

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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Feeling Alone

Do you ever feel alone?

Many people do. It is easy to feel alone when you actually live alone as many of our retired folks do. But it is also possible to feel alone when you are part of an active family.

Feeling "alone in a crowd" is also a real thing. As odd as it may sound, being crammed onto a packed subway car can feel...isolating.

It is also the case that, when faced with a dilemma, it is far more difficult to be sure you are doing the right thing when you are alone.

Being alone may be a physical reality or a state of mind. Either way, it is not an easy thing.

As much as some might crave to be alone (such as those who are parents of busy kids), the value of solitude wanes more quickly than we might anticipate and we long to once again be with people and, more particularly, those we love.

It is really when solitude turns to isolation that things get truly difficult. We humans are, by nature, social beings. We need other people in our lives, we need to feel vital and necessary. We need to know that we belong.

Feeling alone, in any of its forms, can cause a fog of meaninglessness to drift into our lives. It can even reach the point of feeling that we don't matter.

Where ever you might be on the "alone-ness continuum", it is crucial that you remember the power of the incarnation and Epiphany. These are some of the most healing truths of our faith that can make all the difference in our lives because here's the thing:

The coming of Christ at Christmas makes being alone impossible. The miracle of God becoming one of us in Jesus Christ is that God has essentially said: "You are so important to me that I want to become one of you so that I will fully know what *your* life is like. More than that, I give myself to you and I give you the church so that you will never be alone."

When this truth sinks in, isolation evaporates. You come to realize that you are eternally accompanied and, with the gift of the church, you can never be without

Sunday, January 22, 2017

9:00 AM – Morning Star Voices Rehearsal
10:00 AM – WORSHIP and Sunday School
11:15 AM – Coffee Hour
11:30 AM – New Member Class, Library
7:00 PM – Confirmation Class

DURING THE WEEK

****Thursday, January 19****

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

Tuesday, January 24

7:15 to 8:15 PM – Morning Star Voices Rehearsal

Wednesday, January 25

7:15 PM – Bells rehearsal

Sunday, January 29 – New Member Sunday

10:00 AM – Worship and Sunday School
11:30 AM – Fair Debrief Meeting, Lounge
7:00 PM – Confirmation Class

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

loving companions on life's journey. The light of God's love (Epiphany) is in you and around you always.

The consequence of this is that we feel good.

And when we *feel* good we *do* good. In doing good, we carry on Christ's ministry of reconciliation. We ourselves, then, become the instrument of deliverance for others who are feeling alone.

See you in church,



Anne Wing, Ella Boyle, Scott Chisholm.

Bob Hughes, Ray Luebbe (Betsy Garrett's father), Mary Sakata and Becky Faro (Trish Faro's daughters), Ginny Niles, Nyal Fuentes, Claire Griffin, Herb Gray, Bill Albright, Bill Copeland, Merle Copeland, Gem Colvin, Dot Allen, Bob Pierce,

✠ ***Our prayers and sympathy to the family and friends of Arthur Whitman who passed away last week in Belfast Maine. He was 90 years old and one of our 50+ members (at 70 years). His daughter brought him here to church when she could, most recently in October, and for the 50+ celebration Sundays.***

BOSTON WOMEN'S MARCH

The Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ invites you to the Boston Women's March for America on Saturday, January 21, 2017.

Where: Meet at the "Make Way for Ducklings" statue in the Public Garden in Boston at the corner of Beacon and Charles Streets, across from the staging area for the start of the March. Using public transportation is strongly urged for this event!

When: We will gather at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, January 21 and join the rally that proceeds the March at 11:00 a.m. The whole event is scheduled between 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Our UCC group is committing to be together from our gathering spot at 10:30 a.m. until the finish of the March at 2:00 p.m.

What: This March is organized in Boston and coincides with Marches happening in the same time frame across the nation. Its stated mission is "We stand for religious freedom, human rights, climate justice, racial justice, economic justice and reproductive justice. Together we will send a message to our leaders and the world that the United States of America stands for values of human decency, equal rights and freedom from discrimination. Ours is a peaceful, nonpartisan march."

Why: We March to speak truth to power. By gathering in ways such as these, we join a long line of forbears who spoke truth to power as proclaimed by prophets of old, coined in a phrase by Quakers and embodied in the ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Who: Anyone - this March, while led by women, is open to everyone!

FAIR FEEDBACK MEETING!!!



There will be a meeting in the lounge following the service on January 29 to discuss the 2016 Winter Wonderland Fair. We'd love to hear from you about what you observed that went well,

and what ideas you might have to make improvements. If you aren't able to attend the meeting, but have some ideas, please let us know by emailing Sallie at shklemm@verizon.net and/or Nancy at ngift@mit.edu.



Mission Opportunity – Bread of Life

January 19TH is the Third Thursday of the month... so the FCC volunteers are heading to **Bread of Life** in Malden! We would love to have a few more people join us. Bread of Life provides the food, we prepare and cook it, then serve the clients. Our team from First Congregational Church volunteers from 4pm – 7pm. You can make a difference, even if you can only spare an hour during that time!

The location for the meals is: **The American Legion Post 69, 368 Pleasant Street, in Malden**— one block from the Malden MBTA station, near the intersection of Rte 60 and Pleasant Street. (There is a parking lot!!!)

If you can't make it to the dinner but would still like to help, we can always use donations of dessert. If you have questions about this mission of our church, please speak with Sallie Klemm shklemm@verizon.net or 781-665-0159.

RACIAL JUSTICE MINISTRY

A group of us have been meeting once a month at the Garrett's home to discuss racial justice issues. We have been reading the curriculum *White Privilege: Let's Talk—A Resource for Transformational Dialogue*, put out by the United Church of Christ. You can download the curriculum for free at <http://privilege.uccpages.org/>.

At our last meeting, on January 11, we discussed the cash value of whiteness and how that impacts our education and housing opportunities. Read Part Three of the curriculum to find out more about that. We also started discussing what we as a church can do to work toward social justice in our community and beyond.

We hope you will join us! The meetings are open to all in our church who are interested in this issue. Our next meeting is February 13 at the Garrett's home. (We have been meeting alternately on Mondays and Wednesdays). We begin at 6:30 with a social time so that we can start the meeting promptly at 7:00 PM.

For more information and to be added to our email list, please contact

Betsy Garrett - betsy.luebbe.garrett@gmail.com

Beth Hampson - bkashatus@gmail.com

We hope that you can join us at our next meeting!

~ Betsy



SUNDAY SCHOOL:

On Sunday January 15, Kris led the children in a Souper Bowl poster class. All I can say is be ready for some bling!

Toddlers thru grade 5 will start their series to learn about Jesus' life. This week we will talk about his baptism.

Middle School is doing a unit on The Power of the Tongue with Beth Hampson.

High school is led by Scott Crain with a unit on cooking leading up to the Souper Bowl.

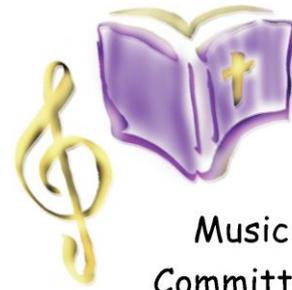
We have been fortunate to have some volunteers step forward as the second adult for the K to 2 class. We are in need of someone for 1/29.

This is such an exciting time with new teachers and volunteers.

Thank you!

MEMORIAL FLOWERS

Have you ever considered giving flowers in memory or in honor of a loved one? There is a silk bouquet in the sanctuary at all times that can be "given" in memory. You can make a donation to the Flower Fund of \$15 and those flowers can be in memory /honor of your loved one for a given Sunday. If you prefer, fresh flowers can be ordered for you. The cost for fresh flowers is \$50 to \$75 depending on the size you would like. After the service, fresh flowers can be taken by the donor, or if they prefer, they can be distributed to someone in the congregation that is sick or in need of an uplifting gift. If you would be interested in donating either type of flowers, please call or email Susan in the church office. 781-665-2111 or info@fccmelrose.org.



Music Committee

Hello friends,
The Music Search Committee would like to hear your input on the role of music in our church.

Please complete our short survey, either online (<https://goo.gl/f8B1Ed>) or using the paper version.

This survey is anonymous, and can be completed in as little as 5 minutes. Your input is very valuable to us as we craft an updated position description for our Music Ministry Director.

You are welcome to share this survey with any young adults in your home, and include any comments from younger children as well.

Please share your response **by Sunday 1/22/17**.

Thank you,
Music Hiring Committee: Ann Ahlin, Tom Foth, Betsy Garrett, Beth Grzegorzewski, Bob and Lisa Jamison, Michael Leskiw, Jaime McAllister-Grande and Rev. Dominic



By Lighting our Church Steeple in memory or in honor of loved ones, you can help our church financially. Contact the church office (781-665-2111 or info@fccmelrose.org) to sign up for a week beginning on a Sunday. Your gift will be announced in the Sunday Bulletin and "The Messenger". A \$25.00 per week contribution is suggested.





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NAME: _____ ADDRESS: _____
