



First Congregational Church

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

in Melrose

An Open and Affirming Congregation

Messenger

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Sara Beltran Hernandez

Twenty-four-year-old Sara Beltran Hernandez fled an abusive relationship in El Salvador. Because the partner she left was also a police officer, she also fled the country because she had received death threats from drug gangs in El Salvador. She came to the U.S.

Sara is the mother of two children and is seeking asylum in this country. She has also been diagnosed with a brain tumor. She became a patient at a Texas hospital where she received treatment. As an undocumented person, however, Sara was arrested for illegally entering the U.S.

Despite her medical condition, she was taken to a detention facility. There, she collapsed due to her condition (one that requires surgery and induces bouts of great pain). She was taken to a different area Texas hospital where she was handcuffed and guarded during her brief stay and asylum lawyers were kept from seeing her. She was then taken back to the detention facility.

Her family has also been denied access to seeing her and they fear for her life. The U.S. Department of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), however, is determined to deport Sara back to El Salvador. This is in keeping with a new crackdown on undocumented people in this country.

Whether from a faith perspective or any other vantage point, something is terribly wrong with this picture. No person should be separated from family, put under threat of deportation, and denied full access to treatment for a potentially fatal illness because they don't have the right paperwork. (Significantly, more undocumented women stay in abusive relationships because to seek help or leave means likely deportation; sometimes away from their American born children.)

Since Sara clearly poses no threat to our country, it makes me wonder why she—and many thousands like her—are being treated in such an inhumane way. It is not difficult to see racial overtones swirling about current immigration enforcement.

“The law is the law” is hardly an excuse for a lack of compassion. In fact, forget compassion. No one coming to this country is looking for compassion. They are simply looking for a fair chance.

Clearly we need immigration reform. There are 11 million undocumented people in this country (and let's remember that they are “people” not “aliens” or “illegals”). Consequently, enforcement of the current laws can only happen randomly. And when it does, people like Sara get caught in the chaos.

On second thought, maybe it is about compassion. In the absence of a workable system and until we have one, that should be our mode of operation. Unfortunately, the opposite seems to be at work.

I invite you to pray for Sara. Pray also for greater compassion in our world and for a legal solution our immigration dilemma that is not based on fear and bigotry. And then translate that into education and action.

Remember, Jesus and his parents were “illegals” in Egypt shortly after his birth. There they sought asylum from Herod. How would you hope they were treated?

See you in church,

Sunday, March 12, 2017

9:00 AM – Morning Star Voices Rehearsal

10:00 AM – WORSHIP and Sunday School

11:15 AM – Coffee Hour

11:30 AM - Lenten Adult Education Class, Library

7:00 PM – Confirmation Class

The Daffodils on the communion table are in loving memory of Becky Mockler, given by Rick and Sarah Mockler.

DURING THE WEEK

Saturday, March 11

Daylight Savings Time begins.

Turn clocks AHEAD

Tuesday, March 14

7:00 PM – Deacons and Trustees, Library

7:15 to 8:15 PM – Morning Star Voices

Rehearsal

Wednesday, March 15

7:15 PM – Bells rehearsal

Thursday, March 16

4:00 PM – Bread of Life Dinner, American Legion, 368

Pleasant St., Malden

Friday, March 17

1:00 PM – Staff Meeting

Sunday, March 19

11:30 AM - Lenten Adult Education Class, Library

7:00 PM – Confirmation Class



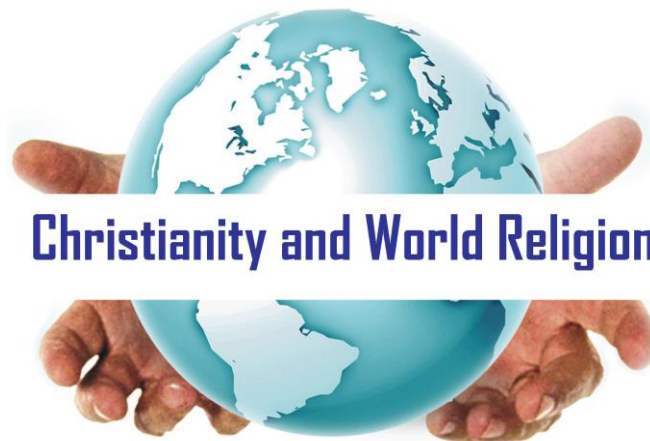


Brian Johnson, Bob Hughes, Ray Luebbe (Betsy Garrett's father), Mary Sakata and Becky Faro (Trish Faro's daughters), Nyal Fuentes, Claire Griffin, Bill Copeland, Merle Copeland, Gem Colvin, Dot Allen, Bob Pierce, Anne Wing, Ella Boyle, Scott Chisholm.

Condolences

Our hearts go out to our Nursery Care Coordinator and Sunday Sexton Jose Perea on the death of his sister. May he and his family feel the love of God surrounding them during this difficult time of loss.

We also extend our condolences to Darryl Pollica on the recent death of this mother in Vermont.



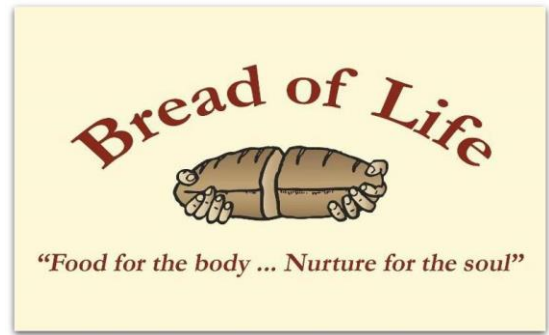
Christianity and World Religions

LENTEN ADULT EDUCATION CLASS CHRISTIANITY AND WORLD RELIGIONS

After worship each Sunday of Lent

Join Rev. Dominic in the Library after worship during Lent for a discussion based class that will look at world religions through the lens of our own faith tradition. The classes are not built upon each other so you are welcome to join at any point. The classes will be group discussion based and all are welcome. Each class will begin with a starter video from Adam Hamilton outlining the topic of the day. These will include an Introduction Session on how questions around world religions are framed, followed by sessions on Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity.

While Christianity is the largest religion in the world today, there are billions of people who practice other faiths. In this series we will learn the salient features of these other major religions from a Christian perspective in order to lift up points of similarity and difference. Doing so will allow us to better own what it is we believe about our own faith, approach other religions with reverence and respect, and build bridges by learning from other traditions while sharing our own.



BREAD OF LIFE

Our church volunteers will be cooking and serving the evening meal at Bread of Life in Malden on **Thursday, March 16th** from 4pm until 7pm. The location is the **American Legion Post 69, 368 Pleasant Street, Malden MA**. Many thanks to the members of the FCC Confirmation Class who joined us last month! More volunteers are always welcome... contact Sallie Klemm shklemm@verizon.net for more information.



SUNDAY SCHOOL:

Toddlers thru 5 will be talking about spiritual fitness! In 1 Corinthians 9:24 to 27, Paul talks about training to win a race. We want our children to have a good life. There is a fun spiritual fitness test in the children's NIV bible (page 1266). Check it out!

Middle School will be led by Nancy in a series called "unmasking the end times". High School will continue their discussion with Trish Faro.

Volunteer opportunity still exists for 2nd adult for March 19 and 26. Let us know if those dates would work for you to help out in the K to 2 class

Lisa & Sherri

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

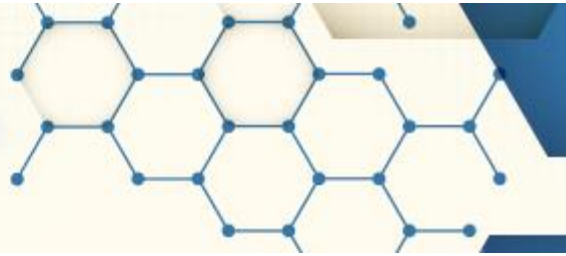
Al-Anon – weekdays at 12 noon, Sunday at 1 & 7 PM – Rm. 8

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 4:30 PM and 8:00 PM and Saturdays at 9:00 AM (men) and 3:00 PM – Rm. 8



Friends –

I am so grateful for your steadfast commitment to the work of justice and peace in these difficult, challenging days. To support and strengthen you in that work moving forward, I want to personally invite you to attend the [2017 Ecumenical Advocacy Days Conference in Washington, DC, April 21-24, 2017](#). This is a great opportunity to expand your advocacy capacity, connect with other Christian leaders, and feed your spirit.



The theme of this year's conference is as timely as ever: [“Confronting Chaos, Forging Community,”](#) highlighting the themes of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s historic address at Riverside Church 50 years ago. In that address, he identified the intersection of the “three triplets” of racism, materialism and militarism, and the challenge they present to people of faith.

Keynote speakers this year include Tamika Mallory, national co-chair of the Women's March on Washington and a leader in the Black Lives Matter movement, and our own UCC General Minister and President John Dorhauer, who will be delivering an address on white privilege. New this year is several timely skills-building workshops on community organizing, sanctuary churches, media advocacy, spiritual resilience and dialoguing across difference.

Can you imagine what we could do together by creating an ever-growing cohort of UCC advocates well-trained to lead the work for justice in local communities? Can you imagine how this effort could impact the life of the United Church of Christ and inspire us in our work to build a “Just World for All”?

I hope you will [join us](#) and help spread the word about this opportunity. If you are not able to attend, perhaps your congregation can send someone or help to provide scholarship assistance for others who might otherwise be unable to attend, especially young leaders.

We look forward to standing with you side-by-side in the ongoing work of justice advocacy. Heartfelt thanks to you for your faithful ministry and witness.

Continued courage in the struggle,

Sandy Sorensen
Director
United Church of Christ Washington Office

P.S. We do have some funds available for UCC young adults who would like to attend. [I invite you to apply by 3/17.](#)

Easter Memorial Flowers - \$15 per plant

Send your order form by April 7th to: Darby Drafts, 25 Adams St., Melrose MA 02176, (Last minute orders may be handed to Darby on Sunday, April 9th.)

Ordered by: _____

Phone #: _____

IN MEMORY OF:

of plants ordered _____ Amount enclosed \$ _____

Please make checks payable to First Congregational Church.



EASTER FLOWERS