

# The Courier

*Semi-monthly Newsletter*

*May 11, 2007*

## WARRANT FOR ANNUAL MEETING

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

**You are hereby notified that the Annual Meeting of the Melrose Highlands Congregational Church will be held on Sunday, May 20, 2007 at 11:30 A.M. in Fellowship Hall to transact the following business:**

1. To hear and act upon reports of Officers, Boards and Committees.
2. To elect the Officers of the Church in accordance with the By-Laws.
3. To discuss and vote on a balanced budget for Fiscal Year 2007-2008.
4. To transact any other business that legally must be brought before the meeting.

Lois Mackey, Clerk  
May 3, 2007

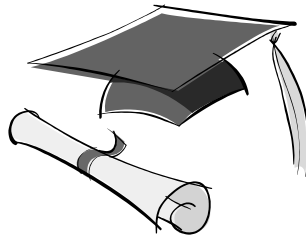


**REMINDER:** Offering Envelopes are ready for pick up.

## MILESTONE SUNDAY June 3<sup>rd</sup>

Everyone of us experiences milestones in our lives – time of transition, celebration and recognition. In worship on Sunday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>, our time will focus on milestones such as graduation from high school, fifty year membership at MHCC, and other special occasions. Plan to be in worship on this special day!

### CALLING ALL GRADUATES!



### Recognition on Sunday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>

Are you graduating from high school or college this spring? If so, we would like to celebrate your achievement in worship on Sunday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>. College graduates will be hailed and high school graduates will receive a gift to honor this step in life's journey.

Please let Wendy know if you can be present and pass any graduation information on to her or to the Church Office.



**Sunday, June 3**

With a desire to foster relationships within MHCC a cookout is planned for Sunday June 3. A golf outing will precede the cookout.

For EVERYONE – a cookout, BBQ, potluck picnic at John Everett's home, 55 Adams Street in Melrose. This is the fourth year John has hosted this event. All ages are most welcome.

For golfers – there will be another outing at Mt. Hood – tee times to be announced. Please indicate your interest in golfing to John Everett at 781-665-2409 or [everettland@aol.com](mailto:everettland@aol.com) our “starter” and extravagant host.

### A WITNESSING MOMENT presented by Teri Vienot on Sunday, April 29

Like Wendy's Lenten series of sermons on Golf— a subject near and dear to her heart —I wanted to use something I treasure in my life as a metaphor for what I cherish about the Melrose Highlands Congregational Church. One thing that came to mind was cooking. I love to cook, especially on Sunday afternoons when I have a few hours to pull out my favorite cookbooks and create some meals for Sunday night and the week

ahead. I find the chopping and preparing therapeutic, and putting together all the ingredients is a creative outlet for me. And having a home-cooked meal as a family, priceless! But what does this have to do with the Highlands Church?

Maybe some of you have heard of the folk tale and children's book *Stone Soup*. Well, if memory serves, it's the story of 3 soldiers who come to a village after the war. The peasants hide all their food since they're afraid of the soldiers who have nothing. The 3 men say they won't need much, just a big pot and some water, and with just that they'll make a soup from stones. They set about making stone soup, and as they're cooking, they ask for just one ingredient, which different peasants bring for the soup, a potato here, an onion there, until finally they have an amazing soup. In fact it's a feast and turns into a celebration for the whole village. I just loved this story as a child, and as an adult, I see a lot of similarities in my life and with this church that I love so much.

I see this in the way Kent & I first came to the Highlands Church. As many good soups begin with the cutting of an onion, and you know how chopping an onion makes you cry, it was tears that brought us to this Church...tears of despair that our youngest son Dylan had gone through 3 surgeries before he was 3 months old, followed by tears of joy that after all that time in the hospital, he was home and healthy. Through that tearful time, we began looking for a church family, a village after the war that would take us in when we had nothing.

Over these past 6-7 years, we have been asked to bring our ingredients to the pot, an onion to begin with, followed by celery, carrots, chick peas, spices, a veritable crock-pot of ingredients! I remember soon after coming to

the Church, Ann Haddock called to ask me to bake something for the fair. I thought, wow, I love to bake and brought a lemon poppy seed cake. And beyond cooking and baking, members of the Church have asked us to share our talents for the "soup", to get involved in the Church. Joan Dunne asked if I'd help with rummage sales (although thankfully she didn't ask this weekend); Wendy asked if I would be a Labyrinth Keeper; Barbara Kenworthy asked if Kent & I would join the Ceacons; and with the Deacons, we're asked to literally bring our soup to the Maundy Thursday service.

Like the *Stone Soup* story, this Church is about **generosity**. People have shared their "ingredients" with us... literally, with Ann Whelan sharing her stash of cardamom for Mary Edward's Carrot Leek soup recipe; figuratively, with Mary Anne, Tracy, and Bonnie sharing their gift for teaching with our children; and spiritually, with the Labyrinth Keepers—Charlotte, Beth, and Erin—sharing the opportunity to pray and meditate with the labyrinth walk. I'm grateful for the most amazing soup!

The story is about **participation** and creating this incredible soup together, most of all the story is about giving away – and yet having abundance. It is through the giving of our time, our talents, our tithing, that we have enjoyed a remarkable feast! Thank you so much for helping to "make the soup", for the joy you bring to our lives, and for sharing this extraordinary meal with us!

*Teri Vienot is Co-Chair of the Raise the Roof, Raise the Spirit Capital Campaign. Come to Annual Meeting to hear a report on the Campaign!*

**MA CONFERENCE  
LISTENING PROCESS LEADS  
TO RECOMMENDATIONS**

Our Conference wants to thank the 183 churches who participated in a series of listening sessions designed to help us understand how to nurture local church vitality and the covenant among our churches (Holly Ardito, Steve Calabro and Wendy attended from MHCC).

Approximately 500 people participated in one of 33 listening sessions held around Massachusetts this past January.

The Listening Steering Committee analyzed findings from these sessions. From there, the Steering Committee formed recommendations on key congregational needs and priorities which the Conference can champion to help our churches grow. They are:

- Essential ministry #1: Adult Faith Formation and Action

Our local churches want to grow in Christian faith and in attracting more people to attend worship and join their churches. They seek tools that will help them develop a more meaningful faith journey, as well as transform the world in God's name. To this end, they would like the Conference to provide a full range of staff and program resources.

- Essential Ministry #2: Conference Support in Times of Transition, Change and Conflict

Our local churches depend upon the Conference for expertise, guidance and staff presence at two crucial times: when faith communities face a change in pastoral leadership and when churches are in conflict or crisis. Strong professional support, leadership and resources are required, even more so than at other times.

- Essential Ministry #3: Lay and Clergy Leadership Development

Our local churches thrive when gifted spiritual lay and clergy leaders are in place.

The churches are asking the Conference to manage the process of identifying, supporting, training and nurturing those who will lead us in the years ahead. The UCC tradition is that leaders always come out of the pews at the local level. Once they begin that journey, the Conference can become a resource of depth to walk with them along the way.

- Essential Ministry #4: Fostering Community and Connections Among Our Churches

Many of our churches and their leaders desire more connectedness, communication and collaboration among and between our faith communities. They look to the Conference to be the agent which brings them together, like the hub at the center of a wheel.

You can find the report at [www.macucc.org/news/listening.htm](http://www.macucc.org/news/listening.htm) Their findings and recommendations will be used along with other research and analysis to create an initial proposal for the direction of the Conference which will be discussed at the Annual Meeting in June.

## Keep In Your Prayers

**Phyllis Greene** – recovering from surgery

**The family of Dot Bezanson** – Dot's life was celebrated in a service on May 10 at church.

**Jeff Barriss** – recovering from surgery

**Bonnie Bowden's mother** – requiring surgery after a fall.

### LUNCH BUNCH



June 13  
12:30 p.m.

## Su Chang's

373 Lowell Street, Peabody

Directions: Route 1 North to Lowell Street Exit. Turn right off exit continue on Lowell Street for approximately 2 miles. Restaurant will be on your left at the corner of Prospect and Lowell Streets. The restaurant is in a [former] house.

Please call Lee Rosseland at 978.535.3343 for a ride or reservation. Everyone is welcome!



Hi All:

Thank you so much for the lovely pot of tulips Dianne Cheney brought to me. They were just gorgeous and I have saved them to replant in my front garden to enjoy for years to come. I hope to be back to join you all soon.

Peacefully, Diane Bucknill

To MHCC:

There is nothing more beautiful than flowers and the thoughtfulness of people to make you feel happy –

Thank you for your kindness to my husband Warren during his stay in the hospital.

Sincerely, Rhoda Schermerhorn

Dear "Rev. Wendy",

I have just returned from a most inspirational Good Friday experience – walking the Labyrinth Walk at your Church.

As my partner and I do not attend evening services (we're 86 and 83) we felt privileged to have an opportunity to take advantage of the Good Friday Labyrinth Walk.

Please thank whomever was responsible for doing such an inspirational walk, and for providing the printed material to

accompany it. Each station was so inspirational with beautiful appointments.

Thank you for a most spiritual end to my Lenten journey.

Sincerely, Natalie Pogson

Dear Wendy:

A much belated thank you for our beautiful Easter Lilly.

We were told it was in recognition of our 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. We truly appreciated your thoughtfulness.

Thanks again to all who were involved.

Love, Janice & Don Blanchard



On April 12<sup>th</sup>, baby Reid was born to Camille & Brian Heidebrecht. Congratulations!

Have you read a good book lately? Have you seen a movie you

enjoyed? What is your favorite food? What hymns do you like to sing?

These are just a sample of questions that can be used to strike up a conversation with someone you know or don't know.

The time after worship in Fellowship Hall can be an awkward moment, especially for introverted folks. But it is a vital time to connect to the MHCC community beyond a handshake at the door or the time of greeting.

We are a warm, hospitable and friendly people, but it can be easy to fall into only speaking with people you know and staying within a comfort zone that prevents branching out.

Hospitality and extending an extravagant welcome is the work of everyone in the church. We might entrust our Board of Fellowship to provide goodies for us to munch on while we talk, but it is the work of the



church to extend the welcome of Christ to all.

So in the coming weeks, I will experiment with providing a question for Fellowship Hour. It can serve as a vehicle to strike up conversation with someone you are meeting for the first time or a way to get to know someone that you've seen, but with whom you have never conversed.

Consider yourself invited to be the welcoming presence we strive to be to all who enter through our doors. Better yet, invite someone to church and introduce them to the lovely array of people that make MHCC who we are!

-- Rev. Wendy Vander Hart

**NEXT COURIER DEADLINE**  
Friday, May 18<sup>th</sup> at noon.

The churches in Melrose rotate each year in honoring the Veteran's of Melrose. MHCC is happy to host this year's recognition that will coincide with our celebration of Pentecost. Please be in worship on May 27 to add your appreciation for the Veteran's among us.

### **Annual Meeting** **Sunday, May 20**



Begins with lunch  
Childcare provided

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

**MELROSE VETERANS TO BE**  
**RECOGNIZED IN WORSHIP**  
**Sunday, May 27**

**STAFF**  
Church Office: 781-665-4200  
Ministers: People of the church!  
Pastor: