



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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Christian Calling and Governmental Responsibility

As ironic as it may sound, I have always believed that the function of government and the function of the church are not altogether that different. That is to say, the function of government is not only to protect our country and its citizens, but also and more importantly, to provide help for the most vulnerable among us and those trying to get a leg up in society.

In a similar way, the function of the church is to educate and support its members while also reaching out in mission work to minister to those who are hungry, lost, and going without. Our spiritual formation and deepening connection to God must be translated into outward expressions of divine grace, inclusion and healing. This often takes the form of feeding the hungry and serving the economically disadvantaged in various ways.

In recent decades, as governmental social services have been cut, there has been an increasing assumption that the church and other religious organizations will "pick up the slack". At the moment, this often unspoken trend seems likely to continue. This is very impactful to the church as a whole, and should be cause for concern.

Simply put, the notion that churches should fill in the gaps where social services cuts have been made is an abdication of governmental responsibility. Of course churches will continue to do what we do to help those in need, but our motivation is not to correct for the loss of priorities on the federal, state or local level.

We do what we do in order to serve Christ and uplift his ministry in the world. The government should not rely on the coincidence that the outcome of this mirrors one of *its* primary jobs; not least because religious organizations will never have the resources to effect the level of social change that is needed.

For example, Christian churches have the ability to help satisfy the basic needs of individuals who are out of work and hungry. The government, however, has the ability to restructure social institutions that cause unemployment and hunger in the first place.

Sunday, January 29, 2017 New Member Sunday

8:30 AM – Bells Rehearsal
9:00 AM – Morning Star Voices Rehearsal
10:00 AM – WORSHIP and Sunday School
11:15 AM – Coffee Hour
**11:30 AM – Winter Wonderland Fair Debrief Meeting,
Lounge**

DURING THE WEEK

Tuesday, January 31

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

Wednesday, February 1

7:15 PM – Bells rehearsal

Friday, February 3

6:00 PM – Music Director Search Committee meeting,
Spollett Youth Room

Saturday, February 4

11:00 AM – Memorial Service for Arthur Whitman at FCC

Sunday, February 5

10:00 AM – Worship and Sunday School

After worship - Souper Bowl of Caring soup luncheon

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

The church will always be the church. We will answer a call that has existed for thousands of years. It is governments that change and as these changes happen, government leaders should not substitute our Christian calling for their political responsibility.

See you in church,

Rev. Dominic





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, Anne Wing, Ella Boyle, Scott Chisholm.

The 2016 Giving Statements have been mailed/e-mailed. If you do not receive one, please call Rick Mockler at 781-690-2058 for a statement.



SUNDAY SCHOOL:

Toddlers through grade 5 will learn of Jesus' first miracle in Cana. Middle school will continue with Beth Hampson on the lesson the Power of the Tongue. High School will be taught by Kris Carbonneau.

We are in need of a second adult for K to 2 class on 1/29 and 2/12. The second adult attends the class, assists with crafts and keeping the children focused on the lesson. If you would like to help out these Sunday's or another one please contact Lisa Warner (mlwarner98@verizon.net).



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



We Need Church Photos!

If you have any digital photos of events or people at our Church that you would be willing to share with our Website Development team, please email them to melrosefcc@gmail.com. We're looking to display pictures that illustrate the many wonderful facets of our Church. Pictures of Baptisms, weddings, fellowship events, Sunday school, our outdoor worship service, choir, mission or fundraising events, Rev. Dominic giving a hug – or anything at all, please send them! We will also be asking each parent to give us official permission to use photo that includes their children. Please see Nancy Brincheiro to give your approval.

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.



CHILI AND CORNBREAD COOK-OFF

**2017 CHILI COOK-OFF
& CORNBREAD CONTEST!
FEBRUARY 26, 2017**

*To Be Held In Memory of Connie Robinson –
Frequent Chili Cook-Off Champion and Loyal
Supporter of Fellowship Events*

**IN THE NARTHEX, RIGHT AFTER THE
WINTER CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

Everybody mark your calendars, the Annual Chili Cook-off and Cornbread Contest are not far off! Just four weeks from this Sunday! The signup board will be in the Narthex this Sunday, and there will be three Sundays to sign up, so take a look at the categories and see if one seems just right for your culinary expertise - or just your sense of fun! There will be some new categories this year, just to stir things up a bit! So indulge your enthusiasm for cooking and your competitive spirit and sign up!



Feb. 5th is Souper Bowl of Caring time!

Did you know that 1 in 7 Americans face hunger every day? That is why our next youth mission event will be to raise money for our local food pantries: Servants Heart and Pantry of Hope. The high school youth will make soup, the middle school youth will make desserts and our congregation can enjoy a delicious lunch after worship on February 5th before the big game. Any size donation will be appreciated and will go directly to feeding someone else.

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.



Flowers
in Memory of...



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.

ANNUAL MESSENGER SUBSCRIPTION

It is time for the Annual renewal of your Messenger subscription. The subscription rate for one year is \$25.00. THOSE THAT ALREADY RECEIVE THE MESSENGER BY EMAIL, NEED TO MAKE NO CHANGE.

_____ Enclosed is \$25 for my subscription to the Messenger. Please continue mailing it to me.

_____ Enclosed is \$_____ to help defray the cost of a subscription for someone else.

_____ **Please sign me up for e-mail delivery of the Messenger at no charge and discontinue mailing it. My e-mail address(es) is/are as follows (Please print neatly):**

If you choose to be added to the e-mail list, you will receive a notice each week when the Messenger is posted to our web site, with a link to take you to it. You will need to download Adobe Acrobat if you do not currently have it on your computer. There are links to do this on the web site as well. It only needs to be downloaded once and should continue to work each week when you open the "E-Messenger". NOTE: If you are already receiving the Messenger by e-mail, no action is required.

NAME: _____ ADDRESS: _____
