



MCUCC@live.com

Medford Congregational United Church of Christ

www.mcucc.org

SUMMER SUNDAYS
7 P.M.


Worship!

Medford Congregational United Church of Christ
Main Street, Medford
JUNE 1 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 1

After return from camping, cabin, and other summer travel and before beginning a new week of work and play, set aside a soulful hour. Child-friendly and casual. Watch sign for related special events!

About 25 worshipers gathered for the first summer worship service of 2014, including a couple of people who haven't been around in awhile. Make it 26 next week by adding yourself to a pew!

Coming Soon! **HYMNS YOU CHOOSE!**



Fill in the "favorites" coupon in the bulletin and place it in the offering plate. Each week a few congregational favorites will populate the bulletin – and engage the vocal chords of the congregation!

Dear Friends,

As the end of the week and the end of the school year draw near, I find myself absolutely basking in the warmth, the sunshine, even the wind and rain. Winter was rough on us this year, and even more than usual, it feels good to be out and about. I imagine all our neighbors in and around Medford are feeling it, too – the sheer joy of being in God's creation, of moving and stretching and breathing deeply.

Those neighbors have been much on my mind this week. On Sunday, I shared an article I read about outward-looking churches. Jesus sent us out into the world, after all, and unless we're out there, too, fulfilling Christ's instruction to make disciples is going to be difficult! The full article is on page 3. It really made me think – hope you enjoy it, too!

Pastor Lou

News Briefs
from the April
Council Meeting

- Received an orientation to the "Council" meeting format from Chair Travis Ernste. The Core Group will meet each month and report; they in turn will go back to their respective groups/teams. If the chair person cannot attend the council meeting, he/she will ask someone from the team to attend or email a written report to the moderator.
- Set regular meetings meeting on the second Sunday of the month right after church
- Heard plans from the Education Board for the end of the program year, including presentation of Bibles, swimming, and a potluck lunch.
- Gratefully accepted the offer of the Girl Scout troop that meets in the building to assist with a clean-up day.

- Heard plans from the Stewardship and Mission Board for Straight River Days and possible movie.
- Discussed the desire of the Senior Care Center in Medford to have Chaplain services provided. Designated Rodney Parrish to discuss with them having Pastor Lou visit the 1st Sunday of the month and provide communion service.
- Set the summer worship time at 7:00 from June 1st through Labor Day.
- Decided on a light supper and a movie to kick off the summer, and designated responsibilities for accomplishing this event.
- Noted that messages on the church phone are checked each Sunday, and that the message states this fact and refers callers to website and email in the meantime.
- Decided, with the number of extra bulletins available, to cancel orders for now and start up again later as needed.

TREASURER'S REPORT

March, 2014

Beginning Balance	\$903.80
Income	
Pledged Offering	3545.00
Loose Offering	70.00
Mission Project	40.00
Per capita dues	20.00
Health Insurance reimbursement	92.00
Church Maintenance	28.48
Interest – Monthly	.01
Total Income	\$3,806.00
Expenses	
Church Utilities	603.90
Pastor Salary	1,800.00
Health & Pension	1,052.86
Church Maintenance	181.91
Christian Education	69.79
Total Expenses	\$3,707.26
Ending Balance	\$1,002.54

Community Events!!!

Straight River Days June 20 – 22

June 20, 2014

Food Sales: On Friday, MCUCC will be selling walking tacos, hotdogs, water and lemonade during the parade.

Family Outdoor Movie Night: Join us when the sun goes down for a family-friendly movie under the stars! Enjoy FREE popcorn and ice cream while you cuddle up and enjoy the movie **ROBOTS!**

Open to everyone! Sponsored by the MCUCC.

June 21, 2014

MCUCC will be having a **Bake Sale** Saturday morning. Stop by to pick up some fresh baked, homemade items! Something for everyone!!

For more information about Straight River Days events, contact Ruth Sanborn at 507-676-0734.



Steele County Fair August 12 - 17.

Start making craft items and picking up little prizes for grab bags; the fair will be here in no time at all!

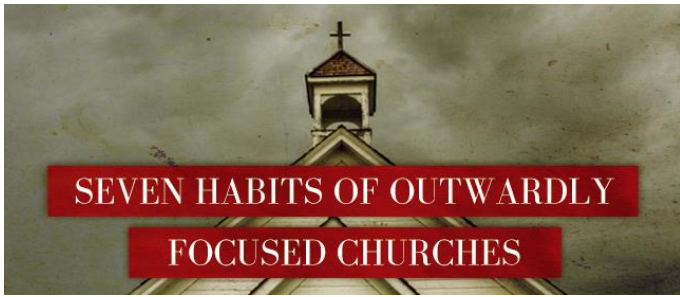


Cash Wise Cookout

August 22 (11am – 6 pm)

August 23 (10am – 5 pm)

Have fun with friends, earn a little money for the church and feed some hungry shoppers by volunteering at the Cash Wise Cookout! Sign up on church clip board.



May 28 2014 <http://thomrainer.com> by Thom Rainer

It was not a dramatic moment in time. Instead it was subtle, almost too subtle to be noticed. It became evident first in mainline churches. But evangelical churches followed a few years later. The erosion was slow, but it became glaringly apparent after several years.

The change of which I speak is the movement away from outwardly focused ministries in churches. Over time, most of the resources of time, money, and ministries have shifted more toward the members. Churches are now gathering in holy huddles with little intention of breaking out into a world of lostness and loneliness.

How It Happened

How did this negative trend develop? Though many perspectives could be offered, allow me simply to share the practical perspective. There was a time when most churches had an outreach ministry. And more times than not, this ministry was a type of program with predictable patterns.

But church leaders, vocational and lay alike, became program averse. So they slowly began eliminating outreach programs in their churches. I understand why this development took place. The programs seemed ineffective, not culturally relevant, and often cumbersome to lead and implement.

The problem, however, is that nothing replaced the programs. And the mild culture of outreach in churches was replaced with no culture of outreach.

At the same time, more churches started sending members on international mission trips. This development was good. But it gave many in the church a sense of false comfort that the church was really outwardly focused. The problem was that many times the local community became a neglected mission field.

Possible Beginning Points for an Outwardly Focused Church


So I began asking leaders in outwardly focused churches about their practical steps. I made certain the leaders were in different size congregations lest I offer suggestions limited to one group of churches. The

leaders were in churches with worship attendance ranging from 50 to 2,500. The answers I received were immensely practical, very helpful, and highly doable. Though this list is by no means exhaustive, here are seven of the more common habits.

1. **The church takes time during each worship service to pray for the community.** Prayer is powerful; and the church members become more focused about their communities.
2. **A volunteer or staff person is accountable for the outreach ministry of the church.** If no one has leadership responsibility, it does not get done.
3. **A regular report is provided to church members about outreach and ministry efforts in the community.** What gets reported gets done. Have you noticed most churches provide financial reports to the church members? That says the money is important. We need at least equal emphasis on the importance of outreach ministries.
4. **Churches have regular “mystery” guests come to the worship services.** One church leader told me that his church asks someone in the community to be a mystery guest every quarter. Those guests are always first-time guests, and they share their experiences with leaders later that day or week. The church members thus get to see the worship services through the eyes of a community member.
5. **The church gives obsessive attention to their websites.** A church website is the new front door for churches. It’s almost always the first place prospective guests go. These websites should be designed in a very guest friendly way.
6. **The churches are intentional about scheduling ministries, events, and activities for reaching the community.** One pastor told me that his church always focuses on one key community outreach ministry per month. The church’s attendance is less than 80, but it was under 40 two years ago.
7. **Churches are intentional about connecting with their communities through social media.** It is mindboggling that we have the most pervasive form of communication in history, but very few churches use it strategically. I know a pastor in a rural community who worked with a Millennial and asked her to lead the social media outreach. It has been a great success because someone is responsible for it.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 5 pm: Hot Dogs and "Frozen" 7 pm: Worship	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 5:30 pm: Council 7 pm: Worship	9		11	12	13	14
15 7 pm: Worship	16		17	18 6:30 pm: Trustees	19	20 Straight River Days
22 7 pm: Worship	23	24	25	26	27	28
29 7 pm: Worship	30					

June

		1	2	3	4	5
6 7 pm: Worship	7	8	9	10	11	12
13 5:30 pm: Council 7 pm: Worship	14	15	16 6:30 pm: Trustees	17	18	19
20 7 pm: Worship	21	22	23	24	25	26
27 7pm: Worship	28	29	30	31		

July

					1	2
3 7 pm: Worship	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 5:30 pm: Council Meeting 7 pm: Worship Service	11	12 Steele County Fair Booth	13 Steele County Fair Booth	14 Steele County Fair Booth	15 Steele County Fair Booth	16 Steele County Fair Booth
17 Steele County Fair Booth 7 pm: Worship Service	18	19	20 6:30 pm: Trustee Meeting	21	22 CashWise Food Stand 11 am – 6 pm	23 CashWise Food Stand 10 am – 5 pm
24 7 pm: Worship Service	25	26	27	28	29	30
31 7 pm: Worship Service						

August

THE PARISH PAPER

IDEAS AND INSIGHTS FOR ACTIVE CONGREGATIONS

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Caring for the Caregivers

Rosalynn Carter pointed to the universal nature of caregiving when she said that there are four kinds of people in the world: those who have been caregivers, those who are currently caregivers, those who will be caregivers, and those who will need caregivers.¹ The church plays a unique role by helping many people realize that they are already engaged in some form of this ministry. Caring for a family member or loved one is a vocation that can be supported and celebrated by the congregation. Still, part of this support requires acknowledging that caregivers often put their own needs last and risk losing their ability to continue as caregivers.

What the Caregiver Experiences

Caregivers deal with immense personal stress, and often without much awareness of its effects. In the face of a problem or situation that cannot be fixed, feeling overwhelmed, helpless, and frustrated are common responses. Over time, isolation, loneliness, or depression can surface. All caregivers feel guilty, angry, or resentful at some point. Most caregivers express physical, emotional, financial, and spiritual concerns. Unfortunately, caregivers typically wait too long before seeking out personal medical care too.

The caregiver is also struggling with the feelings and needs of the care-receiver. Their loved one may experience physical limitations, lack of independence (such as no longer driving or an inability to care for self), poor health, and loss of the family home, church, and friends. Both the caregiver and care-receiver must try to find pathways to acceptance. This acceptance may take the form of understanding that some kind of end has occurred; grieving the loss or change; and feeling a sense of gratitude for what has ended. People fall prey to the “focusing illusion”—focusing on what is lost after a major surgery, illness, or large life change. The illusion neglects the fact that we have extraordinary capacity to adapt and enjoy a new life that is not “perfect.”²

Those who care for the caregivers can help them realize that all these feelings are normal. Gently ask

caregivers what they are doing to take care of their own needs. For example: How are you kind to yourself? What do you do or whom do you talk to when you are discouraged? Do you allow others to help you? What blessings have you received as a caregiver? Point them to online resources that identify the warning signs of caregiver burnout.³ Depending on the circumstances, consider sharing with them the Caregiver’s Bill of Rights.⁴

Ideas for the Caregiver

Caregivers need to care for themselves in order to care for others. Starting or strengthening spiritual disciplines such as prayer, worship, meditation, Bible reading, journaling, or singing help family caregivers handle their own emotional needs. Continuing to engage in activities that bring joy such as physical exercise, hobbies, reading, or time in nature also provide some respite. Doing social things like lunch or an outing with a friend, playing with children, going to a movie or concert, or shopping for oneself give people a break from caregiving. Time away generates the most benefit if caregivers start early in the care giving process.



BOB REALIZED KAREN WAS APPROACHING BURNOUT WHEN SHE BEGAN SLIPPING INTO CAREGIVING MODE WITH TOTAL STRANGERS.

Ideas for Church Members

Individual church members can take actions that help caregivers—offering to do grocery shopping, assisting with transportation, or staying with the family member while the caregiver takes some much-deserved personal time. Prayers, cards, phone calls, and visits always bring comfort. Finally, never underestimate the power of listening to the caregiver's concerns.

Ideas for the Congregation

Beyond what individual, caring church members can do for caregivers, the congregation as a whole can leverage resources and coordinate efforts to support caregivers. Here are some examples of how congregations can support caregivers.

Develop a Care Team or Stephen Ministry. Congregations of every size need a care team or system for providing care to one another. Without such a team or system, some members fall through the cracks. Details on establishing a care team are in a free resource on *The Parish Paper* website (Church Effectiveness Nuggets # 9: How to Develop a Congregational Care Team; www.theparishpaper.com).

Thousands of congregations have trained their staff and members to be Stephen Ministers, a way to provide one-on-one confidential Christian care. This nonprofit organization (www.stephenministries.org) offers training to equip local trainers, who in turn train others, who offer care and support to people in the congregation or community. After completing the training, a Stephen Minister is assigned to a care-receiver, who they visit once a week. Participants who complete the training report that the skills they learned were useful in many other settings where caring ministry was needed.

Start a caregiver support group. A staff person or member organizes a group of people who share the common situation of care giving. The group provides nonjudgmental support, and helps participants deal with emotions that accompany the role of caregiver. The group can also be a place to hear about community and governmental resources that could assist in the care of the family member. The group coordinator or convener should not currently be a caregiver and should encourage the full participation of the group members in choosing meeting times, topics, and guest speakers.

Coordinate a prayer shawl ministry. Some congregations gather a group of people who love knitting or crocheting to make shawls. Those who make a shawl offer prayers and blessings for a caregiver or their loved one. More information about this ministry is available at www.shawlministry.com

Offer workshops, lectures, or series about care giving. Caregivers and members who want to support them benefit from additional information about particular illnesses, conditions, technologies, and other topics related to caring for loved ones. Presentations could range from a single session on Alzheimer's disease to a series on multiple topics related to community resources. Many local social service agencies are willing to send a speaker for such a program.

Create a resource directory. Compiling a directory of local organizations or services (such as Adult Day Care, respite care) is a time-saver for caregivers. The directory can also assist members who wish to make contacts on behalf of the family.

Share weekly worship services. If worship services are recorded or streamed on the internet, find out if families who can no longer attend services are interested in the opportunity to worship weekly.

Hold services of prayer and healing. Many congregations prepare special worship experiences several times a year where time is devoted to prayers for healing. Making extra efforts to invite and include caregivers in these services is greatly appreciated.

Organize additional outreach at Christmas, Easter, and during other religious seasons. Holidays and other busy times stress the already overwhelmed caregiver. Conversations with caregivers and their families can reveal ways that the congregation could be part of making rituals surrounding holidays more meaningful and less stressful.

Who Cares?

When we offer sympathy, empathy, compassion, concern, or the willingness to listen, we show our care and love. In Matthew 19:19, Jesus said, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." The young lawyer who pressed for the details heard the story of The Good Samaritan. Jesus' story of compassion illustrates how we can overlook the one who cares unselfishly for another.

1. Rosalynn Carter, *Helping Yourself Help Others* (NY: Three Rivers Press, 1994), 3.
2. Maureen Dowd, "Decoding the God Complex," *New York Times*, September 28, 2011.
3. <http://www.webmd.com/healthy-aging/caregiver-burnout>.
4. Jo Horne, A Caregiver's Bill of Rights, <http://www.caregiver.com>.