



First Congregational Church

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

in Melrose

An Open and Affirming Congregation

Messenger

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The Boundaries of the Church

"Here is the church and here is the steeple. Open the doors and see all the people!"

How many of us remember that rhyme and the hand motions that went with it? Of course, there were only ten people in the church since that's how many fingers you have, but still—the "church" looked full to capacity!

While this is a great lesson for kids, it fails in one important aspect. The church is "full", sure, but everyone is stuck inside! It feeds the idea that church is defined by what happens inside the building, inside the sanctuary.

To be sure, worship on Sunday mornings is the heart of who we are, but we must make sure not to confine our faith to the building itself.

How are you a person of faith when you go to work during the rest of the week? Do you remember that you are "the church" in that setting too? Because you are. You are a disciple of Christ no matter where you go and no matter who you are with. That is both a comfort and a challenge, of course, but the point is that there is nothing part-time about being a Christian. It is your primary identity. It should inform who you are and how you act.

"Church" is also taking place outside the walls of our church in another way these days. We have noticed something very interesting in conjunction with the installation of the pergola and other landscaping improvements. More people are coming to our church. Maybe they don't "open the doors and see all the people"...yet, but there are significantly more people accessing our grounds. People having lunch under the pergola or kids playing under the trees (and I don't just mean on Sunday mornings!).

So this week I want to remind us to always be about the work of expanding the boundaries of what it means to be the church. It is important to take the affirmation, encouragement and love we find during

Sunday morning worship and bring it to the wider community—whether by creating a more welcoming space on our grounds or by more fully owning our identity as people of faith in our daily interactions.

"Here is the church and here is the steeple. Open the doors and see all the people".

Theologically, there are no property lines when it comes to the church and no insiders and outsiders when it comes to membership. God's grace touches everyone and all of us—regardless of denominational affiliation, age, ability, orientation, race, or gender—belong.

See you in church,

Sunday, September 24

8:30 AM – Bells Rehearsal

9:00 AM – Morning Star Voices Rehearsal

10:00 AM – WORSHIP and Sunday School

11:15 AM – Welcome Back Cookout, Playground behind the church



Bring a dish to share



Emelie Burnham, Bill Albright, Anne Wing, Bob Hughes, 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, Michael Connelly, Francoise.

DURING THE WEEK

Tuesday, September 26

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

Wednesday, September 27

7:15 PM – Bells rehearsal

Sunday, October 1

10:00 AM Worship and Sunday School

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



SUNDAY SCHOOL:

We would like to thank the returning teachers. You are the spine of this ministry. We greatly appreciate how well the congregation has responded to the need for teachers and support in the classrooms.

We are excited about this year's theme for toddlers to grade 5. We are utilizing the emoji's to talk about our feelings and God's everlasting love for us.

Middle school taught by Kris Carbonneau will focus on Peace Heroes.

High school surveys are in and they are discovering various world religions with Catherine Dhingra.

Please remember to register your children for our Sunday School program if you haven't already done so. We'll have a table set up in the narthex again this week. If you're not able to register this week, please see Dunia, Lisa, or Sherri another time so we can get the form to you. All children, from the Nursery through High School, should be registered.

We're always welcoming new volunteers into our Sunday School program. If you'd like to be added to the list of volunteers to help out in Sunday School classes as a 2nd adult, please let one of us know at church, or email Sherri Jackson at sltjmtj@hotmail.com.

High School Youth Update

This summer we sent out a survey to our HS youth asking what activities and discussions would interest them the most. Based on their feedback, we have an exciting year planned. Here is a sneak peak of the start of the year...

During September and October, on Sunday mornings, Catherine Dhingra will be leading discussions on how Christianity compares to other religions including Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism and Islam. We're looking into seeing if we can attend a worship service of one of the religions we study. In a world that sometimes feels deeply divided by our religious beliefs, we'll focus on understanding and gaining tolerance and respect of non-Christian beliefs.

Throughout the rest of the year, we will discuss other topics including: Race & Ethnicity- Living in a Diverse World, The Realities of World Hunger, The Environment Today, and Relaxing and Refocusing in Stressful Times – Mindfulness Techniques.

We are planning many activities that will help reinforce what we discuss. Here are a few we have planned so far...

TBD – Attending Worship Services of other faiths
Oct. 8th – Baking Care packages for College freshmen*
Oct. 28th - Planning and running a Halloween party for the elementary kids at our Church*
Nov. 19th – Running a Hunger Banquet for elementary kids to help them understand the food disparity in the world.
Dec. 10th - Sorting donations at the City Mission Christmas Shop (4pm – 6pm)*

* Our middle school youth will be invited to join these activities!



Fall Bulb Sale

The Metro North cluster of Refugee Immigration Ministry is again selling bulbs to support our

continued effort to welcome those in need into our community. The bulbs are top quality from Holland and naturalize well. Bulbs will be sold **through Sunday October 1st**, and will be available for pick-up on Sunday October 8th in time for planting on the Columbus Day holiday! Order forms available in the narthex.

September 22



From Tom Foth:

#1

A request for ALL members: Please review our church online!

One of the best things we can do to create more visibility for our congregation for free is for as many members to write short reviews for our church. The more reviews we receive and the better we'll be placed in things like Google searches.

Please write a short review in each of these places:

Google Places:

1. Go to Google Search and enter "First Congregational Church in Melrose"
2. When Google returns the search results, you'll see our Google Places listing on the right
3. Scroll down (if necessary) and click the "Write a Review" button
4. Click the number of stars you feel is appropriate (we're hoping that's FIVE!)
5. Write a few sentences.
6. Click the "Post" button at the bottom of the box.
7. Feel really good about yourself and how you helped to promote the church and possibly attract new members!

You'll note that you won't find a review from me (Tom Foth). As the "owner" of the page, I'm prevented from posting a review.

Facebook (for those of you who are on Facebook only):

1. Go to our Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/FCCMelrose>
2. Below our group photo, you'll see four boxes. One has "..." in it. Click that box
3. Select the number of stars (we're hoping that's FIVE!)
4. Write a short review
5. Click the "Done" button
6. Feel special that this time, your use of Facebook helped let others know how great our congregation is!

Thank you!

#2

One of the great things about our new website (www.fccmelrose.org) is that it is on Wordpress. Wordpress is VERY easy to use. If you only know very basic Microsoft Word, you can learn Wordpress in less than an hour.

We selected Wordpress so that people involved with various activities in the church can maintain their own part of the website. By keeping your content current, it shows to the community that we are an alive and vibrant church.

Wordpress is also a perfect choice if you want to host your own blog or host a website for an organization you support.

I will be conducting a Wordpress class on October 1st after service. If you're interested (and I hope you will be!), please email me at tom@fothmail.com so we can determine how many will be attending.

Thank you!

#3

Thank you to Gary Lamothe for installing the automatic electronic defibrillator (AED) cabinet in church last Saturday. The cabinet is located outside of the kitchen in the corridor

leading to the daycare. We'll be putting signs up in the near future.

In the cabinet is the AED and emergency oxygen. A trauma kit with medical supplies will follow.

NOTE: The cabinet has an alarm which will go off if you open it. So please don't open it unless there is an emergency and you plan to use it!

Dr. Frank Brincheiro is looking for someone to conduct a CPR class. This will include AED training. Before using the AED, you should have training so that you and other rescuers are safe and the use is effective.

This training will be open to everyone and we encourage as many people as possible to attend. CPR is an important skill to have. If you've been CPR trained but haven't been recertified or haven't had AED training, this class will be for you, too!

We will keep you posted as we have more details about the class.

We thank Melrose Day Care Center for their contribution toward the equipment in memory of Rick Mockler.

**Mystic Valley Elder Services presents:
"My Life, My Health" Workshop Series
Starts September 27th**

Don't let chronic disease, pain or discomfort limit the activities and life you enjoy!

Our free chronic disease self-management workshop series is for anyone living with an ongoing medical condition, such as arthritis, asthma, chronic back pain, chronic fatigue syndrome, cancer, COPD, diabetes, fibromyalgia, heart disease, high blood pressure, Parkinson's Disease or stroke.

Topics will include managing and controlling pain, beginning (or improving) an exercise program, handling stress and learning to relax, increasing energy, and eating for health and wellbeing. All are welcome. The classes are free, but registration is required. Call 781-942-6794 to reserve your spot!

Details:

Wednesdays, September 27th to November 1st
9:30am-12noon
Pleasant Street Center
49 Pleasant Street, Reading, MA