

THE MESSENGER

PAYSON PARK CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
365 BELMONT STREET, BELMONT, MA 02478
617-484-1542
office@paysonpark.org www.paysonpark.org

DECEMBER 2010

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

*“We believe God is calling us to walk in the ways of Jesus Christ
and to bear witness to the Gospel through worship and service, empowered by the Holy Spirit.”*

“We begin to die the day we remain silent about things that matter.”

The words of The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. inspire us this Advent season to keep at the heart of our festivities *things that matter*: the promise of new life and unconditional love found in the babe in the manger. From our worship services and special programs at church, to family plans and other social connections, we’re invited to revel in the goodness of God’s presence in our midst as though we, too, are in that crowded inn. For this is a time to be filled with joy even as we feel the pressures of society’s ceaseless expectations.

Reverend King’s words also led us to appreciate the importance of focusing on *things that matter* at the Memorial Service for Jonathan Michael Curtis held here Sunday, November 21. Over six hundred people joined our congregation to give thanks for Jon’s life and to grieve his death, as serving as Army Specialist, he was killed in Afghanistan. Celebrating Jon’s dedication as well as his loving presence in Belmont and beyond, we acknowledged the call to make this world a better and safer place, not only for ourselves but for children like Tesse Marie, Cecily, and Kyle, Jon’s daughter, niece, and nephew. Feeling our pain, we recognized the need to offer greater comfort to those who grieve like Jon’s widow, Samantha; his parents, Pam and Phil; his brothers, Brian and Paul; and sister-in-law, Anna. With the realities of war entering our community so tragically, we opened our doors *and* our hearts, knowing our outreach will continue in the weeks and years to come. For isn’t this the promise heralded by the one we call Emmanuel? By speaking about *things that matter* — indeed, singing about them! — we build God’s realm right here on earth, where “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God.”

With love from The Reverend Lael Atkinson



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WORSHIP SCHEDULE

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5

10:30 AM

Second Sunday of Advent

Communion Sunday

Food Pantry Collection Drive

The Reverend Lael Atkinson preaching

The acolyte is Eleanor & Harry Thidemann. Altar flowers are given by Armen and Janet David in memory of Marion, Tom and Kathleen Serino. Serving communion are Merry & Terry Ray, Winnie Snow, and The fellowship hour is given by the Payson Park Nursery School Committee. Reading scripture is Isabel Best. The ushers greeting are Carl Miller, Phil Ripley & Matt Benjamin. Leading the food pantry collection drive for the Belmont Food Pantry is Olivia Cronin.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12

10:30 AM

Third Sunday of Advent

Christmas Pageant and Party

The Reverend Lael Atkinson preaching

The acolyte is Eleanor & Harry Thidemann. Altar flowers are given by Betty Burnett in memory of her parents, Mr. & Mrs. William Burnett. The deacon on duty is Marian Ferro. The Christmas Party is given by the Christian Education and the M & O Committees. Reading scripture will take place during the pageant. The ushers greeting are Carl Miller & Phil Ripley.



WINTER STORMS & WORSHIP

As we enter the winter season, the Diaconate reminds you that Sunday morning worship services will be cancelled when a parking ban is in effect in Belmont. To confirm a cancellation, please call the Church after 8:00 a.m. on Sunday. The recorded message will provide relevant information service. If you call the church and do not hear the recording, please call again, the line may be busy with another caller.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19

10:30 AM

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Service of Lesson & Carols

The Reverend Lael Atkinson preaching

The acolyte is Eleanor & Harry Thidemann. Altar flowers are given by the Diaconate in thanks for the service of our pastor and Christian education director. The poinsettias decorating the chancel are in celebration and or in memory of loved one. The deacon serving today is Nancy Fergus. The fellowship hour is given by the Music Committee. The scripture readings will take place during the Lessons and Carols. The ushers greeting are Carl Miller & Susan Clark.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24

7:00 PM

Candlelight Service

The Reverend Lael Atkinson preaching

Reading scripture is Rick Marsh. The ushers greeting are Carl Miller & Susan Clark.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26

10:30 AM

Christmas Weekend Service

The Reverend Lael Atkinson presiding

The acolyte is Eleanor & Harry Thidemann. Altar flowers are given by the Caroline Russell Memorial Fund. The deacon serving today is Carl Miller. The fellowship hour is given by the Finance Committee. Reading scripture is Nancy Slavinsky. The ushers greeting are Carl Miller and Cynthia Lasker.



WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

We are grateful to those who worshipped with us in the month of November as we commissioned our prayer shawl ministry, marked the start of our stewardship campaign, and celebrated Thanksgiving!

November 7	119	November 21	149
November 14	97	November 28	71

WORSHIP & ADMINISTRATIVE NEWS

ALTAR FLOWERS:

HONORING OUR LOVED ONES

Would you like to honor someone in your life? Each Sunday our altar flowers are given in honor or remembrance of those we hold dear. Coordinated in December for the calendar year by Cindy Lou Benson, our Administrative Coordinator, this program also offers us a chance to reach out to those in our congregation who cannot attend worship, as the flowers are regularly delivered by our pastor or others to those hospitalized or homebound. Please call the church office at 617/484-1542 to participate.

ANNUAL MEETING:

SAVE THE DATE!

The Annual Meeting of Payson Park Church will be held on Sunday, January 24, after worship. This is an important event as we not only review the past year but plan for the future. During the meeting we will gather for our annual Church Luncheon. Please speak with Nancy Fergus, Senior Deacon, if you would like to help plan this festivity. Childcare available.

SCRIPTURE READERS WELCOMED!

Would you like to give voice to one of the scripture readings during our Sunday morning worship services? A sign-up sheet for the upcoming months is on the bulletin board outside the Church Office. We would love to have you be a part of our prayerful time together in this way.

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED:

SPECIAL HOLIDAY HOURS

With the coming of the holidays, please note that the Church Office will be closed December 27 through December 31. If you have an emergency and need assistance, please call our Pastor at home: 617/464-4990.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

EXTENDING OUR CARE TO OTHERS

If you have a prayer request that you would like announced during worship, please speak with our pastor in the days (or minutes!) before our Sunday service. Concerns and celebrations are announced just prior to the Pastoral Prayer each week. Help us reach out to God and extend our care to others.

*Grant us, we pray thee,
a heart wide open to all this joy and beauty,
and save our souls from being so steeped in care
or so darkened by passion that we pass heedless
and unseeing when even the thorn bush
by the wayside is aflame with the glory of God.*

Walter Rauschenbusch

from "Prayers of the Social Awakening"



A NOTE FROM

THE ASSISTANT TREASURER

I would like to thank everyone for their help during my initiation to the collection process here at Payson Park. I am especially thankful for my team of counters: Walt Brownlie, Will Clifford, Al Gledhill and Phil Ripley. And a big thank you to Carl Miller who helps me gather the collections every Sunday from the plate.

Here is a reminder that the year end deadline for having your contributions and pledges appear on the 2010 for tax purposes and for your personal information is the real date of Sunday, December 26, 2010. Any money received after that Sunday will be recorded in 2011!!

My blessing and gratitude to you all. And may your holidays be filled with joy.

Liza Roman, Assistant Treasurer.

SHARING & CARING

IN MEMORIAM:

JONATHAN MICHAEL CURTIS

As noted in the Pastor's Reflection on page 1 of this issue of The Messenger, Army Specialist Jonathan Michael Curtis was killed in Afghanistan by a suicide bomber on November 1. While we did not know Jon as a member of Payson Park Church, we are grateful his mother, Pam, and brother, Brian, sister-in-law, Anna, and niece and nephew, Cecily and Kyle, are active in the life of our community, and we will continue to offer them our prayers and support in this time of great loss. We also reach out to Jon's widow, Samantha, and his 8 month old daughter, Tesse Marie, who reside in Knoxville, Tennessee, where Jon is now buried. For Jon's years in Belmont and his active service in Iraq and Afghanistan, we are grateful, trusting his memory will live on and on. For all those members and friends of Payson Park who helped to offer hospitality at the Memorial Service, we say "thank you," with a extra thanks to Marty Gledhill for her coordinative efforts at the church and with local businesses. The baked goods and refreshment service helped the Curtis family and wider community celebrate Jon's life and grieve his death on a day of meaningful remembrance.

THANK YOU

FOR YOUR THOUGHTFULNESS

Blessings are everywhere. Fortunately I fell at church as opposed to being home alone. Your cards and calls have cheered me. Thank you all.

Bobbie Bradt

CABLE BROADCASTING TIMES

If you or a loved one are unable to attend worship on Sundays, we hope you'll join with us in the spirit of prayer during the week. The Sunday services of our church are broadcast on local cable networks at the following times: In Arlington - Sundays and Wednesdays at 4:30PM, Belmont - Sundays at 9:00AM, and 4:00PM, Waltham - Sundays at 8:00AM, Watertown - Sundays at 10:00AM and Mondays at 4:30PM.

REACHING OUT TO CHURCH MEMBERS

IN THIS SEASON OF THANKSGIVING

As the holiday season unfolds, we have the opportunity to offer our care to those long time members of the church who are not able to attend worship regularly at this time in their lives. Please reach out to those you miss seeing on Sundays with a note or phone call. It is with such loving outreach we offer the loving Spirit of Christ to the wider community.



"PEACE STARTS WITH A SMILE"

BUILDING COMMUNITY TOGETHER

Help us grow as a faithful and loving community! In addition to wearing a name tag on Sunday mornings, it's also important that we reach out to others each week. Please make an effort to talk to someone you do not know after worship, whether it's someone new to our congregation or a long-time member. Take a chance, make a new connection. It's all a part of "walking in the ways of Jesus" right here at Payson Park. Amen!

SHARING & CARING:

THE JOY OF EXTENDING OUR PRAYERS

When prayer requests are shared by our pastor during worship each week, many of us may resolve to reach out to the individuals and families named, but then forget about it when we get home! Our Faith, Hope, & Love Fellowship group often sends notes for special occasions, and its members want to make it easy for YOU to do so, too. On Sunday, a table will be set up in the Parlor with a variety of cards to choose from so that notes of sympathy, congratulations, or simply "thinking of you," may be sent to members and friends of our congregation. Those who have been ill or through a hard time know what a morale booster it is to feel others are offering loving thoughts and prayers.

STEWARDSHIP NEWS



BUILDING CHRIST'S COMMUNITY

Approaching a new budget year in the life of this congregation, we recognize the value of pledging more than ever before. With our commitment to managing operating and endowment funds with faithful care, the Finance Committee needs *your* help in supporting our programs and mission projects as we strive to raise \$125,000 in pledges this year. While the ways we give of our time and talents help us to be the loving, thriving community that we are, contributions of treasure are greatly needed. Below are some frequently asked questions about pledging and its importance at Payson Park Church.

WHY SHOULD I PLEDGE?

Pledging money to support the programs and mission of the church helps us to make a commitment to God in a very concrete manner. As men and women seeking “to walk in the ways of Jesus,” our financial support of this community gives clear witness to our source of hope and to our dedication to the Christian story of love and reconciliation. Pledging also allows us to plan our budget appropriately. While all contributions to the church are appreciated, a formal pledge allows us to make decisions about how we allocate our funds. *Your* faithful stewardship helps *us* be better stewards together.

HOW MANY PEOPLE PLEDGE AT PAYSON PARK?

Last year, nearly three-quarters of our members made a formal pledge. A “pledge unit” can represent either an individual or family’s financial commitment to the church. This year we’re hoping to increase that number as a way of showing our unified commitment to the church at this time. One hundred percent participation is our goal!

WHO KNOWS ABOUT OUR PLEDGES?

Pledging is highly confidential here at Payson Park. The Assistant Treasurer is the only person aware of exact pledge information. Data regarding the number of pledge units, average and total amount of pledges, etc., is discussed within the Finance Committee for stewardship and budget planning purposes as necessary. In those discussions, personal information and pledge amounts are never reviewed.

WHAT HAPPENS IF A PLEDGE IS NOT FULFILLED AS PROMISED?

If someone makes a pledge that cannot be fulfilled, no action is taken. Rather, in the spirit of grace with which we share in community life together, a person’s inability or decision not to fully fund their pledge is respected and held in strict confidence. If the amount given is greater than anticipated, it is appreciated. Increased giving helps us meet our budget with more ease and confidence as the year unfolds.

HOW DO I GO ABOUT PLEDGING?

Pledge cards are available on the table outside of the Sanctuary. It lists the areas in which you may pledge and the amount you are committing to give. There are three categories listed: Current Expenses; Mission & Outreach; and the Building Fund. You may place your pledge card in the offering plate or mail it to the Church Office.

**THANK YOU FOR BEING A PART OF THIS EXCITING TIME
IN THE HISTORY OF PAYSON PARK CHURCH!**

MUSIC & PAGEANT NEWS

I write this greeting as Payson Park Youth Choir Director, with excitement and enthusiasm. In my career as music school owner, and voice/piano instructor I have had the pleasure of dealing with many wonderful children. However, one of the shortcomings of the private lesson environment is finding performance and ensemble opportunities for students. Even more, I believe students need to sing music that has a purpose, for an appreciative audience. Those desires led me to Payson Park Church. I now have a roster of enthusiastic youngsters performing meaningful music for the congregation.

Coming from a family of church musicians, I have always been involved in church music. While at Whitworth College in Spokane WA, a small Presbyterian College, I was heavily involved with various choral performance and music director positions. After receiving my degree in Music Education, I went on to teach in the public schools as a choral director. Later, while at Arizona State University obtaining my master's in music performance, I chose to pursue an opera career. It was this pursuit that brought me to Boston. Since moving here, I've soloed throughout New England with opera companies including Boston Lyric Opera, Granite State Opera, and Opera Providence, and many orchestras including the Nashua Symphony and the Waltham Philharmonic.

In addition to performing, I have always taught private piano and voice lessons. After meeting my husband Chris, who is a drummer, we decided to open up our music school, MJ's Music School in Waltham. We now serve over 200 students a week with 15 teachers. Although I am mainly a classical musician, we offer lessons in all styles and ensembles too. I have really enjoyed learning how to put bands together and play pop/rock and blues!

For the past several years I have spent my weekends subbing as cantor, pianist, soloist, and choir director in dozens of churches around Massachusetts. While I enjoyed being able to pick and choose my work, I felt I needed to do more. I am now glad to be part of this community, and have the chance to work with the same people week after week. I am excited about the musical and personal growth that will result. I am so honored to work with your children, thank you for this opportunity!

Molly Jo Rivelli



MARK YOUR CALENDARS! Call family and friends! Our Christmas Pageant will be on Sunday, December 12, during the worship service. This program, put on by our Youth and Adult Choirs will be a special presentation this year. Don't miss the opportunity to share this presentation with your friends and neighbors, please invite them to church that day!

The Christmas Luncheon and Party will follow the service. Join us for this festive time filled with food, fellowship and caroling. Please sign up to bring salads or desserts as the meal and drinks are provided by the Christian Education and the M & O Committees. A gift swap with Santa will take place. Bring a gift item for the City Mission Society and Santa will give you a sweet treat.

MISSION & OUTREACH

CHRISTMAS FUND

For over 100 years, the Christmas Fund Offering has enabled the UCC to help care for those who serve the church as clergy or lay people. Your generous giving helps the Pension Board's Ministerial Assistance Program to provide over \$1.5 million in assistance to individuals and families. Payson Park Church will collect the annual Christmas offering on Sunday, December 19. Look for the offering envelopes in the pews that day. Thank you.



A COMMUNITY IN ACTION WITH AN ACTIVE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING: AN OFFERING TO OUR LOCAL FOOD PANTRY

Please bring in new canned goods and dry food items on Sunday, December 5th, to continue with the mission project for our two local food pantries in Belmont and Watertown! Led by Olivia Cronin this month, the "Active Prayer of Thanksgiving" will take place during the children's moment in worship and will be an offering of food (and/or money for food) to help feed God's hungry children. There will be a procession to the altar steps where the donations will be delivered. After church the teen youth will gather the offering for this month's recipient, the Belmont Food Pantry.

BRISTOL LODGE FOOD KITCHEN

Thank you for the donations toward the purchase of lasagnas from Costco for the November meal!

Next Date: Wed., Dec. 29
Delivery: 3-5 p.m.; Serve: 5-5:45 p.m.
Menu: Chili, cornbread, salad
Volunteers need to cook, deliver, serve.

Thank you!

CITY MISSION SOCIETY: CHRISTMAS SHOP

City Mission Society's **Christmas Shop Program** once again celebrates its partnership with local churches who give gifts of the heart to honor the birth of Jesus Christ and to help families and children in need. The CMS Christmas Shop brings the joys of giving and receiving to many people in the Greater Boston Metropolitan area annually. In 2009 over 2,400 adults and children benefited, thanks to the generosity of hundreds of members of more than 40 local churches, groups and organizations. In 2010 we expect the need to be equal if not greater.

Only NEW items are accepted and leave unwrapped:

Winter coats, sweaters and sweatshirts (large sizes)

Hats, mittens, gloves and scarves

Socks and underwear

Blankets and backpacks

Toys, games, and books for all ages

Gift cards from Target, Walgreens, CVS, Kohls,

Walmart, Shaw's and Stop and Shop



VOLUNTEERS SORT & PACK GIFTS FOR THEIR NEIGHBORS

More than 10,000 items are delivered to First Church in Winchester. They are sorted and repacked for distribution by volunteers from church youth groups, women's fellowships and other church groups, including families who want to help.

COLLECTION DATES: SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5 & 12

The children and youth are asked to bring a gift, unwrapped, on Sunday, December 12 and give it to Santa at the Christmas Party. Santa will be giving a sweet treat in return. Items will be taken to Winchester Church on Saturday, Dec. 18. Please speak with Nancy Slavinsky or the church office for more details.

EDUCATION & FELLOWSHIP

GOD'S GARDEN:

WRITES A RAP

Cary Morse and Madeline Cronin taught the youth class last month on the Bible Basics unit. The holy spirit led the class one day and they were inspired to write a rap song. We would like to share it with you.

The first five books are the Torah

I would like to read some more'

It's all about a promise

Long before the Amish

A tale of five books

With saviors and crooks

In Genesis was the world creation

In Exodus they left their nation

Leviticus tells people how to live right

In Numbers they counted the Israelites

In Deuteronomy Moses said goodbye

This Rap is really fly



THE GOOD AFTERNOONS:

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2:00 – 3:30 PM

Would you like to gather with old and new friends here at Payson Park Church? Could you use an afternoon filled with fun and laughter? This month's gathering of The Good Afternoons will be filled with the faithful spirit of fellowship as we give thanks for our life together in this season of Advent. Sharing gifts from our homes for a Yankee Swap, in addition to recounting favorite Christmas memories, we plan to have a great time. Join us if you have the afternoon free! For more information about this special holiday event, contact Lael Atkinson.



DECEMBER ADULT EDUCATION SERIES:

A TIME FOR PRAYER & WONDER

THURSDAYS, DECEMBER 9 & 16, 6:30 – 8:00 PM

As we find ourselves immersed in the hustle and bustle of the holidays, our Christian faith challenges us to balance secular expectations with the spiritual practices of prayer and service. These contemplative sessions will be filled with readings, meditations, and song as we gather to reflect on the meaning and miracle of Christmas. Led by Lael Atkinson, you are invited to come to one or both of these educational and fellowship opportunities. Slow down, simplify, and receive God's wondrous love. Light supper fare will be served. All are welcome!

SOMETHING TO CHEW ON

Every Pecan pie uses 1/2 lb- 3/4 lb of Pecans. It takes about 310 pecans halves to fill a one-pound bag. So there are about 78 pecans used in every pecan pie! Pecans are one of America's favorite nuts and are a good source of oleic acid, Vitamin B1 - Thiamin, magnesium, protein, and fiber. Pecans can help lower total blood cholesterol and combat heart disease. Pecans are believed to be helpful in fighting some cancers

WINTER BREAK:

FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE

The group will be taking their annual winter break during the month of December. They will meet again in 2011 on Tues., January 4 and continue, through the winter, weather permitting. Inspired by the knitting of prayer shawls, this is a time of "sharing and caring" in the spirit of faith, hope, and love. Please consider coming .

DECEMBER 2010

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5

**Communion Sunday
Food Pantry Collection Drive
The Reverend Lael Atkinson preaching**

9:00 AM Chancel Choir Rehearsal
9:45 AM Pageant rehearsal
10:00 AM Nursery Care
10:30 AM Worship, Church School & Rehearsal
11:30 AM Fellowship Hour

MONDAY, DECEMBER 6

9:00 AM Food Pantry Delivery

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 7

7:00 PM Church Council

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9

11:00 AM Staff meeting
6:30 PM Adult Education

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11

10:00 AM Party Set up

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12

Christmas Pageant Sunday

The Reverend Lael Atkinson presiding

9:00 AM Chancel Choir Rehearsal
9:00 AM Pageant Dress Call
10:00 AM Nursery Care
10:30 AM Worship and Pageant
11:30 AM Christmas Party & Luncheon

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 14

7:30 PM Property Committee

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15

2:00 PM The Good Afternoons

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16

6:30 PM Adult Education

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18 CMS Delivery

10:30 AM SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19

**Christmas Fund Offering
Service of Lesson and Carols**

The Reverend Lael Atkinson preaching

9:00 AM Chancel Choir Rehearsal
9:45 AM Youth Choir rehearsal
10:00 AM Nursery Care
10:30 AM Worship & Church School

MONDAY, DECEMBER 20 Messenger Deadline

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24 CHRISTMAS EVE

6:00 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal
7:00 PM Candlelight Worship Service

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26

Christmas Weekend Service

The Reverend Lael Atkinson presiding

9:00 AM Chancel Choir Rehearsal
10:00 AM Nursery Care
10:30 AM Worship & One Room Church School
11:30 AM Fellowship Hour

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 29

5:00 PM Bristol Lodge Food Kitchen Delivery



DO YOU NEED TO REACH THE PASTOR?

The Reverend Lael Atkinson can be reached through the Church Office or at home (617) 464-4990.

THE MESSENGER
PAYSON PARK CHURCH
365 BELMONT STREET
BELMONT MA 02478-3438

POINSETTIA ORDER FORM FOR CHRISTMAS SUNDAY ON DECEMBER 19, 2010
ORDER DUE MONDAY, DECEMBER 6TH



Donor Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

I would like to order _____ poinsettias at \$7.00 each. Enclosed is \$ _____.

I would like the flower to be given in memory of _____

I would like the flower to be given in honor of _____

Please check one. After the service on Sunday, December 19, I would like to:

_____ Take my plant(s) with me _____ Have my plant(s) shared with others

Place your order to the church office by Monday, Dec. 6, 2010. Please make check payable to Payson Park Church.