

The Courier

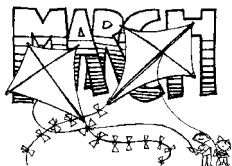
Semi-monthly Newsletter

February 23, 2007

Melrose
Highlands
Congregational
Church

www.mhcc-ucc.org

WORSHIP PLANS



March 4

“The Spiritual Life through the
Lens of Golf: Getting a Grip”

Psalm 27

Organ 101 follows worship

**“Lights, Camera, Faith!”
every Sunday in March**

@ 7:00 p.m.

Chocolate included!

Upcoming movies:

Phenomenon

Awakenings

Erin Brockovich

Shadowlands

March 11

“The Spiritual Life through the
Lens of Golf: Taking It Back”

Isaiah 55: 1 – 9

Children of Note

Special Meeting after worship

March 18

“The Spiritual Life through the
Lens of Golf: Letting Go”

Luke 15: 1 – 3, 11 – 32

Choir Light

Baptism

Capital Campaign Kick-off
lunch after worship

March 25

“The Spiritual Life through the
Lens of Golf: Making the Turn”

Isaiah 43: 16 – 21

WARRANT FOR SPECIAL MEETING

*To the Legal Voters of the Melrose
Highlands Congregational Church:*

**You are hereby notified that a
Special Meeting of the
Melrose Highlands
Congregational Church will be
held on Sunday, March 11,
2007 at 11:15 A.M. in
Fellowship Hall to transact
the following business:**

1. To act on a proposal to
engage the congregation in a
Capital Campaign for the
purpose of raising funds for
various music, property, and
mission projects, the specific
details of which have been the
subject of several previous
meetings among the Capital
Campaign Committee and the
congregation.

Lois Mackey, Clerk

March 1, 2007



Attention

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN INPUT MEETING

Following worship **Sunday,
February 25**, your Capital Campaign
Committee will be seeking input to
potential projects that the upcoming
Capital Campaign could address.

Please refer to the February 9
issue of the Courier for the list of
considered projects.

MISSION MOMENT

**Delivered by John Egan
in worship on February 18**

Ten years ago this winter, Keith
Bowden was nearing the end of a
very busy two-year tenure as our
Moderator. Our former pastor
had recently resigned, which had
required an immediate search for
an interim minister. Once our
interim pastor was on board, we
had to put together another
committee to undertake the
important and time-consuming
task of searching for a new
permanent minister, and that
effort, which ultimately resulted in
Wendy being called to be our
pastor, was in full swing that
winter. We were all very busy.

In the midst of that period of
change and uncertainty and high
activity and many meetings Keith
approached me and asked me to
sit on another committee (in
addition to Trustees) - a newly
formed Capital Campaign
Committee for the purpose of
raising a fairly substantial amount
of money to fund some much
needed repairs and improvements
to our building and an equally
important program addition to our
church life.

Keith thought \$200,000 might
be a good target. For my part, I
thought Keith was beginning to
show signs of needing a long
vacation. And I thought the
congregation may have finally
bitten off more than it could
chew. But a committee was put
together – Steve Calabro, Gail

Durland, Les Haddock, Alex Johnston, Keith and myself - and we went at it.

That was ten years ago, and I am happy to report that I was dead wrong about the prospects for the Campaign. It was a terrific success. We asked the congregation to reach – to really reach – beyond what many of us probably believed we were capable of, both individually and collectively, and this congregation, including many of you, stepped up and made it the success that it was. With the funds raised in the Campaign, we built the wheelchair ramp at the West Highland Ave. doorway, and among numerous building needs we did some critical work that was needed on our organ.

But we did more than just restore and rejuvenate our property. We dedicated some seed money – about 15% of the total amount raised in the Campaign - to the establishment of a senior high youth program, which simply didn't exist 10 years ago, and today is thriving, in large part because of the jump start the Capital Campaign gave it. The youth mission trip to New Orleans last summer, and the similar trip that is being planned for this coming summer, are direct spin-offs of the success of the 1997 Capital Campaign.

Perhaps most important, though, we challenged ourselves to accomplish something significant, and we did it. A collective, Congregational success story that uplifted all of us and, coinciding generally with Wendy's arrival in the spring of 1998, helped us move forward with a renewed sense of optimism about our church and its future. It was something for which we all had good reason to be both proud and grateful.

I have been asked to serve again on the Capital Campaign Committee, chaired by Teri Vienot and Jeff Winey. I've been joined on the Committee by Don Darwin, Jim Lyles, Joe McNulty, Anne Moore, and Christine Oteri. But, as was the case in 1997, the members of the congregation will have the most significant role to play.

Our stewardship of this building requires more of us than simply paying our utility bills, keeping the place clean, and putting fresh paint on the walls from time to time. We are, just by way of example, living on borrowed time with respect to the roof over our heads. There is no reason – no earthly reason anyway – why that roof hasn't started leaking yet, and we really should do what responsible stewardship requires of us and replace it before it does start leaking.

Our organ – a really extraordinary instrument, constructed in this space by our forebears over half a century ago – needs some upgrading so it can continue to provide music for worship services. And I am pleased that Harold has offered to give us some of his time this coming March 4 to give us a tour of the organ and to explain what the nature of the upgrades are that it requires.

The inside of this sanctuary has not been painted in at least a generation, if not more. There has been some talk about reconfiguring the chapel space downstairs, perhaps making use of that space for some form of community outreach or activity. There is consideration being given to the idea of funding the Children of Note choir director's position for a number of years so we are sure to be able to continue this vital piece of our overall ministry

that we and our children have come to enjoy.

These ideas, and others like them, are just that at the moment – ideas - and we invite you to come to an informational and congregational input meeting on February 25th, at the conclusion of worship, so we can do two things.

First, share with you the ideas that have already bubbled to the surface in our preliminary talks among ourselves and among the various boards and committees. But second, and equally as important, ask for your input as to other ideas and projects that we might consider as we put our wish list together, focus that list on the things that we really do want to accomplish, and give ourselves a Capital Campaign program that will inspire all of us to make it succeed.

I have been involved with this Church for over 25 years, and I married into a family that's been here twice that long. I have never known the good people of this congregation to shy away from a challenge. To the contrary, whenever I have seen this congregation face a challenge of any sort – financial or otherwise – I have only known it to rise to the occasion and to use that challenge as an opportunity to bring out the best in all of us. I have every confidence that this Capital Campaign will be no different.

This campaign will be on a relatively fast track, and you will be hearing from us soon and often about its progress. I hope to see as many of you as possible – and more - next Sunday, so we can get started.

NEXT COURIER DEADLINE

Friday, March 2nd at noon.

HOLY WEEK INFORMATION



April 1 (note change of time)

∞ Palm Sunday ∞

8:30 a.m. breakfast and Palm Parade beginning at First Baptist Church, 561 Main Street
10:30 a.m. worship at MHCC
"Voices from the Crowd"

April 5 – Maundy Thursday
Supper & Footwashing
at 6:00 p.m.

April 6 – Good Friday
Noon – 7:00 p.m. Labyrinth open for walking
7:30 p.m. Worship service
"The Crux of the Matter"

April 8 – Easter!
Sunrise service at 6:00 a.m.
at Mt. Hood
10 a.m. service – "Hole in One"
John 20: 1 – 18
Cross of Flowers
Children of Note

LUNCH BUNCH



Wednesday, March 14th
12:30 p.m.

MACARONI GRILL
48 Walkers Brook Drive, Reading

As the February scheduled Lunch Bunch was cancelled due to the snow storm, we are repeating the Macaroni Grill.

All are welcome! Please call Ralph Archibald at 781.665.5335 to re-sign up or if you need a ride.



The family of **Reginald Rasanayagam** – who died February 16.

Bob Cunningham and family – on the death of his mother Doris.

Louise Cook – recovering at home.

WALK ACROSS MASSACHUSETTS



HIGHLIGHTS ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Greetings, grace and peace to you and your congregations. I write to invite you to participate in a witness.. At noon on March 16 a walk will begin that will cross the Commonwealth raising awareness about our need to be good stewards of God's creation.

The walk will conclude with a worship service in Copley Square, Boston at our Old South Church on Saturday afternoon, March 24 at 2:00 PM.

For more information, to register either for the walk or for an evening event: www.climatewalk.org

See you with your church banner along the roads of Massachusetts March 16-24!

Jim Antal, Minister & President,
Massachusetts Conference
United Church of Christ
(ed. Note, Jim Antal will be a preaching at MHCC on April 22)

What does spring training look like at MHCC? It looks a lot like the season of Lent!



While the Red Sox are engaging in conditioning drills in Fort Myers, we are invited to engage in the spiritual discipline of the Lenten season.

The church I served before MHCC held its annual giving appeal in the Fall. It has taken me awhile to appreciate combining our annual giving appeal with the season of Lent, but I believe in it now! Giving is a discipline!

I've come to appreciate a new angle on giving up something for Lent – not as a rigorous punishment but as an opportunity to create room for something else. At the Ash Wednesday service I invited us to complete this sentence in prayer; "This Lent I will let go of ___ in order to make room for ___."

Our invitation to giving naturally creates this prayer. We decide what we want to give up in order that we may be more generous with our resources. Giving always involves sacrifice, it's hard to escape it. But sacrifice is often fruitful if it frees up something else to emerge.

This Lent we are engaging both a Capital Campaign and our annual giving invitation. I hope you will approach these opportunities as I will – as an invitation to free up generosity in order that something may give life to our shared ministry.

-- Rev. Wendy Vander Hart

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING OFFERING Sunday, March 4

One Great Hour of Sharing is an ecumenical offering that provides disaster relief in situations like hurricanes, earthquakes and floods. MHCC will invite this offering on Sunday, March 4.



ROTATION WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

Story: The Empty Tomb

Date	March 4	March 11	March 18	March 25
Thou Art	Middle School	Grades 3, 4, & 5	Preschool Kindergarten	Grades 1 & 2
Glorious Games	Grades 3, 4, & 5	Middle School	Grades 1 & 2	Preschool Kindergarten
Holy Word Theatre	Preschool Kindergarten	Grades 1 & 2	Grades 3, 4, & 5	Middle School
Our Daily Bread	Grades 1 & 2	Preschool Kindergarten	Middle School	Grades 3, 4, & 5

Empty Tomb Overview:

In a prelude to Easter, during this rotation, the children will learn about Jesus' resurrection. The students will learn that the women found Jesus' tomb empty, and that the stone was moved away not to let Jesus out, but so people could see Jesus had risen from the dead. The resurrected Jesus appeared to his followers; first the women, then to disciples in a locked room. Jesus was alive! Jesus was raised from the dead to give us new life.

Thou Art - The students will create a 3-D empty tomb scene.

Glorious Games - The students will play a game to learn the details of Matthew's account of the story.

Holyword Theatre - The students will watch & discuss the video *He Is Risen*.

Our Daily Bread - The students will make Empty Tomb buns.

