

# The Courier

Semi-monthly Newsletter January 26, 2007

Melrose  
Highlands  
Congregational  
Church

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



## WORSHIP PLANS

### February 4

“Prayer and Conversation”

Luke 11: 1-13

Communion

### February 11

“Loaves, Fish and Abundance”

John 6: 1 - 21

### February 18

“Be Ye Unspectacular”

Esther 7: 1-10, 9:20-22

### February 25

First in a Lenten Series on  
“The Spiritual Life through the

Lens of Golf”

Choir Light

## AUCTION



Our annual Church Auction will be held on Saturday, March 24. As in years past, the success of this event is crucial to our financial stability. As always, there are two critical components to the Auction's success: contributions and volunteers.

One of our goals this year is to obtain some new items. While there have been many perennially successful items through the years, new items that are unique and unusual are always desired. Premium items are vacation homes, condos, cottages, etc. which are always highly popular. We also feel that items such as dinner for 4, 6 8 (or more) will prove to be very popular.

In the past, our members and friends have always stepped up to volunteer in numerous ways. For those of you who have volunteered in the past – THANK YOU! New volunteers are needed each year. If you have not yet participated, please consider doing so. You have an opportunity to participate in a meaningful way and to also have an enjoyable evening.

Want to help? Just let me know. See me after Church or call me at home [781.662.9671] or at work [781.665.1034.]

Start thinking Auction now!

Keith Bowden, Board of Trustees

## Capital Campaign Feedback Sought

**Sunday, February 25**

**11:30 a.m.**

Following worship on February 25, your Capital Campaign Committee will be seeking input to potential projects the upcoming Capital Campaign could address. A list has been generated to-date by members of

boards and committees, staff and others. Be sure your voice is heard in this process. Please plan to stay and offer this vital information as we proceed.

## WHY SHOULD YOU COME TO THE ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE?



### Wednesday, February 21 Fellowship Hall

- Because you can have pancakes for dinner (with lots of toppings!)
- Because it is a different kind of worship experience, intimate and reflective
- There will be something for everybody.
- You get to worship with our UCC cousins of First Congregational Church.
- It's a great way to start the season of Lent! Lent is a journey and a journey has to start somewhere!

The Deacons are your hosts and will provide supper. The service will feature the distribution of ashes, singing, walking the Labyrinth and Communion. You can participate however it feels right for you. Hope to see you there!

**NEW ORLEANS MISSION  
TRIP SPOTS  
ARE GOING FAST!  
July 29 – August 4**

If you have been pondering participating in our summer mission trip to New Orleans you might need to act quickly.

*Potentially 15 of our 20 openings are taken!* Additionally, airfares are quite low right now, some as low as \$235 round trip to fly into New Orleans, so we would like to take advantage of more affordable prices.

Contact John Everett, the trip leader, at 781-665-2409 or via e.mail at [everettland@aol.com](mailto:everettland@aol.com) today!

**Women's Guild Winter  
Fellowship Meeting**



**All the women of MHCC are invited** to the Winter Fellowship and Planning Meeting of the Women's Guild. The meeting will be on Tuesday, February 6. We will gather at 11:45 a.m. in the Parlor for a "Bring-Your-Own-Lunch". Desserts and beverages will be served by the Guild Group I. Lunch will be followed by a meeting that includes a discussion of plans for the coming year.

We encourage all newcomers to join us and find out more about the Guild. Childcare can be available (at no charge to you), if you let Bonnie or Anne know by Friday, February 2 that you need this service. If you have any questions, please call Bonnie Bowden (781-662-9671) or Anne Gilbert (781-665-5064).



**Teamwork  
MHCC RETREAT**

**February 10**

**9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m**

**Centre Church Lynnfield**

**There is still time to register!**

You may still register for the upcoming retreat day and receive the book, "Living Your Strengths." The key to our day together will be the discovery of your own strengths.

**Recruitment for work in the church will NOT be a part of our day together.** Rather the purpose is to strengthen our church community by strengthening and understanding God's gifts in each and every one of us.

The strengthsfinder test that accompanies the book must be done on-line on the internet. For the next two Sundays (Jan. 28 & Feb. 4), Timothy Project team members will be on hand after worship to use the computers at church to assist you if you do not have access to or knowledge of computers. Our day will best be served if everyone has completed and knows their top five strengths.

So speak with Wendy today, call or e.mail her to receive a copy of the book and sign up for the day – you'll be glad you did – guaranteed!

**NEXT COURIER DEADLINE  
Friday, February 2nd at noon.**

**LIGHTS, CAMERA, FAITH!**



**Sunday Evenings beginning  
February 25 @ 7:00 p.m.**

Building on the success of "Chocolate for Lent" series from 2006, a new film-based discussion opportunity will be offered during Lent 2007.

Meeting on the Sunday evenings leading up to Palm Sunday we will watch clips of a movie and discuss the faith connections or issues that are raised by the story.

We meet in the Holyword Theater on the third floor and chocolate will again be served! You can show up for one or all of the series.

**Back to School – Almost!!  
MHCC folk are served first!**



**The Highlands Nursery School** is getting ready for the fall of 2007. If you are thinking about a preschool experience for your child or know of someone who would be interested in our school, now is the time to gather information.

We open our registration to you first. Come see us anytime in February to register. March 1<sup>st</sup> begins registration to the public. For more information call the school at 781.665.4202.

Join Wendy and MHCC member Rob Tullis on a field trip to Boston to hear

**“Curses, Foiled Again! Drama and Melodrama in Red Sox History.”**

By William R. Herzog II  
Academic Dean, Andover Newton Theological School  
**Old South Church in Boston  
Wed., January 31 @ 7:00 p.m.**

William R. Herzog II, Member of Red Sox Nation & author of *The Faith of Fifty Million: Baseball, Religion & American Culture*, will be speaking on “Curses, Foiled Again! Drama and Melodrama in Red Sox History.”

Red Sox Door Prizes include a baseball signed by a current Red Sox pitcher and a set of four tickets. Audience members are invited to come wearing their baseball paraphernalia: hats, shirts, etc. In the heart of winter, let us experience a bit of a January thaw by anticipating the warmth and excitement of a summer’s game.

Also participating will be Dr. Charles Steinberg, Vice President for Public Affairs with the Boston Red Sox. Dr. Steinberg will provide a brief preview of what we can look forward to from the Red Sox in the 2007 season. Let Wendy know if you’re interested!

**LUNCH BUNCH**



**Wednesday, February 14<sup>th</sup>**

**12:30 p.m.**

**MACARONI GRILL**

48 Walkers Brook Drive, Reading

All are welcome! Please call Jean Beers at 781.665.4315 if you haven’t signed up.



**Ann Graves** – Melrose Wakefield Hospital.

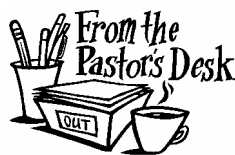
**Philip Coleman** – recently hospitalized.

**Polly Harlow** – at home.

The family of **Virginia Barrett** who died and whose life was celebrated in a funeral on December 28.

The family of **Margaret Sargent** who died and whose life was celebrated in a service at church on December 30.

Seven of our Confirmation class spent the night in Boston participating in the *CityReach*



program on Jan. 19-20 to learn about and serve those who are homeless.

The staff of the program were all folks who are currently or have been homeless. We spent the next hour hearing the stories of fifteen people on the staff and their experience of being homeless. All of the stories were powerful, many riveting.

We slept in the pews or between the pews on the floor of St. Paul’s Cathedral. The next morning we were roused from sleep and given 10 minutes to gather up our belongings much as a person who is homeless must do when they spend the night in a shelter.

Before people were let in to receive the clothing we had sorted and the food we had made, a staff person noted that while we were giving away needed material items, the best thing we could

give was the gift of conversation and recognizing our common humanity.

Here is what one confirmand wrote about the experience...“*How many of you have walked through an urban city area, such as Boston and have seen a homeless person begging for money with a cup and you just walked by them? I know that I have and if I hadn’t gone on my trip yesterday, I would still view them the same way.*”

*On Saturday morning we went on a trip to deliver items to homeless people. Things such as socks, mittens, gloves and hats, all simple to us but very appreciated to these people. Our leader, Mike, is a former-homeless person and is very proud of his apartment in Boston. He kept mentioning that he had a key to a door. Something that almost all of us take for granted on any given day of our lives.*

*One of the most heartrending things that I saw on my trip delivering items was when our group leader picked up a half-used cigarette from the sidewalk and started to smoke the rest of it. I never realized how deep into desperation somebody could have to go because they could not afford an alternative. It’s important to realize that saying this does not even come close to how good you feel when you can help somebody out with something as simple as a peanut butter and jelly sandwich or even a pair of socks. If the opportunity arose for me to take part in another trip similar to this I would do it with no hesitation.*

We all learned something and were humbled by our abundant lives. But mostly, I appreciated the chance to be the church at its best – being the presence of Christ in service.

--Rev. Wendy Vander Hart

## Rotation Workshop Schedule

Date	February 4	February 11	February 18	February 25	
<b>Thou Art</b>	Loaves & Fishes	HEIFER INTERNATIONAL "Tasting Party"	ENRICHMENT PROGRAM	ENRICHMENT PROGRAM	
					Grades 3, 4 & 5
<b>Glorious Games</b>					Preschool Kindergarten
<b>Holy Word Theatre</b>					Grades 1 & 2
<b>Our Daily Bread</b>	Middle School				



Groundhog Day, February 2nd, is a popular tradition in the United States. It is also a legend that traverses centuries, its origins clouded in the mists of time with ethnic cultures and animals awakening on specific dates. Myths such as this tie our present to the distant past when nature did, indeed, influence our lives. It is the day that the Groundhog comes out of his hole after a long winter sleep to look for his shadow. If he sees it, he regards it as an omen of six more weeks of bad weather and returns to his hole. If the day is cloudy and, hence, shadow less, he takes it as a sign of spring and stays above ground.