375

High School Youth Leaders:

John Everett 781-665-2409

Liz Faughnan 781-438-3346

Middle School Youth Leader:

Jim Dunne 617-395-4386

Children of Note Choir Director:

Lara Ruoss 479-871-3931

Highlands Nursery School Director:

Sue McGrath 781-665-4202

Sexton: John Angel

Parish Administrator: Kelly Fung

Fax # (call first) 781-665-4201

WEB SITE: www.mhcc-ucc.org



Summer Labyrinth Walk

Wednesday, August 8th

@ 7:30 p.m.



Empties4Cash

Your Recycling And Fund Raising Partner

Remember to support a fundraiser for MHCC – recycle your printer cartridges here! MHCC receives money for each cartridge and we contribute to a cleaner environment. A collection box or mailers are available through the Church Office.

GENOCIDE CRISIS IN DARFUR



A poem by Tim Nonn, the Founder of [Dear Sudan](#).

Our Lady of the Bombs,

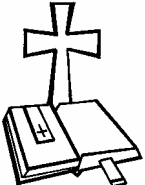
Where does God weep every day for the people of Darfur if not beside a woman who has been raped by government soldiers, if not next to a child whose father vanished in the flames that devoured his village like the pages of a book turning to light on the streets of Berlin in 1933, if not within the bombed heart of Mother loving us, her children, even in all that smoke and evaporated tears, tears rising like gilded angels captured in frames, tears rising and falling until the last heart on earth opens so wide there is space inside for God to rest, a place that is safe from bombs, a refuge for creation.

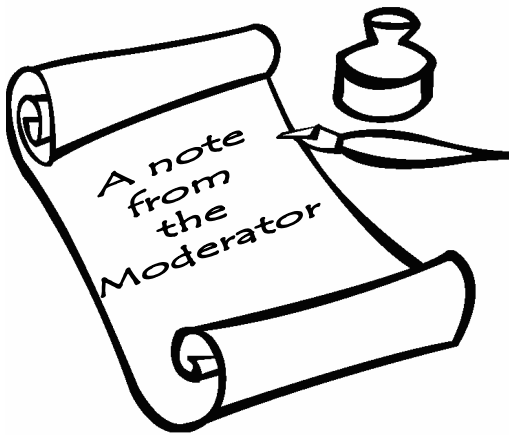
Tim Nonn 10 April 2007 Petaluma, CA.

From June 8 to July 16, Dr. Tim Nonn will journey by train across the United States to raise awareness about the case on Darfur at the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague. This is the first time in history that a sitting government will be tried for crimes against humanity. International support for justice in Sudan is growing rapidly. This is a critical hour for us to strengthen hope for justice. Along the route, Nonn will be speaking at congregations and other locations, including the 2007 General Synod in Hartford, Connecticut (June 22-26).

For more information on the Darfur Crisis, there's a great website at The Holocaust Museum (in Washington DC), which is dedicated to drawing attention to genocide around the world and has been focused on Darfur; since 2003 – more than 200,000 people killed and 2 million displaced. The Holocaust Museum site with Darfur info is: <http://www.ushmm.org/googleearth/>. If you are not familiar with it, *Google Earth* is a free program providing satellite mapping data of many places all over the earth. It's pretty cool.

- Keren Hummer, BOCO

UNION SERVICES			
SUMMER	DATE	PREACHER	HOST
 WORSHIP	July 22	Rev. Chuck Hartman	First Congregational
	July 29	Rev. Chuck Hartman	First United Methodist
	August 5	Rev. Wendy Vander Hart	First United Methodist
	August 12	Rev. Wendy Vander Hart	First United Methodist
	August 19	Rev. Chuck Hartman	Highlands Congregational
	August 26	Rev. Dominic Taranowski	Highlands Congregational
	September 2	Rev. Larry Starr	Highlands Congregational



Change, I really don't like change. And by now, you probably know that our beloved Minister, the Reverend Wendy Vander Hart, will be leaving MHCC in September to accept a call as an Acting Associate Conference Minister for the MA Conference of the UCC.

And though I don't like change, after 50 something years I have come to the realization that the only real certainty is change and our Lord gives us the strength and faith to deal and to learn and to grow from whatever change we must face. So we must get on with the business of dealing with this leadership change and to call a new minister to MHCC.

To start the work ahead, a meeting was held on Monday, July 16th at MHCC. About 30 members and friends attended the meeting which we started with a simple prayer. We were introduced to the Rev. Dale Hempen, a very experienced Associate Conference Minister from the UCC who will guide and assist us with this work. John Egan read some insights and thoughts on the process that called Wendy to MHCC from Carol Rosseland, a past Moderator and Co-Chair of the prior Search Committee. Beth Valliere, our Treasurer and a Member of the prior Search Committee with Carol also gave us some good input on the process. A number of excellent questions were asked and Dale patiently and insightfully answered them for us.

At this point I can say that it is most likely that we will have an Interim Minister for about a year. A committee is being formed ASAP to help get this Interim Minister in place for September and Dale Hempen is in the process of identifying potential candidates for us. A second committee will be formed to begin the search process for a permanent minister. We will try very hard to include a diverse group of people on this committee who will represent the various thoughts, feeling and beliefs of our membership. This committee, with guidance from our interim minister, will likely begin the process with a survey of the Congregation for input. Stay tuned for more info as it becomes available.

In closing, allow me to relate a story from Belgrade Maine this past weekend. I was scouring the cottage for my glasses, when I noticed a small wooden plaque on the wall in the spare bedroom which said "*A hug is a great gift. One size fits all and it's easy to exchange*". It was a simple reminder to me of all the gifts Wendy has brought to MHCC, and that we all have gotten our share of hugs from her over these past nine plus years.

Respectfully,
Steve Calabro
Moderator

