



THE WIND OF THE SPIRIT AT WEST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

WEST WINDS

Peabody, Massachusetts

January 2017

GOD ANSWERS PRAYER!

Often we can get very discouraged because we don't see God work in exciting ways. We live in a liberal commonwealth which contains powerful people striving to remove our religious freedoms. So it is wonderful blessing to see God work and hear good news in this arena. Below is a letter written by Andrew Beckwith, President of Massachusetts Family Institute, about a recent development in our battle to protect our religious freedoms. Let us rejoice that God answered our prayers. However let us remember that though there are people who are aggressively trying to push Christianity out of the culture and take away our constitutional right for religious freedom, we must love them. All people without Jesus Christ are broken, hurting, lost sinners needing to know the way of reconciliation to God through Jesus Christ. We must reach out lovingly and compassionately; yet redemptively to all manner of people with the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We should not discriminate in reaching out in love, hearing people's story and announcing the Gospel to them. Our neighbors are all manner of people: rich, poor, successful, struggling, atheists, agnostics, homosexual, transgender, heterosexual, and we are commanded by Christ to love them as we love ourselves. So we must balance loving people with the gospel and fighting to protect our religious freedoms. We thank Massachusetts Family Institute for their great work in the Bay State.

Be Blessed,

Pastor Rick

.....

December 15, 2016

Dear Friend of the Family,

Yesterday, we celebrated a real win for religious freedom. Both MA Attorney General Maura Healey and the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD) voluntarily reversed their new transgender polices to acknowledge the constitutional right of churches to teach and operate consistently with their faith. As many of you know, in September of this year, the unelected MCAD and an activist Attorney General threatened an unprecedented intrusion into the constitutionally protected rights of churches and pastors. These state bureaucrats made national headlines by declaring that they had the power not only to impose transgender bathroom and locker room polices on churches, but also to decide which church activities were "secular" enough to take away their first amendment protections. So much for the so-called "separation of church and state!"

In response, four MA churches filed suit in federal court, with the help of our friends at Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), to protect their right to teach their beliefs and operate their churches according to their faith – without being threatened by the government. The good news is that both MCAD and the AG backed down in response to the threat of legal action, so we were able to dismiss the case. I was surprised that someone as aggressive and condescending on this issue as the AG (AKA Maura "Hold-it" Healey) would voluntarily admit she was wrong, but it confirms that when you stand up to a bully, they often back off.

Yesterday, we held a legal briefing for churches to explain this victory, and MA pastors and ministry leaders from across the Commonwealth gathered in Boston to hear the good news. We were graciously hosted by Congregation Lion of Judah, which served a fabulous pasta lunch. That culinary choice was intentional, because the now withdrawn policy from MCAD originally declared (without any legal justification) that something as simple as holding a “spaghetti supper” could make a church lose its protections under the first amendment and have to open its women’s bathrooms and changing rooms to gender-confused men.

For those of you who couldn’t attend yesterday, here are the takeaways for churches and ministry leaders:

Sermons, worship, Sunday school, Bible studies are all clearly protected by First Amendment.

Community outreach activities are also protected, such as:

Concerts & movies - Special meals open to the community (e.g. Thanksgiving meals to homeless, men’s breakfasts, spaghetti suppers) - Alcohol & chemical addiction recovery ministries, Radio ministries, Holiday events: Thanksgiving, Halloween, July 4th, Christmas, Marriage seminars, Community weddings/funerals, Food pantries, Back to school nights w/ games, food, schools supplies for kids, Life skills workshops (e.g. anger management, conflict resolution)

Note: Anytime you allow a third party to use the facility, it is critical to have a facility use policy detailing the religious nature of the facility and how the church allows certain approved community members to use the facility as a means of furthering the church’s religious purposes and expression. [If you’re looking for sample facility use policy language, you can find it on page 28 of our “Protecting Your Ministry” guidebook.

The bottom line is any religiously-affiliated activity or event that reflects religious expression is protected activity and exempt from the transgender public accommodations law. That being said, we can’t predict how MCAD or the AG will choose to interpret this law in the future, but rest assured ADF and MFI stand ready to go back to court at a moment’s notice if necessary. Please do not hesitate to reach contact us with questions.

For our families,
Andrew Beckwith
President



Massachusetts
Family Institute

www.mafamily.org | Massachusetts Family Institute | 781.569.0400

CALL OF SPECIAL CHURCH MEETING
Saturday, January 14, 2017 at 2 pm

The Board of Trustees has issued the call for a Special Meeting of the West Congregational Church membership to be held on Saturday, January 14, 2017 at 2 pm. The purpose of the meeting is to consider a motion to change the Annual Meeting date of Article VI B1 of the Constitution from the 4th Tuesday of January to the last Saturday in January. A quorum for the meeting is thirty (30) active members.

-On behalf of the Board of Trustees, L. McDonough, Clerk.

ANNUAL MEETING

The date of the 2016 Annual Meeting will be determined at the Special Church Meeting on January 14th at 2 pm. The purpose of the Annual Meeting is to receive the annual reports, to elect officers for the coming year, to adopt budgets for the year, and to act upon any other matters which shall come before the congregation.

Possible dates and times for the meeting:

- **Tuesday, January 24, 2017 at 7:30 pm**
- **Saturday, January 28, 2017 at 9:00 am**



ANNUAL REPORT

The 2016 Annual Report will be available on Sunday, January 22nd following the Worship Service in the Lower Narthex. On Friday, January 20th a PDF of the 2016 Annual Report will be emailed to those on our West Church Email Distribution List.

FLOWERS FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS

If you would like to have flowers in the chancel on a Sunday to celebrate an occasion that is special to you, please sign the Flower Chart on the bulletin board across from the office. The Flower Chart for 2017 will be posted in December. The cost of each arrangement is \$35, which may be included in your offering envelope or pew envelope and designate "flowers" under the heading "Other."

GIRLS' GROWTH GROUP

We are very thankful that the Lord has provided for Girls Growth Group to continue! Each Wednesday evening we have time for sharing, praying for each other, encouraging each other and reading and learning His Word. We have been using the devotional "*Behold your God*" by Myrna Alexander and learning about the attributes of God. We have also been able to enjoy several activities, like going to see the movie "*I'm Not Ashamed*", going to see New Life Fine Arts' production of "*A Christmas Carol*" and a game night. We are looking forward to seeing what God has to teach us and show us in 2017! God bless!

~ Girls Growth Group Ministry Team

NEW ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES BEGIN JANUARY 8

Engage the Bay State

Lyons Hall

Teacher: Pastor Rick McDonnell

This course was produced by Massachusetts Family Institute (MFI). It is a call to Christian Civic Stewardship in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The course consists of a video lecture given by Andrew Beckwith, President of MFI, and provides a study guide for all participants. The class will lend itself to important discussions on current issues that Christians face living in the Bay State and what our response should be to them. The course uses current events as case studies on the state of our law and culture. The class will be informative and challenge participants to learn how to lovingly articulate a Biblical World View as a valid option in a reasoned manner. The following topics will be covered: The role of Church and State, Abortion, Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia, Sex Education, Homosexuality/Same-Sex Marriage, Gender Identity and Transgenderism, Religious Liberty, and additional issues as they rise.

For more information visit:

<http://www.mafamily.org/engage/>

Eternity 102 (Women's Class)

Upper Room

Facilitators: West Church Women

This course is a continuation of the class that began in September 2016.

Have you ever wondered . . . What Heaven is really going to be like? What we will look like? What will we do every day? Won't Heaven get boring after a while? We will be watching and discussing the teaching of Heaven on a DVD course called Eternity 101 taught by Randy Alcorn. The course will help you gain a better understand of our eternal dwelling place. We'll talk about the pervasive myths and misconceptions about Heaven, and seek answer from Scripture the most frequent questions about life after the resurrection, on the New Earth.

For more information on this DVD curriculum visit:

<http://store.epm.org/eternity-101-class-dvd/>

MARCH FOR LIFE

"Even the smallest person can change the course of history."
- J.R.R. Tolkien



THE POWER OF ONE

One person can make a difference in the world, whether in the life of one person or many. Sadly, in the U.S. alone, 1 million babies are not even given the opportunity to live and change the world each year. Building a culture of life and ending abortion takes each and every person. Starting with your family or neighborhood, our collective efforts will change hearts and minds, save lives, and build a culture of life.

This year's March for Life will take place on January 27th at 1:00 pm in Washington D.C.

Sarah Steffens is willing to organize a group to attend this event in Washington D.C. The group would leave on Thursday, January 26th and return late Friday following the event. If you are interested in going or would like information please contact the office.

For more information on the event visit: www.marchforlife.org/mfl-2017/

TAX STATEMENTS

Statements are available only for those who used Offering Envelopes. You may request a statement from our Financial Secretary using a Pew Card or by contacting the office: (office@westchurchpeabody.org or 978-535-4112).



SNOW POLICY

There will always be a worship service on Sunday morning at 10:30 am for those able to come to church.

Sunday School is cancelled from time to time due to inclement weather and poor road conditions. Cancellation notices will be posted on:

- West Church's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/westchurchpeabody)
- WBZ-TV
- My TV38
- www.cbsboston.com
- 7NEWS (NBC)
- Channel 56(CW)
- www.whdh.com

FOOD DONATION FOR INN BETWEEN

Citizens Inn (formerly Citizens for Adequate Housing) has reached out to



CITIZENS INN
Leaving homelessness behind

West Church because one of their residences is running low on staple food items. If you would like to purchase and donate any of the items in the list below, you may put them in one of the boxes in the lower narthex labeled "Citizens Inn." The boxes will be available during the month of January. If you have any questions, please contact the office.

Currently their most needed items include:

- canned greens and veggies
- coffee
- pasta
- salt and sugar
- shelf milk
- snacks
- soup
- vinegar and oil

For more information visit: www.cahns.org/

FINANCIAL INFORMATION REGARDING TITHES AND OFFERINGS

BASICALLY TWO WAYS TO GIVE:

1. Using the church's Weekly Offering Envelopes.
2. Not using Weekly Offering Envelopes.

ADVANTAGES of using the Offering Envelopes:

1. Consistent and disciplined giving.
2. Ease in 'Designating' your gifts (telling the Church where to use the money you are giving).
3. A Church Record of giving that complies with IRS regulations.
4. The Church ONLY keeps financial records of giving for those who use Offering Envelopes.

DESIGNATING GIFTS (telling the church where to use your gifts)

By designating your gifts on your Offering Envelope (or, on your check, if you do not use Offering Envelopes), you can tell the church—

1. Which BUDGET to apply your gift to (the Current Expense Budget, or the Missions Budget);
2. Which FUND to apply your gift to (the Deacons Fund, Flower, Scholarship Fund, Memorial Gifts, Membership Assistance, etc.)
3. Which SPECIAL NEED or PROJECT to apply your money to.

IMPORTANT PRACTICAL POINTS TO REMEMBER:

1. ALL giving that is NOT DESIGNATED is automatically applied to the Current Expense Budget. This is the church budget approved at the Annual Meeting from which all Operating Expenses, Ministry Expenses (except for Missions items found in the Missions Budget), and salaries are paid.
2. ALL giving intended for the Missions Budget MUST be DESIGNATED for MISSIONS on your Offering Envelope or check.
3. Unless otherwise requested by the Missions Committee, it is best to DESIGNATE your missions giving to 'MISSIONS' rather than designating your missions giving to specific missionaries who are already in the approved church Missions Budget.

IRS TAX RECEIPT LAW

The IRS does NOT accept canceled checks for any single contribution over \$250 as proof of charitable giving. The IRS will ONLY accept an itemized receipt from the non-profit organization confirming each gift that exceeds \$250. Using the Offering Envelopes is a good idea for those who itemize their tax deductions, no matter what the amount of your giving, since the church does NOT keep a record of Non-Envelope giving.

WEST CHURCH

SCRIPTURE MEMORY PROGRAM



The start of a new year is a great time to begin memorizing Scripture by planning a memory routine into your life.

The West Church Scripture Memory Program is designed to encourage children, youth, and adults to commit to memory verses from the Bible. This program was created to allow for participants to join at any point in the year. Scripture is considered complete when it has been confirmed by the participant at four Checkpoints in four different months to a Listener. Verses are self selected and families can even work on the same verses/passages together.

Upcoming Checkpoints will be Sundays, February 5th and February 11th following the Worship Service.

Program information and Scripture Memory Journals are available from the Sunday School Coordinator.

The following article from Children Desiring God has excellent tips on helping children memorize Scripture: <http://blog.childrendesiringgod.org/how-to-help-children-memorize-scripture/>



LOOKING AHEAD

February 3-5: Snow Camp at Berea for Rock Solid

This year for snow camp we will be going to Berea for Deep Freeze, February 3-5.

The cost is \$165. For more information about Deep Freeze at Berea check out:

<http://berea.org/deepfreeze/>



**Berea
DEEP
FREEZE**

February 11: Teacher Training Time 9 am - noon

The Sunday School Ministry will be hosting a training time for all volunteers who minister to children and youth at West Church. The focus of this time will be based on *Creative Bible Teaching* by Lawrence O. Richards. This time will follow up on November's training and specifically look at how to plan a creative Bible lesson. The training will begin at 9:00 am and will include hands on activities, discussion, and lecture. For more information contact the office.

February 18: WHY 17

W: Worship of God

H: Holler for Hockey

Y: You be You

17: February 18, 2017 at 4 pm

On Saturday, February 18th, the Rock Solid Youth Group will be hosting WHY 17 at Merrimack College in North Andover for Youth Groups in the area. At this event Rock Solid will be leading a time of worship before the Merrimack Warriors play their hockey game at 7 pm. For more information contact the office.

MINISTRY PRAYER CALENDAR

Please use the information below to daily pray for the ministries of West Church.

Sunday

- Kingdom Kids & Nursery***
- Rock Solid***
- Sunday School***
- Ushers & Greeters***
- Worship Team***

Monday

- Every Man a Warrior
- Gideon Ministry
- Haven from Hunger*
- Nursing Home Ministry***
- Pulpit Committee**

Tuesday

- Board of Deacons & Deaconesses*
- Board of Trustees*
- Community Outreach Committee*
- Nursing Home Ministry***
- Prison Ministry

Wednesday

- Christian Service Brigade***
- Girls' Growth Group***
- Pioneer Girls***
- Women's Bible Study***

Thursday

- Christian Education Committee*
- Missions Committee*
- Home Fellowship Groups**
- Missions Prayer Watch*
- Food Pantry

Friday

- College and Career Ministry *
- Compassionate Ministries
- Media Team
- Young at Heart

Saturday

- Gain Sewing Ministry*
- Marriage Builders*
- Nominating Committee
- Potpourri
- S.A.L.T.*

*And **pray** for us,
too, that God may
open a door for
our message, so
that we may
proclaim the
mystery of Christ. ..
Colossians 4:3*