



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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Faithfulness in Times of Division

After the dust has settled, it is remarkable to reflect on what has come out of the recent presidential election. In short, "more of the same" has been rejected and a completely unorthodox, outside the box approach embraced.

While Secretary Clinton and President Obama have laid the groundwork for a peaceful transition of power, there remain some very dark clouds hanging over it all. Clouds of fear and anger. Clouds of division and uncertainty.

How do we, as Christians, live faithfully in such times? How can we help smooth the path ahead?

I have heard some say that smoothing things out is not possible. In fact, things need to get worse before they get better, they say. On the one hand, for conservatives that means righting the wrongs of years of progressivism and returning to "traditional values". On the other hand, for progressives that means standing up against bigotry and racism and any attempt to roll back the clock.

You can see how things are rather volatile. A certain kind of tribalism is at hand in which it doesn't matter who gets crushed in the process as long as your side comes out on top and gets to shape society.

I am convinced that we, as people of faith, need to exit such an environment. Not in a way that denies the polarization of our country right now but to remember who we ultimately are: disciples of Christ.

It may be helpful to remember that even before we are Americans we are Christians. That means that the family to which we belong is an international one and extremely large and diverse.

Remembering that we are people of faith before anything else can also be helpful in gaining healthy distance and perspective regarding what is happening. Rather than fighting a battle to make sure things go our way as Americans, our call is to minister in the name of Christ. If we continue to work hard for the ideals of our faith (the Realm of God), the *consequent* result will be that our country will become the place we want it to be.

Sunday, November 20, 2016
Thanksgiving Sunday
Faith Commitment Sunday

9:00 AM – Morning Star Voices Rehearsal
10:00 AM – WORSHIP and Sunday School
11:15 AM – Coffee Hour
11:15 AM – Thanksgiving Dinner, Narthex

DURING THE WEEK

Thursday, November 17

4:00 – 7:00 PM – Bread of Life Dinner, American Legion,
368 Pleasant St., Malden

Saturday, November 19

9 AM to Noon – Fall Cleanup Day

Tuesday, November 22

7:00 to 8:00 PM – Morning Star Voices Rehearsal

Thursday, November 24 - Office Closed

Happy Thanksgiving!

Friday, November 25 – Office Closed

Morning after Thanksgiving, come on down and join volunteers to hang lights and snowflakes in the narthex.

Sunday, November 27

First Sunday of Advent

The following groups meet here regularly:

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

Girl Scouts – Sundays, 3:00 to 5:00 PM

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. – Mondays and Tuesdays at 6:30 PM, Lounge

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

A.A. – Mondays at 4:30 PM, & 7:00 PM (men), Tuesdays at 4:30 PM,

7:30 PM (Women's AWOL), Wednesdays at 4:30 PM & 7:30 PM,

Thursdays at 4:30 PM and 7:00 PM, Fridays at 8:00 PM and

Saturdays at 9:00 AM (men) and 3:00 PM – Rm. 8

In other words, our job is always to live by the values of inclusion, empowerment, justice, equality, peace and love; not to assure a particular political outcome. That may be a small distinction, but it can help allay anxiety and lock us back in on a path of hope.

Jesus said that we are "in the world but not of the world". The resurrection reminds us that new life is always possible in our world as long as we continue to seek "earth as it is in heaven". May we live faithfully each day.

See you in church,

Rev. Dominic



Sally Pollack, Mary Sakata (Trish Faro's daughter), Ginny Niles, Tom McLoughlin (Judy Murphy's brother), Nyal Fuentes, Bryan Mc Allister-Grande, Claire Griffin, Herb Gray, Bill Albright, Barbara Wellington, Becky Faro, Bill Copeland, Gem Colvin, Dot Allen,

Bob Pierce, Anne Wing, Ella Boyle, Scott Chisholm.

Random Acts of Kindness

On November 20, please join the Melrose community as we honor a day of Random Acts of Kindness. Reach out to your fellow citizens and do something good. Through a small, kind gesture, you'll put a smile on the face of another and feel empowered that a simple act can help to make the world a better place. Buy a cup of coffee, give up a parking spot, smile at a stranger, compliment a friend, or be present, to listen. Honor kindness on this day.



SUNDAY SCHOOL: CHRISTMAS PAGEANT Sunday December 18th during church service

We are going to have a Christmas Pageant on December 18th instead of the normal Paper Bag Pageant. We are looking for children, middle and high school youth and adults to participate. The Narrator will do all the speaking. Other roles will dress up in costume. The entire congregation will participate in songs throughout the pageant.



There will be one brief rehearsal Sunday December 11th.

Please sign up on the poster in the Narthex or email Heidi Buser.

- Roles:
- Narrator (High School or Adult)
 - Mary with baby (or doll) - Middle school, high school or adult
 - Joseph - Middle school, high school or adult
 - 3 Kings
 - Shepherds (children, youth or adults - multiple parts)
 - Angels (children - multiple parts)
 - Star
 - Animals (children - multiple parts)

We are also looking for some crafty volunteers to help with the costumes and props. Maureen is organizing the costumes and props we have on hand, but we need help with some animal costumes that were damaged and review of all costumes. In addition, if someone can manage the costumes the day of that would be a big help.

Finally, we would like a core group to commit to the pageant, but will take walk on roles the day of.

Thank you
Heidi Buser



6TH ANNUAL THANKSGIVING DINNER NOVEMBER 20TH Right after Church

Turkey
DINNER

On November 20th, right after the service, our church will have its 6th Annual Thanksgiving Dinner! It is always a meaningful time in that we all can gather in the Narthex, share in a delicious potluck meal and visit with one another.

As in the past, there will be turkey for everyone, and members of the congregation bring their choice of a side dish, salad, or dessert.

Please plan to join us on November 20th. We hope to see you there!

Donna and Ron Miner

Fall Clean Up: Saturday, November 19th! 9:00 a.m. to Noon

Join us as we rake up the leaves and prepare the grounds for winter. There may also be some interior cleaning jobs. Hope to see you there!





Winter Wonderland Fair
December 2 – 6:00-8:00 pm

December 3 – 9:00 am-2:00 pm

FRIDAY NIGHT SUPPER 6-8pm

Baked Potato Bar
Mac 'n cheese
Hot dogs

Contact: Jim Sugrue

COMFORT FOOD LUNCH Saturday 11:30-1:30

Chili
Clam Chowder
Hot dogs and more!

Looking ahead to FAIR WEEK (important preparation!)

Morning after Thanksgiving, Nov. 25 come on down and join volunteers to hang lights and snowflakes in the narthex.

Face painter(s) for Saturday in the children's room.

Icing Maker For the gingerbread house construction: Tuesday (11/29) or Wed. (11/30) evenings.

Sign up in the narthex for work shifts the evening and day of the Fair.

Take posters to distribute around town advertising the Fair.

Donate goods: jewelry, books, collectibles, raffle baskets, Christmas decorations, toys, tools, gift table items, baked goods, auction services and goods.

Gingerbread House ingredients: graham crackers, 2 lb. bags of powdered sugar, mini candy canes and small hard candies.

Construction: Tues. (11/29) and Wed. (11/30) evenings.

The Gift table is looking for new or barely-used gifts still in their original boxes if possible. Some ideas are purses, wallets, scarves, small decorative items, new candles, placemats, napkins & any item that can be purchased as a gift for a parent, sibling, grandparent or teacher. Pet items such as small wraps, toys or bandanas are other ideas.

Contact: Ginny Altmann



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CHRISTMAS FLOWERS - \$15.00 per plant

Send your order form by Sunday, December 11 to: Darby Drafts, 25 Adams St., Melrose MA 02176

Ordered by: _____

Phone #: _____

IN MEMORY OF:

of plants ordered _____ Amount enclosed: \$ _____

Please make checks payable to *First Congregational Church*.

