



First Congregational Church

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

in Melrose

An Open and Affirming Congregation

Messenger

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A Mother God on Mother's Day

We are pretty clear in the United Church of Christ that God is beyond gender. Yet despite our acceptance (since the 1860s) of women's ordination and countless attempts to update our language to be more "inclusive", we still tend to refer to God as "He" or "Him". How come?

We may groan at the political correctness of "inclusive language" but it has its value. I'm all in favor of eliminating anything that might inhibit someone's connection to God. If someone finds a barrier with words like "father" and "him", then I believe it is less important to maintain those words than it is to bring that person into a closer relationship with God.

Also, if you start using "she" and "her" to refer to God, it opens up a lot of new characteristics for God. For example, we start to see that compassion and tenderness are vital characteristics of God and that strength and power are not exclusively male.

The main reason we are reluctant to embrace alternative language and images for God is, of course, the bible. While the bible does occasionally refer to God as having the attributes of a woman, God is never referred to *as* a woman or "Mother God" per se. The reason is that the bible was written by men in a patriarchal time and culture where women had almost no leadership roles.

When it comes to the bible, however, it is important to remember that we are created in the image of God, not the other way around. To get the final word on God's gender, all you have to do is look around: we humans are both male and female. That's because God is.

Consequently, when we change up the pronouns we use for God, we not only see God in new ways, but we see ourselves in new ways too. If God is both male and female, then we cannot pigeonhole any human attribute, characteristic or behavior as "male" or "female". Apart from physically, all of us are "both/and"

just like God. When we start thinking this way, even more barriers start to come down.

Scripture aside, for ease of being understood, I try not refer to God with either masculine or feminine words in worship but instead use simply "God". It may be a bit too gender-neutral; I get that. But the alternatives are either delightfully complex at best or heavily loaded at worst.

All of that said, Mother's Day is a great opportunity to consider the ways in which God is our Mother--the one who birthed creation and each one of us. She is one who longs for us to know Her and Her heart of limitless love.

See you in church,

Sunday, May 14, 2017 Mother's Day

- 9:00 AM – Morning Star Voices Rehearsal**
- 10:00 AM – WORSHIP and Sunday School**
- 11:15 AM – Coffee Hour**

THE FLOWERS are given in loving memory of Ethel Norris Batting and Claire Marie Ahlin by the Ahlin/Krueger families.

DURING NEXT WEEK

Tuesday, May 16

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

Wednesday, May 17

7:15 PM – Bells rehearsal

Thursday, May 18

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

Saturday, May 20

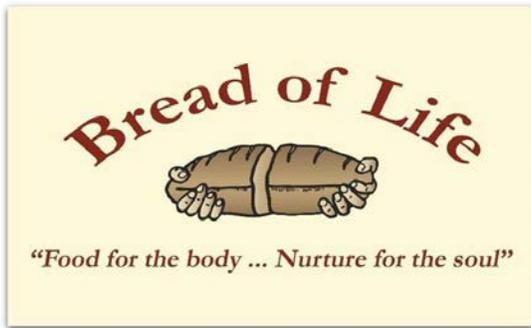
10:00 am – RIM Walk at Lake Quannapowitt

Sunday, May 21 – Confirmation Sunday

10:00 AM – Worship



Bill Albright, Anne Wing, David Gauvreau, Grandmother Terri Cook and Uncle Dan Cook (of Beth Grzegorzewski), Lorine Timmermann (mother of Lori), 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, Scott Chisholm.



BREAD OF LIFE

Our church volunteers will be cooking and serving the evening meal at Bread of Life in Malden on **Thursday, May 18th** from 4pm until 7pm. The location is the **American Legion Post 69, 368 Pleasant Street, Malden MA**. More volunteers are always welcome... contact Sallie Klemm shklemm@verizon.net for more information.



SUNDAY SCHOOL:

Reminder to all parents:
Church School Sunday is on June 11th. Please notify your child's teacher if your child is going to be available June 11:

Sherri Jackson <sltjmtj@hotmail.com>;
Theresa Pluskey <tpluskey@gmail.com>;
Carbonneau, Kristine <Kristine.Carbonneau@ch2m.com>;
Linda Fennel New <lsfenn6@gmail.com>;
Lisa Warner <mlwarner98@verizon.net>;
Catherine Dhingra <catherine.dhingra@gmail.com>;
Beth Hampson <bkashatus@gmail.com>;
Jen Crain New <jcrain1@gmail.com>;
Nancy Brincheiro <nbrincheiro@gmail.com>;
Melanie Kugele <mproscoe@aol.com>;
Yvane Ngassa <ngassa.yvane@gmail.com>;
Darcy Green <darcy_grn@yahoo.com>;
Jose Perea <augustoperea@yahoo.com>



Take Home Meals

TAKE A BREAK FROM MAKING DINNER AND SUPPORT RIM!

Our youth will be making "Take home meals" for our congregation to purchase to help support our RIM clients.

It's simple: check out the menu of take home meals, purchase the meal (or meals) that interest you, and take them home and pop them in the oven for dinner or put them in your freezer to eat at a later date. All the proceeds from this fundraiser will go directly to support our RIM clients!

All meals will be ready to take home after Worship on Sunday May 21st. Members of our youth will take your orders after Worship on both Sunday May 14th and Sunday May 21st.

By the way....Sunday May 14th is Mother's Day! Gift cards will be available if you want to give the gift of meals to a mom in your life!

We would gladly accept monetary donations for the ingredients to make these meals. If you would like to contribute, please see Kris Carbonneau or Catherine Dhingra.



YARD SALE IS COMING!!

Saturday, June 3rd

9:00 AM to 1:00 PM

More Info to follow.

ANNUAL REPORT

The Spring Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, June 4th. All those submitting reports for the Annual Report book should have them in by May 18th, so that they will be available for distribution on May 28th.

Do you have a family member graduating from college this spring?

Please let the church office know, so that we can share in congratulating them with their church family.



The RIM Walk is Saturday May 20th

Join us to walk three miles at your own pace around beautiful Lake Quannapowitt at 10 am to show support for asylum seekers and refugees in nearby communities. If you can't walk and want to support our team of walkers, directions are below. Thanks for your continued support!

To register or to donate online go to www.r-i-m.net Click on *A Walk for Refugees*, click *Sign Up Online*, click either *Join Now* or *Donate*, click *Choose a Team*, click *MetroNorth Cluster*! Or see Debbie Anderson, Bill Chetwynd or Nancy Toney at Coffee Hour. Thanks
No fees to register

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.



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 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, 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
- Makam Music Group – Fridays 7:00-9:00 PM – Lounge and Rm. 1

