



MESSENGER
of the
**First Congregational
Church**
United Church of Christ
121 W. Foster St.
Melrose, Massachusetts

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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Christ

Hope, Peace, Love and Joy. Those are the gifts of God represented on the Advent Wreath. We began lighting those candles and utilizing this spiritual tool when the Advent season began back on December 1st. We continued lighting one candle each week and then all of them during the season of Christmas.

We set aside the Advent Wreath now as we move into the season of Epiphany. Before we do so, however, let's consider the meaning of the last and most important candle on the wreath: The Christ Candle.

"Helping Other People Everyday", "People Everywhere Are Created Equal", "Leave Out Violence Everywhere", and "Jesus, Others, You". These are the acronyms we pondered for the Hope, Peace, Love and Joy candles of Advent.

In keeping with this devotional approach, the Christ Candle can remind us that with Christ's birth at Christmas there are Christian Hearts Re-born In Spirit and Truth. C.H.R.I.S.T.

This is the true power of Christ's coming into the world. The power foretold by John the Baptist and the power experienced by those who directly felt Jesus' ministry. It is also the power that is available to us today. This power is healing and transformative. It energizes and inspires us to our fullest potential within the situations in which we find ourselves.

Christian Hearts Re-born In Spirit and Truth is a great phrase because there are so many of us who declare ourselves to be Christian but stand in desperate need of a re-connection to the true meaning of our faith. What, after all, does it mean to be Christian? Most people can rattle off the main features of our belief system but faith is more than a historical texts and doctrines. Faith, in the end, is a connection to God. All of our doctrines and beliefs—generated over the last 2,000 years—are attempts to deepen this connection.

The problem for many *Christians* is that our *Hearts* have forgotten the *Spirit* and *Truth* behind our beliefs. That is, we have forgotten that it is ultimately all about the movement of God's spirit in our lives and in our world and cultivating an undying awareness of this

Sunday, January 12, 2014
Food Pantry Sunday

- 9:00 AM – Choir Rehearsal**
- 10:00 AM – WORSHIP**
and Church School, Pre K - 12
- 11:15 AM – Coffee Hour**
- 11:30 AM – Inquirers' Class, Library**
- 11:30 AM – Band of Praise Rehearsal**
- 11:30 AM – Treblemakers Rehearsal**
- 7:00 PM – Confirmation Class**

*THE STEEPLE is lit this week in loving memory of
Ted Cinella through a gift given by his wife, Sue Cinella.*

DURING THE COMING WEEK

Tuesday, January 14

3:45 PM – Bread of Life Dinner, St. Paul's Malden

Wednesday, January 15

7:15 PM – Bells Rehearsal, sanctuary

Thursday, January 16

3:30 PM – Staff Meeting

7:00 PM – Choir Rehearsal

The following groups meet here regularly:

Boy Scouts – Tuesdays at 7:00 PM in the basement

Girl Scouts – Mondays, 2:45, Thursdays 2:45, Fridays 2:30, 7/8

Cub Scouts – Sunday, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays

Al-Anon – weekdays at 12 noon, Sunday at 1 & 7 PM – Rm. 8

Blue of a Kind – Mondays at 7:00 PM in the Music Room

S.A.R.P. – Tuesdays at 6:30 PM, lounge

A.W.O.L. – Tuesdays at 7:30 PM, 7/8, lounge, Rm. 1

Tai Chi for Arthritis – Wednesdays at 10:00 AM, Room 8

Vital Cycles - Thursdays at 7:00 PM, lounge

O.A. – Fridays at 7 PM, lounge

A.A. – Wednesdays at 7:30 PM, Fridays at 8:00 PM and Saturdays at 3:00 PM – Rm. 8

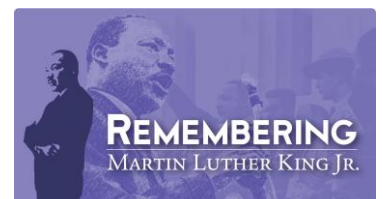
spirit each and every day. The only way this is possible is to allow Christmas to be a time when we are *Re-born* to the depths and wonder of God's empowering accompaniment with us.

No matter the time of year, may the light of the Advent Candles of Hope, Peace, Love, Joy, and Christ illumine your heart and your way.

See you in church,

Rev. Dominic

**Melrose Community
MLK Celebration
January 20, 2014**



**First Congregational Church
121 West Foster Street, 5:00 PM**



Bob McVoy, Colby Orton, Amy Spollett, Thorsten Vogel, Becky Faro, David Shakespeare, Gem Colvin, Marilyn McComas, Kate Watson, Dot Allen, Bob Pierce, Anne Wing.



Christian Ed News:

Parents of Middle and High School:

Tuesday, January 14th, is the Church's committed date to serve at Bread of Life. If you and your son or daughter are attending that afternoon, please let Janiele know if you would like to meet at the church at 4 pm or if you will be meeting at BoL. Thank you for your attention to this note.

Mission Information

We are still collecting new or gently used children's books for the Bread of Life food pantry.

Mark your calendars for the Souper Bowl of Caring, which takes place after church on February 2nd.



Jan 14th: MS/HS – Bread of Life

Tuesday afternoon 4-6 PM (We will meet at the church and go over.)

Feb. 2nd: MS—Souper Bowl of Caring

Looking ahead.....

HS: March 22nd – Fast

MS/HS: April 6th – Amazing Race

MS/HS: April 27th – Earth Day Cleanup



Chronic Pain Self-Management Program

Hallmark Health System and Mystic Valley Elder Services are sponsoring a Free Program on Chronic Pain Self-Management for six sessions on Wednesdays, beginning January 22, through February 26, from 9:30 am - noon at Saltonstall Building, 121 Riverside Ave in Medford (Edgerly Hall). The Program is a "must attend" for those who want to learn how to manage their chronic pain, leading to a more satisfying and fulfilling life. Open to adults of all ages who have a primary diagnosis of pain or care for someone who does. This program is free, however registration is required as space is limited. To register or for more information, call (781) 338-7823.