

# The Courier

Semi-monthly Newsletter

July 18, 2008

Melrose  
Highlands  
Congregational  
Church

[www.mhcc-ucc.org](http://www.mhcc-ucc.org)

## UNION SERVICES

**10:00 a.m. Worship**

Childcare provided.

Light refreshments served  
after each service.



**Unitarian Universalist**  
**70 West Emerson Street**

July 27: Rev. Threet

August 3: Rev. O'Connor

**First Congregational**  
**121 West Foster Street**

August 10: Rev. Hartman

August 17: Rev. Threet

**Highlands Congregational**  
**355 Franklin Street**

August 24: Rev. Hartman

August 31: Rev. Starr

## LUNCH BUNCH



**Wednesday, August 13th**  
**12:30 P.M.**

## JACKSON'S RESTAURANT

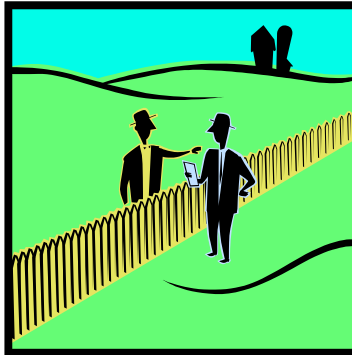
478 Lowell Street (Route 110)  
Methuen

For reservations or a ride please  
call Dick Rowland at  
781.938.8763. Every one  
welcome!

## NEXT COURIER DEADLINE

**Friday, August 1st at noon.**

## GOOD NEIGHBORS



Yesterday the green house across the street from the church caught fire (cause still unknown.) Angel, who was raking outside alerted Kelly and I to the situation and we rushed out to find the back of the house engulfed in flames and thick black smoke billowing from the roof and windows of the second and third floors. Sue McGrath, the director of our Highlands Nursery School was walking towards the church and we heard her voice yelling at a young man who was running into the house to stay out of building. He replied saying he had to save his cat and his guitar. Thankfully he emerged moments later with both in hand.

The fire was intense and several towns responded to the alarm. It took firefighters over an hour to contain the flames and one truck stayed for several hours attending to the hot spots. It finally left the scene somewhere around 4:00 or 4:30 p.m..

When I left the church to go home at 5:00 p.m., life was getting back to normal on Franklin Street. Except of course, 386 Franklin Street (the green house) was boarded up and posted as unsafe. Two of the people who lived in the house were in our parking lot and so I asked them if they had places to stay for the night. As I asked the question I wondered to myself what I was going to do if they said no. Both said they had places to go but that they hoped

to be back soon. I was off the hood, so to speak.

As I headed home I thought about what it would be like to be homeless and once again wondered what I would have done if they had said they had nowhere to go. The answer came quickly and surely. I would have invited them into the church and begun making phone calls to members who might be able to help me help them. I had no doubt that it would not have taken so very long to find a temporary solution to their dilemma.

In a similar vein, three or so weeks ago a young man came into the church office and spoke with Kelly asking if there was any possibility that the church would be willing to have another church use our worship space three times a week for services. Kelly said she thought it was possible and the young man went to get his father, the pastor of their Assemblies of God church.

Kelly showed them around our church and they loved it. They were especially impressed with how clean and well maintained the property is. And they were very eager to find out if we would be willing to allow them to use our space.

I met with the young man, Adriano and his father, Pastor Oliveira, a week later to explore this possibility. I learned theirs is a Brazilian congregation (which means that they speak Portuguese) that is only a few years old. They started as a choir that traveled from church to church but then attracted enough interest to begin their own congregation.

At first they rented space in a school in Cambridge. This worked for a while but as they grew the space became too small. A few months ago they began renting a function room at the Holiday Inn in Somerville. This afforded them more room but it

was not very inspiring space. So they decided that they would look for a church that would rent them space while they look for a space of their own. And so, that is how Adriano first walked into our church.

In my meeting with Adriano and his father I was taken with how respectful of our space they were and their deep longing to worship in a church. I discovered that they currently have about 90 members, about 15 children, and get about 120-130 in each of their three weekly services. Their services last 2 hours and they like to have a time of fellowship after. Their choir is lively, they have a full orchestra for each service, and classes for kids once a week before the service.

Not finding an obvious reason to reject their request I called a meeting of the Executive Council to see what the leaders of the church thought. Here is the request that was presented at that meeting:

The *Assembly of God Worshippers of the King Ministries* is interested in renting space in our church three times a week in the evening. Specifically they would like to hold worship services in our sanctuary on Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday nights followed by an hour of fellowship in our hall. They would like to use the kitchen each of those nights a well and a class room on Sunday for their Sunday School.

After a full and thoughtful discussion, the Executive Council decided that this request was an opportunity for the church to be a good neighbor and give a new congregation a

temporary home while it looks for one of its own. This, the Council decided was a mission outreach project that could be exciting and invigorating for the church.

Meeting with Adriano and Pastor Oliveira to go over the details of our rental agreement was a joy. We talked about fees and keys and their start date: Tuesday July 22, but those were just the details because then we talked about our beliefs, which while different in some ways, are both anchored in the worship of the same triune God. Then we laid the ground work for us to have a union service on Sunday October 19<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. Pastor Oliveira and I will preach together that morning and our choirs will sing together. How long will the service be? Who knows? But it will be one not to miss.

When I met with Adriano and his Pastor Oliveira to finalize the terms of the rental agreement fire trucks still filled Franklin Street. And as the tenants of 386 found temporary homes the congregation of the *Assembly of God Worshippers of the King Ministries* found a temporary home as well. God is good!

If you want more information about the Assemblies of God go on-line to either the Assemblies of God website or the Wikipedia website, which has a good thumb nail outline of their beliefs.

Peace and Blessings,  
Rev. Peggy O'Connor

## SUMMER SERVICE OFFERINGS



The question has been asked, “If I go to one of the union services here in Melrose and put my pledge in the plate, how will MHCC know?” Good question!

Here is how the offerings are handled during the summer union services. At the end of each service the host church’s money counters take the plates and sort the offering into six piles...one for cash and five for the pledge envelopes for each of the participating churches. The host church keeps the cash offering and of course its own pledge envelopes. Then a representative from each church is given the envelopes for that church; Don Johnson is often the MHCC representative.

So, by all means attend the services this summer and do not worry about your pledge money finding its way to us. Just be sure to put it into a properly marked envelope so that the counters know where to send it.

Pledges can also be sent directly to MHCC at 355 Franklin Street, Melrose using the U. S. Post Office.



**Summer Labyrinth Walk**  
Wednesday, August 13  
@ 7:30 p.m.