The sunflower in our backyard is finally blooming. I’ve been waiting for that to happen for a while.

At first, I wasn’t sure what this thing was…I figured it was probably just a weed. I considered cutting it down every time I ran the trimmer. But after a few weeks, I thought a little more about it. It’s right in the area where we hang our bird feeders. Most of what we feed the birds are sunflower seeds. So I thought I’d let it go and see what would happen.

Honestly, it’s not impressive. It’s not 10 feet high like some other sunflowers I’ve seen. I’m surprised by how skinny and short it is, actually. The leaves look like something’s been eating them up. I wasn’t at all convinced it was ever going to flower. I am not at all sure how the stalk will be able to support the head.

I have been pondering for a while the lesson in this, and I think there are a few.

We’ve begun talking about Jesus’ parables in worship. Jesus told a lot of parables about seeds. Here’s one of my favorites:
Then Jesus said, “This is what God’s kingdom is like. It’s as though someone scatters seed on the ground, then sleeps and wakes night and day. The seed sprouts and grows, but the farmer doesn’t know how. The earth produces crops all by itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full head of grain. Whenever the crop is ready, the farmer goes out to cut the grain because it’s harvest time. (Mark 4:26-29, CEB)

The parable is all about the utter LACK of human activity in the coming of God’s reign. In the case of the sunflower, this is extreme – we didn’t even plant the seed – the squirrels were probably responsible for that. All I had to do was leave it alone and see what would happen.

All I had to do was leave it alone even though it didn’t look anything like I expected it to look. Even though I wasn’t at all sure it was going to survive to become a sunflower at all.

Along the way, the task was simply to “be patient and see what would happen.” Are there things in your life right now where you just need to “be patient and see what will happen?”

It’s not easy. In fact, sometimes it’s one of the hardest things you can do. Because it requires you to trust in a few things that may or may not be evident right now:
1) that a seed actually HAS been planted
2) that it’s the seed you WANTED to see planted
3) that the seed will SURVIVE
4) and that the seed will mature INTO THE THING you were hoping for

Patience is hard. Because patience requires faith. And having faith is sometimes the hardest thing we can do. But sometimes it’s all you CAN do – just to “be patient and see what happens.”

Happy August! Peace,
United Methodist Women News

The Flea Market is Coming!! We are gearing up for the Annual Community Flea Market on Saturday, September 14th!

This is a popular annual event for all of Medford and it will be here in our parking lot! Besides perusing great bargains on gently used items, you can also enjoy a variety of delicious food items including homemade baked goods, bagels, grilled all beef hot dogs and meatball sandwiches and more!

Included in this newsletter is the registration form for you to reserve a “parking lot” space to sell your stuff! The price is still just $15.00, per space, if received by September 9th!! The money we raise from selling the spaces, is all donated to local South Jersey Mission Projects.

P.S. We are NOT collecting items for a White Elephant table this year...thank you for your past support for this project!!

PROCEDURE

1. Arrive between 7:00 am and 8:00 am to set up. Everything must be set up and cars must be moved out by 8:45 am.
2. Vendors are responsible for bringing their own tables and tents.
3. Selling of food items is not permitted. We will have food for sale that day.
4. All unsold items must be removed by the end of the day. NOTHING is to be left in the Church parking lot or trash cans.

Mail your check and form to:
Medford United Methodist Church
2 Hartford Road – Medford, NJ 08055
Attn: Flea Market

Contact Information: Ginger Harriett (vtharriett@comcast.net) or Kathleen Stolz (kathleen@medfordumc.org) if you have interest or questions. Thank you!
THE BUSY BEES ARE EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE TWO WIN-WIN FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITIES COMING YOUR WAY THIS FALL!! (A win for YOU and a win for our MUMC!)

The Busy Bees is a women’s group at MUMC who has as our main mission to provide monetary assistance for our church in any way we can as needs arise.

The first Win-Win is an opportunity for you to purchase gift cards, to use for yourself or give as gifts for Christmas, birthdays, or any time you need a thoughtful gift. The cool thing about it is that, for example, if you purchase a $100 gift card for Shop Rite, you get the full $100 to spend at Shop Rite (or whatever store you purchase), while at the same time you’ll be helping the church since the Bees would get a small percentage of each sale. Everyone shops for food, so there’s a big win-win! There are hundreds of stores from which to choose, from food stores to gas stations to Wawa to clothing and gift stores and more.

Another way we plan to offer a Win-Win is by teaming up with Boscov’s for their “Friends Helping Friends.” The way it works is that Boscov’s gives us (we don’t pay for them) a certain number of tickets and we sell them for $5.00 each. Then those who buy a ticket would use it on Wednesday, October 16th to get 25% off all purchases on that day. What a great time to do your Christmas shopping or purchase that large item you’ve been waiting to get!

Additional information will follow as we get closer to the launch of these two exciting initiatives.

PASTOR APPRECIATION DAY..... A BIG SUCCESS!

What a great opportunity we all had to thank our Pastoral Team for another year of service. By all reports the lunch was well received and a big thank you goes out to the Busy Bees and Medford United Methodist Men for funding this special occasion. Shop Rite came through for us once again with free delivery, a frequent flyer discount and excellent service. If you ever need to put on a special event even much smaller than this one, we recommend speaking with Beth-Ann Fantacone, their catering manager . . . 609/605-0995.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO HEAR MORE ABOUT?

During the summer, Pastors Joe and Kathleen work to plan sermon series for the coming year. We’d love to get some input from all of you. What are some of the issues you struggle with? What are some of your questions about God and/or life in general? What would you like to understand better? Are there parts of the Bible that baffle you? Send any and all of your suggestions to Pastor Joe (joe@medfordumc.org) - we’ll be planning now through mid-August.
Pastors Appreciation Day Remarks

Following are the remarks from Jeff Higgins representing the Staff/Parish Relations Committee that were shared on Pastor Appreciation Sunday . . . .

When Christ ascended into Heaven, he gave gifts to the church. One of those gifts was Pastors. Kathleen and Joe, you are our gifts from God to the Medford United Methodist Church. We recently sat down with our pastors in preparation for this day and would like to share their thoughts with you now.

They have just completed their 6th year with us. Can you believe it has been that long? Joe and Kathleen have generously displayed their gifts with us regarding pastoral care and educational opportunities which take up a great deal of their time, but many of us may not be aware that in addition to their duties here in Medford like weddings, funerals, baptisms, confirmation and sermons they also have district and conference responsibilities as well.

As an example, Kathleen serves as the Chairperson of the District Committee on Ministry. This committee guides the ministerial candidate through a process which along with the seminary studies leads to becoming a minister. Joe is also involved with the district and serves as a Circuit Elder. He works with 7 or 8 churches and 6 or 7 pastors as a mentor, on a regular basis.

When you ask them to discuss their recent accomplishments here at MUMC, they seem to have a different approach. Instead of the individual responsibilities already discussed they talk and act more like a team. As you may remember 6 years ago they were appointed here at almost the exact same time. A time of real need here in sleepy little Medford. At that time Joe had some familiarity with Kathleen’s work at the conference level and was quick to confirm the SPRC selection of Kathleen as his team mate shortly thereafter. At that time there were only about a dozen local churches with two pastors and Joe insisted that we would continue to be one of them. They quickly became a homogenous force for change which our church so desperately needed.

It is that team approach that has led them to 6 very productive years of growth and development. Here are a few on their most recent accomplishments. The successful closing of the capital campaign of just a little under 1.1 million dollars for the building of this fine facility that we are sitting in today. The FLC is just beginning to serve the community by offering the use to Boy Scouts, cheerleaders and drama clubs with many more on the horizon. In fact we may be the only group able to bring Republicans and Democrats together in one room . . . TO VOTE! We are also currently looking for programs that can be a self-sustaining way to serve the community. As Joe says “part of our calling is to serve the common good.”

Another accomplishment is the development of the Disciples Pathway, a 6 week program which a lot of us participated in during Lent this year. This program outlined most of the major ways we can become better disciples. This also became an important step in expanding our small group participation, a very key factor in our future growth.

Another important accomplishment was the completion of new Endowment Program. This program is an easy and efficient way for you to contribute into perpetuity the continuance of our church and its ministries beyond our 200th year coming up in 2021 and on to 300 years of service. John Schmidinger refers to these as the good old days.

As far as the future goes Joe and Kathleen are often spending time planting trees under which they will never see the shade but will provide for the congregations to come. Even today Joe announced the release of our own app, a way for those of us who are mobile users to access needed information while on the go. This is in addition to our completely updated web site.

All in all a great deal has been accomplished this year and I have only highlighted some of them due to our more immediate need for sustenance. LUNCH!

I am sure a few of you have a personal story to tell about how these folks have helped you over a hurdle, and we can do one of two things in this regard. You can stand now and we will get a microphone to you or you can wait until Kathleen or Joe come to your table. Please take this opportunity today, Pastor Appreciation Day, to give our Pastors the thanks that they deserve.

I would now like to thank a few of the people that made this day possible:

Rich Campbell
Clarence Beverage
Milt Eisenhardt and his FLC team
Tish and John Cornue
Bruce Rosvold
The entire SPR committee and other volunteers
And the financial support of Busy Bees and Medford Methodist Men
**SUMMER BOOK CLUB NEWS**

On Wednesday, August 7 at 7:00 pm we will be lakeside at the home of Barb Frame to discuss the novel, *Next Year in Havana* by Chanel Cleeton. This is the inspiring story of a Cuban-American woman who travels to Havana after the death of her beloved grandmother, where she discovers the roots of her identity - and unearths a family secret hidden since the revolution. We always welcome new readers! Any questions, please contact the church office or Patty Rosvold, pbrosvold179@verizon.net.

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**LET'S WALK TOGETHER!**

This summer, MUMC is starting a walking in nature group. Join us for reflection, prayer and connection, as we take a meditative stroll in nature. We will be meeting twice a month on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays throughout the summer at 8:00 am. Remaining dates are: August 10 and August 24. All ages and stages are welcome. We will be starting this program at Freedom Park, but other ideas and places are welcome. Meet at 8:00 am at the gazebo closest to the bathrooms at the park, dressed to move and bring water. Contact Barbara Carlson at carlsonb2@comcast.net or at 609/518-9267 for more information, or to help support this new adventure.

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**GLENNA'S GLADIATORS**

Medford UMC Book Club has formed a team, Glenna's Gladiators, to join the walk to defeat ALS on Saturday, October 26 at Citizen's Bank Park. Please join us as we honor the memory of our MUMC friends, Glenna Bishop and Diane O'Brien, by walking with us, donating to us or praying for us! Check out our team web page at www.alsa.org. For more information contact the church office or Patty Rosvold at pbrosvold179@verizon.net.

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**NEWS FROM THE RECONCILING CONGREGATION TEAM**

At the direction of the Church Council a team of twenty people gathered for the first meeting of the Reconciling Congregation Team on July 15. Scott Stahl was named chairperson and Laura Beverage will serve as vice chair. Pastors Joe and Kathleen will work with the Team as their coaches.

The mission of the Team is to inform, educate and prepare the congregation for the possibility of becoming a Reconciling Congregation. The first step in the Team's work is to assess this local congregation on our desire to fully welcome the LGBTQ community into the membership of Medford United Methodist Church.

It is the intention of the Team to keep the congregation apprised of its work through the monthly Messenger and the weekly bulletin. Please direct any questions about the work of the Team to either the chair, Scott Stahl, or one of the members: Wayne Adams, Laura Beverage, Bethany Carl, Tish Cornue, Milt Eisenhardt, Haines Hoag, Barbara Jensen, Allie Maese, Gina Matthews, Melissa Mauer, Alana Miller, Bill Miller, Diane Miller, Sharon Payne, Steve Redeker, Bruce Rosvold, Frank Waldmann, Edie Wechsler and Cathy Whitecar.
SCHOOL SUPPLIES COLLECTION

Back to School already? Not quite – but “Back to School” is just around the corner and there are local children who can use our assistance in getting ready for that first day. We are asking for the church’s help with the following donations:

Child-sized backpacks – preferably non-gender specific!
- Pencils – non-mechanical, boxes of 12
- Loose-leaf notebook paper (100-150 page packets)
- Binders – 1 inch, hardcover
- Folders – 3-hole punched
- Crayons – 24 count boxes
- Markers – 10-12 count boxes, washable
- Erasers – pink, rectangular (not cap!)
- Yellow highlighters
- Glue sticks

A team of youth will be sorting the supplies and packing the backpacks as equally as possible. To make this easier, please put all supplies in a plastic shopping bag inside the back pack and only donate items from this list. If you are only donating supplies, that’s great too! Supplies and backpacks can be dropped off outside the sanctuary or in the FLC Lobby. Please make sure all donations are at the church by Wednesday, August 21st. Donations will be distributed to the children by the Neighborhood Center in Camden, the Christian Caring Center and IHOC. Please join us in supporting these children! Please contact Chris Carl, cmctrumpet10700@gmail.com, 856/404-1706 with any questions.

MEDFORD UMC AT NATIONAL NIGHT OUT, FREEDOM PARK

Join us on Tuesday, August 6 between 6:00–9:00 pm to share the news about what’s happening at Medford UMC. We’ll be inviting people to our Trunk or Treat in October with trunks decorated with Vacation Bible School and Canoe Carnival themes. Would you be willing to decorate a trunk with our Vacation Bible School decorations? It’s always a fun evening and a great way to get acquainted with the community. Contact Pastor Kathleen to let her know you can help tell our story to Medford.

DOWNLOAD THE MUMC APP!

Last month, we launched our brand-new MUMC app (for both Apple and Android)! This new tool will bring together all things MUMC in one convenient place. Miss a sermon? Catch up with the video or audio from last week’s message. Read the latest news, announcements and events. Manage your recurring giving. And in time, we’ll be bringing you small group resources and devotional guides. We’re excited about all this new tool has to offer. Download and install it today - text “medfordapp” to 77977 to go directly to the download page, or search your app store for “Medford UMC.” And send us your feedback - you can do that right from the app!
OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

On August 4th our Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) families will again return for a two week stay until August 18th. The first week we are hosting the hosts, St. Mary’s of the Lakes, who are supporting the IHN families at our church. MUMC volunteers are especially needed for August 11th through August 18th. We will need drivers, food staples, meals prepped, dinner, evening and overnight hosts! Please help us to support the IHN families of Burlington County. Look for sign ups outside the sanctuary and in the FLC lobby. Please contact Bill or Barbara Carlson with any questions: carlsonb2@comcast.net or by phone: Bill, 609/273-5791, Barbara, 609/605-6362.

Would you be willing to serve once or twice a year by preparing the communion elements on the first Sunday of the month? Sharing in Holy Communion is an essential part of our gathering together as a faith community. Instructions and training are provided. Please contact Lisa in the church office.

We are looking for Contemporary worship coffee hospitality team members and need recruits to serve on either the 1st or 4th Sunday of the month. The duties include arriving 45 minutes early to turn on the coffee makers, make coffee, hot water, cut up the cakes, serve them and keep the counter supplied until after worship and then clean up and put things away. If you would like more information, please contact Lisa in the church office or Milt Eisenhardt, meisen1224@comcast.net; 856/298-6500. This is an important part of the ministry of welcome.

A few of our long time Sunday school leaders are stepping down after many years of sharing their gifts with the children and youth of MUMC. If you enjoy being with children and sharing the word of God, the Sunday school would love to welcome you as a class leader! Teaching experience is NOT necessary! In order to continue this important ministry of the church we need leaders like you to be a part of Sunday school! Please contact Leigh Catapano (leighcatapano@gmail.com) or Karen Maese (asmeam825@gmail.com) to find out if Sunday school is where you’d like to share your gifts.
Medford United Methodist Church thanks you for your support!

Would you like to advertise your Business in the Newsletter? Please contact the Church Office (609)654-8111 or office@medfordumc.org
My life goes on in endless song; Above earth's lamentation, I hear the new, though far-off hymn; That hails a new creation; No storm can shake my inmost calm; While to that rock I'm clinging; It sounds an echo in my soul. How can I keep from singing?

These are words from an anthem sung by our Wesley Choir. This hymn, attributed to the Quaker poet, Robert Lowry, also can be found in The Faith We Sing.

Perhaps you never thought about how deeply our singers are affected by the words they sing, but – although the notes they sing make beautiful music – it is the texts that carry the spiritual truths of our faith. And, for some reason, because these texts are sung, they stay in the mind and heart, often for a lifetime. So our children learn scripture passages, our teens encounter theological concepts to think over and discuss in other venues and our adults find meaning, strength and comfort in the words of poets of ages past and writers of today. Consequently, although the music our choirs bring on Sunday mornings enhances the worship experience for everyone, it adds a more intense spiritual experience for the choristers.

If you’ve never thought of this aspect of being part of a choir, maybe it has piqued your interest. MUMC offers choral opportunities for just about everyone in our church family. Why not consider enriching your spiritual and musical life by joining with us this coming season? Information about our choirs and their rehearsal times are given below. If you have additional questions, or wish to talk further about our music program, please feel free to call Carol Reilly at 609/953-3805 or email Crlrlly@aol.com. Or call the church office, leave your name and contact information and Carol will get back to you.

Enjoy the rest of the summer and maybe we’ll see you in the fall.

**Jr. Choir:** grades 2-6; rehearses on Thursday, 4:15-5:15; sings at 11:00 worship most Sundays from October to June.  
First rehearsal: **Thursday, Sept. 5.**

**Youth Choir:** grades 7-12; rehearses on Thursday, 7:15-8:25; sings at 11:00 worship most Sundays from October to June.  
First rehearsal: **Thursday, Sept. 5.**

**Wesley Choir:** adult SAB; rehearses on Tuesday, 8:30-10:00 PM; sings at 8:15 worship from September through June.  
First rehearsal: **Tuesday, Sept. 3.**

**Garwood Choir:** adult mixed; rehearses Thursday, 8:30-10:00 PM; sings at 11:00 worship from September through June.  
First rehearsal: **Thursday, Sept. 5.**
Here at Medford UMC we welcome children at all our worship services. During the summer we meet at 9:00 am in the FLC and 10:30 am in the Sanctuary. We want to remind our families with children that we have a childcare room for children from infant – kindergarten. The room is upstairs in the FLC and is staffed each week by two fully trained, background checked, well qualified adults, from 8:45-11:45 am during the summer months. Just ask the usher or greeter if you need directions to the childcare room.

In addition, in the back of the FLC there will be tables and chairs set up with quiet activities for children who may get restless sitting within the congregation. Children are welcome to sit at the tables in our KIDZ KORNER and enjoy a more creative time in worship with books, coloring pages and activity sheets. Children may also bring their own quiet activities to use either in the KIDZ KORNER or in the congregation.

Parents are reminded that they are still responsible for their children even when they are at the KIDZ KORNER – this is not an adult-supervised activity center. We welcome input from parents how to improve this worship experience for their whole family to spend time together worshipping God. Please speak with Pastor Kathleen, by sending an email or stopping by the office during the week.
Our Summer Worship Schedule

9:00 am  Contemporary Worship in our Family Life Center
10:30 am  Traditional Worship in the Sanctuary

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Deadline for the September issue is August 15th

GO PAPERLESS!

And get your copy of the Messenger in FULL color!

You can help our church to save postage expense and copying costs by simply going to our website and signing up to receive the Messenger via email! You will receive your Messenger days before the snail mail version would arrive.

Hey, it’s the GREEN thing to do!