



Steeple Sounds

February 2011

The Newsletter of Central Square Congregational Church

From the Interim Pastor's Desk:

February 2011

As we move forward in our Interim Search is always important to ask, are we an effective congregation? What are we doing right? What do we need to improve or change?

Twelve Keys to an Effective Missional Church!

By: Kennon L. Callahan

“Relational Characteristics:

1. **Specific. Concrete Missional Objectives.** The missional church has two or three such objectives that involve strong groupings of the congregation in mission with persons who have specific human hurts and hopes.
2. **Pastoral and Lay Visitation.** Though a lost art in many churches, the missional church does consequential visitation with the unchurched, newcomers, constituents, and members on a weekly basis.
3. **Corporate. Dynamic Worship.** The weekly services are holistic in music and message, corporately planned, and led by a compassionate, competent team of laity and pastor.
4. **Significant Relational Groups.** Most people come to a local church looking for community. Instead, we put them in a committee. Missional churches are constantly and intentionally starting new caring groups in which people may discover roots, place, and belonging.
5. **Strong Leadership Resources.** Many churches train leaders to fill functional slots inside the church's program. Missional Churches nurture a majority of their leaders to be relational and caring with individuals and groups in the regional community.
6. **Streamlined Organizational Structure and Solid, Participatory Decision Making.** Missional churches plan on the basis of their strength, hopes and objectives. They are less preoccupied with their own needs and problems than many churches.

Functional Characteristics:

7. **Several competent Programs and activities.** Missional churches know that people attract people more than programs do. Generally, they have two or three really competent programs that serve, rather than use, people.
8. **Open Accessibility.** A physical location that is accessible in terms of major traffic patterns and average trip time and leaders who are accessible to the community are both important.
9. **High Visibility.** Successful missional churches have a high degree of geographical and grapevine visibility with churched and unchurched persons in the community.
10. **Adequate Parking, Land, and Landscaping.**
As a national average one parking space permits 2.5 persons to participate in the church.
11. **Adequate space and Facilities.** More churches under build than overbuild, and they thereby limit growth. They build fixed rather than flexible structures. Missional churches build for the future; they take energy and debt interest issues seriously.
12. **Solid Financial Resources.** Missional churches know people give money to people more than to programs purpose, or paper. Missional churches tend to put their money into people rather than property. They exercise responsible and courageous stewardship.

May these keys help us evaluate our present and provide vision for the future of the church!

Blessings on the Journey! Rev. Esther



BOARD OF DEACONS

As we experience very cold weather and lots of snow this winter season, our thoughts are drawn to the homeless in our own state of Massachusetts. Our "Warmth in Cold Places" program sponsored by Outreach is a great thing and we do many great things here at Central Square Congregational Church that speak to many causes right here in our backyard and around the world. Take a moment to reflect on them as you read the text below which is taken from "Weekly Seeds" on our UCC website. The theme for the week of January 30 through February 5 is The Vision Beautiful.

The Vision Beautiful

Prayer

God of Blazing light, through the power of the cross you shattered our darkness, scattering the fears that bind us and setting us free to live as your children. Give us courage and conviction that we may joyfully turn and follow you into new adventures of faithful service, led by the light that shines through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Focus Scripture:

Matthew 5:1-12

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

Reflection ~ by Susan Blain

Our text from Matthew's Gospel contains the kind of reversals we often encounter in Scripture. Viewing the Beatitudes through the lens of the Cross, we are invited to seek and find the action of God in the most unexpected people: the poor, the mourners, the persecuted, and the peacemakers. Their lives now, in the present, hold the blessing and transforming power of God, as they live and struggle for justice, peace, and wholeness in their world. All of the readings today lead us on a labyrinthine journey toward a vision beautiful with God not only at its center, but God at every turn, upsetting our expectations and challenging us to take another step deeper into the mystery of divine presence dwelling in our world. God is calling us to follow Christ, the Beloved, into the world to engage in a lifetime of faithful, creative, courageous, community-building love. The Vision Beautiful? The joy, the surprise, the blessing of such a life in God. One caveat in any discussion of the Beatitudes: they can often be overly "spiritualized," and we may be lulled into thinking that the struggles of the poor and the suffering must be endured until a future promise of God will be fulfilled. One good corrective to this temptation is to read Richard Swanson's translation in *Provoking the Gospel of Matthew*. The real crisis of a community living under persecution comes through in his translation choices: "Godlike in their happiness, the poor in breath: theirs is the dominion of the heavens. Godlike in their happiness, the mourners: they shall be called as witnesses" (Mt 5: 3-4 ff). The urgent image of "breath" replaces the usual "spirit," and mourners receive not the usual comfort, but the comfort of telling the truth. The other verses are equally stark. The reality of the Cross is manifest in Swanson's "vision beautiful," and a texture of depth and surprise is added to a familiar teaching.

The Reverend Susan Blain is Minister for Worship and Spiritual Formation with Local Church Ministries of the United Church of Christ.

For further reflection:

The Dalai Lama, 21st century

My call for a spiritual revolution is thus not a call for a religious revolution. Nor is it a reference to a way of life that is somehow other-worldly, still less to something magical or mysterious. Rather, it is a call for a radical re-orientation away from our habitual preoccupation with self towards concern for the wider community of beings with whom we are connected, and for conduct which recognizes others' interests alongside our own.

M. Scott Peck, 20th century

The truth is that our finest moments are most likely to occur when we are feeling deeply uncomfortable, unhappy, or unfulfilled. For it is only in such moments, propelled by our discomfort, that we are likely to step out of our ruts and start searching for different ways or truer answers.

Joan Chittister, 21st century

It is time to consider again what a successful life really looks like. If it's about achievement, what have we achieved that will last beyond the power to rust or break or steal it? A world built on prestige and social status has distorted the very idea of success. It is not what we have done that is important. It is whether or not anything we did was worth doing. Worth it for someone else, that is. Worth it for those who are starving or homeless or sick today.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., 20th century

The only normalcy that we will settle for is the normalcy that recognizes the dignity and worth of all God's children.

Amen!

Last year, on Blanket Sunday, I talked to the children about Empathy. Let us be empathic as the news reports state that there are 7000 homeless in Boston alone this winter. Our church is making a difference in our world of injustice.

Carol Chaffee, Deacon



Blanket Sunday

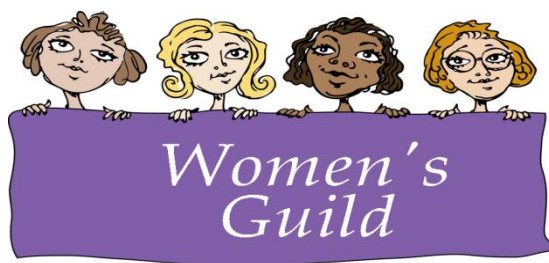
Blanket Sunday is February 13th. We will learn about the Blanket Program sponsored by Church World Service. Your support for Church World Service, CROP Hunger Walks, and the Blankets+ program helps to end hunger and sustain lives. \$5 buys a blanket. Imagine not having a blanket of your own with this winter weather that we have been experiencing. If you would like to bring a blanket from home to enhance our Blanket Sunday Service, please feel free to do so.

Carol Chaffee



Youth Choir

On Sunday, February 13th, the new Youth Choir will practice in the Sanctuary at 9:15 a.m. and will be singing, for the first time, on that Sunday in worship. Children of all age groups are welcome! We need parents to be sure that their children will attend all rehearsals and worship commitments. Please sign-up with Lin at 508-238-2694 or email at jlschuller@comcast.net.



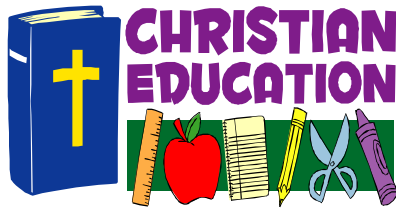
Women's Guild and Fellowship (WG&F)

An open invitation for all the women of CSCC to join WG&F at our February meeting and program, Wednesday, February 2, 2011, at **6:00 PM** in the Fellowship Hall. It is an **EARLY** start for this meeting. At **6:30 PM** our Annual Auction will be held and this year it's a "Bring a Friend Auction", so our friends can join in the fun. Please bring items to auction which may include new or gently used items or even "regifts"! Bring something to donate and join in the bidding. It's such a fun time and we earn money for our charities throughout the year. We'll have great refreshments too, with a Valentine theme. Hope this weather cooperates so everyone can enjoy this meeting. Looking forward to seeing you all there!



Save the Date!

We are having a Spaghetti Supper on March 30th hosting Rev. Chang-Hee Son and his students from the Christian Fellowship Center at Bridgewater State University. The Women's Guild has done this for the past three years, and it is a lot of fun! This year, it will be open to our parishioners. We will be serving spaghetti, salad, rolls & butter, beverage and dessert. The cost for parishioners will be \$5.00 per person or \$15.00 per family. Sandy Alley



LIVING GIFT MARKET

The Sunday school classes will once again celebrate Heifer Project with the culminating activity of the Living Gift Market. All the classes have chosen the animals they wish to sponsor. They have planned their activities. All that is needed is you. The children would like to invite you to the Living Gift Market following church on Sunday, February 6th. The location is in the vestry. We hope to see you all there.

SHROVE TUESDAY

The name **Shrove** comes from the old word *ōshriveō* which means to confess. On Shrove Tuesday, in the Middle Ages, people used to confess their sins so that they were forgiven before the season of Lent began.

Shrove Tuesday also marked the beginning of the 40-day Lenten fasting period when the faithful were forbidden to consume meat, butter, eggs or milk. However, if a family had a store of these foods they would certainly spoil by the time the fast ended on Easter Sunday. What to do? Solution: use up the milk, butter and eggs no later than Shrove Tuesday. And so, with the addition of a little flour, the solution quickly presented itself iní **pancakes**.

The Christian Ed committee would like to invite you to indulge yourself and celebrate Shrove Tuesday with pancakes and more. We would like to have as many people as possible attend and so we have decided to celebrate it on **Saturday, March 5th**. So please save the date and watch for more to follow.

Dates to remember:

Sunday, February 6th - The Living Gift Market

Friday, February 11th ó Kids of the Kingdom 6:00-7:30 p.m.

Saturday, March 5th ó Shrove Tuesday (Saturday)



For the first time in recent memory the members of CSCC have approved a balanced budget. Because we will operate within a balanced budget our committee chairs had the good fortune of attending a cabinet meeting that was not dominated by budget issues (another first in recent memory). How refreshing it was to spend that time planning on how we will grow in our ministry. We now have a secure foundation. We cannot however afford to get comfortable. I am sure Jesus wants us to look to the future with our eye focused on growth.

Take a moment to consider how our youth ministry helps shape the lives of the youth in our community. Every day our youth are bombarded with movies, video games, and street talk that glorify violence and corruption. These messages can be a powerful influence on our youth. Our youth ministry can be, and is, a powerful influence for peace, honor, caring, and growth.

Our teachers and youth leaders are awesome! They work very hard and do a great job with our children. But if we want to maximize the potential of these dedicated people shouldn't CSCC have a youth minister who has the time and resources to plan, guide and coordinate our youth ministry? A strong youth ministry benefits our children, as well as our community. A strong youth ministry also makes CSCC stronger by attracting new families to our church.

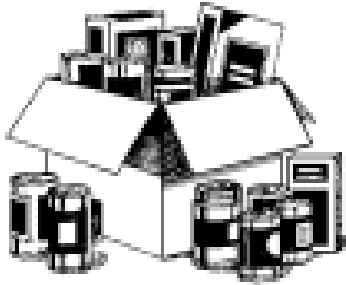
There is so much that we need to do. We need a youth minister. But before that we need a permanent minister. This expansion will come with an increased financial burden to our congregation. Everyone who feels that what we do at CSCC is God's work, and is able to offer more to our church, needs to do so. Many of our people are showing that the work of CSCC is a priority in their lives and are giving a lot each week. Many other people have more limited means but still give all they can. Thank you all for your caring and for your giving. We are all in different places financially. Each of us knows what we care to give and what we can afford to give.

But if we all keep the right attitude and focus on the growth of our ministry we will get everything we need to be our best. How can we fail? The Lord is on our side.

It is going to be an awesome year at CSCC.

God Bless you,

CSCC Stewardship Committee.



Bridgewater Food Pantry

Bridgewater Food Pantry is in need of specific items: ketchup, mayo, mustard, pancake mix, syrup, cereal, rice, rice pilaf, jelly, peanut butter, instant mashed potato, canned fruit, cake mix, crackers, juices (bottles and juice boxes), coffee, and tea. There are boxes provided in the narthex for this collection. Thank you!



A Note from Growth

“Today's leaders must take risks and take the church to places the members never dreamed of going before. The church can no longer afford the luxury of marking time. Stagnation will lead to death. It is only a matter of time. These are urgent times for pastors and congregations to understand that the world has changed and the ways in which we think and do church must also change.”

Mary Louise Gifford, *“The Turnaround Church”*



February 2011: Passing on the Mantle

Written by Laslo and Coralyn Medyesy
February 1, 2011

▶ *May my teaching drop as the rain, my speech distill as the dew, as the gentle rain upon the tender grass, and as the showers upon the herb. Deuteronomy 32:2*

The Kálvin Tér Reformed Church here in Hungary has long been known as the Bishop's Church, so serving there in any capacity has been an honor. This Church is also where our Károli Gáspár University Theology students progress to doing their practice preaching in a Thursday evening worship service throughout the school year. We enjoyed a quiet but noteworthy worship service there this last Sunday.

Our nephew, young Balázs, was filling this rather august pulpit for the three months that the Sr. Minister, the Rev. Pál László, would be on sabbatical. We sat on each side of Balázs's young wife. Behind us was the Rev. László Kovacs, visiting from our Calvin Synod Conference of the United Church of Christ in the US.

Though Balázs was a bit nervous, he preached well, meaningfully, helpfully, with especially good exegesis, and the congregation listened, actively. And, he was wearing my palást (clergy robe), as his sister wears one of Coralyn's every Sunday in her church. After the service the whole family gathered and we all shed a few tears of joy together. It's no small thing to launch a new young minister who is both our own nephew and one of our past students! It is a worthy thing to participate in the beginnings of a new Hungarian Reformed clergy, and it certainly shows us that we are passing on the mantle

Laslo and Coralyn Medyesy are missionaries with the Reformed Church in Hungary, based in Budapest, Hungary. Laslo serves as professor of theology in the Department of Theology of the Gaspar Karoli Reformed University in Budapest. Coralyn T. Medyesy serves as a teacher of Social Work and Diakonia at the Nagy Koros School.



Flowers for the Church Altar

Would you like to see fresh flowers more often on the altar? You can donate flowers for display on Sunday mornings for celebrations such as birthdays or anniversaries, or in memory of loved ones, and then take them home or have them delivered to a shut-in. Please see Jane O'Connell after church or call her at 508-697-3602.



Massachusetts Conference United Church of Christ

Super Saturday!

Saturday, March 5, 2011

8 AM - 3 PM

Ludlow High School

500 Chapin Street, Ludlow, MA

Join hundreds of delegates, pastors, and lay leaders from all over the Conference for our **SECOND SUPER SATURDAY** - a full day of workshops and networking around bestpractices for church leaders. You can view the workshops online and register at:

www.macucc.org/supersaturday

February 2011

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 NRC 9:30 & 11 Bella Voce Sanctuary 7-9 Brownie Group 3:30-6	2 Women's Guild Fellowship 7:0 Den 2 LL	3 Brownie Troup 6 LL	4 GS 73502 LL 6-7:30	5
6 Communion Sunday Living GIF Market (Heifer)	7 CE Mtg 7:00 Deacons Mtg. 7:30 Parlor	8 NRC 9:30 & 11 Bella Voce Sanctuary 7-9 Outreach Mtg 7:00 Growth Mtg 7:00	9 Trustees Mtg 6:00	10 Stewardship Mtg 7:30 Dens 1 & 5 LL 6:30	11 Kids of the Kingdom 6-7:30 Single parents 6-7:30 Parlor	12
13 Annual Mt Teen Forum Youth Group?	14 Presidents' Day	15 NRC 9:30 & 11 Bella Voce Sanctuary 7-9	16 Cabinet Mtg 7:00 Den 2 LL	17 Brownie Troup 6:00 LL	18 GS 73502 LL 6-7:30	19
20 Group SS	21	22 Bella Voce Sanctuary 7-9	23	24 Dens 1 & 5 LL 6:30	25	26
27 Teen Forum Youth Group?	28 Mothers' Club 9:30 Nursery					

March 2011

March 2011						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 NRC 9:30 & 11 Bella Voce Sanctuary 7-9 Brownie Group 3:30-6	2 Women's Guild Fellowship 7:0 Den 2 LL	3 Brownie Troup 6 LL	4	5 CE Family Night Fat Tuesday (Saturday)
6 Communion Sunday	7 CE Mtg 7:00 Deacons Mtg. 7:30	8 NRC 9:30 & 11 Bella Voce Sanctuary 7-9 Outreach Mtg 7:00 Growth Mtg 7:00	9 Trustees Mtg 6:00 Ash Wednesday 7:30	10 Stewardship Mtg 7:30 Dens 1 & 5 LL 6:30	11 Kids of the Kingdom 6-7:30 Single Parents 6-7:0 Parlor GS 73502 LL 6-7:30	12 Rock Show? Mission Youth
13 Teen Forum Youth Group?	14	15 Bella Voce Sanctuary 7-9 Brownie Group 3:30-6	16 Cabinet Mtg 7:00 Den 2 LL	17 Brownie Troup 6:00 LL	18 Pack #35 Vestry 7-10pm Set up	19 Pack #35 Vestry Pinewood Derby 11-4
20	21	22 NRC 9:30 & 11 Bella Voce Sanctuary 7-9	23	24 Dens 5 LL 6:30	25 GS 73502 LL 6-7:30	26
27 Teen Forum Youth Group?	28 Mothers' Club 9:30 Nursery	29 NRC 9:30 & 11 Bella Voce Sanctuary 7-9	30 Den 2 LL	31 Brownie Troup 6 LL		