



First Congregational Church

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

in Melrose

An Open and Affirming Congregation

Messenger

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“He was nuts”

Law enforcement officials, the media and, well, everyone is desperate to learn the motive behind the mass shooting in Las Vegas. In the absence of any concrete reason, many are simply content to say and believe that the shooter, Stephen Paddock, was “mentally ill”.

While this may be satisfying to some and at least hint at an answer to “why?” there are enormous consequences to saying this. By haphazardly throwing this phrase around, those who do suffer from mental illness are re-stigmatized. The “mentally ill” become the scape goat for inexplicable killing, the large basket into which any unexplainable behavior is tossed.

And who are the mentally ill? The truth is, all of us. I am convinced that of those suffering mental health issues, the number of people who are clinically diagnosed and receiving treatment is incredibly small.

The fact is that there is a continuum of mental health challenges and we are all on it. We deny that this is the case, of course, because we sure don't want to be lumped together with “schizophrenics” (who, for some reason, are the “gold standard” of mental illness for the general population) but that denial doesn't make it any less true.

Maybe it is mood swings, or anxiety, or depression or sleeplessness or compulsive dieting or self-doubt or ego-centrism. Most people don't get help for such things because they are still able to function—still able to go about their day and get done what needs to get done. In truth, though, they are not okay.

Again, I think this includes all of us; maybe not all of the time, but certainly at some points in our lives. This is important to admit because it places us in solidarity with those whose mental health challenges are farther along the continuum and prevent them from accomplishing everyday things.

Of course, if we say that this shooter was also mentally ill, it also puts us into relationship with him. And that's really a place we don't want to be.

Consequently, however, another wall goes up between us and “the mentally ill”.

The question remains, though. Was Stephen Paddock mentally ill? It is hard to see how he wasn't. But that is not enough of an answer. Mental illness was a factor, a condition of his, but that is not the same thing as a motive. Until we bring mental health into the light of day and unpack its nuances instead of just “chalking it up to his being nuts”, we will never grow in our understanding let alone improve early identification and prevention methods.

In this work, Jesus' call to honesty of self and compassion for all can certainly help lead the way.

See you in church,

Sunday, October 15, 2017

9:00 AM – Morning Star Voices Rehearsal

10:00 AM – WORSHIP and Sunday School

11:15 AM – Coffee Hour

After worship – Memorial Dedication of the new Pergola

After Pergola Dedication - youth singers (Gr 6 -) rehearse

THE STEEPLE is lit this week in loving memory of my mother, Betty Crane by Nancy Schurian.

DURING THE WEEK

Tuesday, October 17

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

Wednesday, October 18

7:15 PM – Bells rehearsal

Thursday, October 19

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

Sunday, October 22

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

Makam Music Group – Sundays 4:45-6:30 PM – Lounge

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,

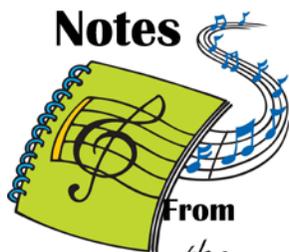
Wednesdays at 4:30 PM & 7:30 PM, Thursdays at 4:30 PM and 7:00

PM, Fridays at 8:00 PM and Saturdays at 9:00 AM (men) and 3:00

PM – Rm. 8



Sam Lynch, 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, Dot Allen, Bob Pierce, Michael Connelly, Francoise.



Notes
From *the*
Director of Music Ministry

Hello FCC friends!

Here is a friendly reminder that your voice is needed this coming Sunday 10/15 for *Non choir sings*.

Please arrive at 9:30 am and be ready to rock. All levels of singers or non-singers are welcome.

Looking forward to singing with you!

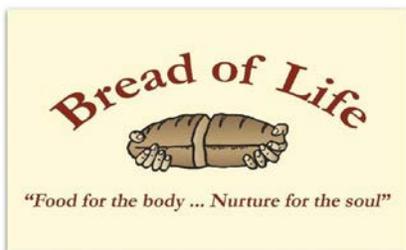
Sincerely,

Mariko Matsumura, Ministry of Music Director

Rehearsal Schedule for Youth (Gr 6-) to sing Sunday, October 29:

October 15:

after the pergola dedication, in the music room



**BREAD OF LIFE –
a chance to FEED YOUR SOUL!**

Our team from First Congregational Church volunteers from 4pm – 7pm on the Third Thursday of every month (volunteers are welcome for all or part of the time). We cook, serve, and clean up – it’s a fabulous opportunity to help feed the hungry and your soul at the same 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!!!) The next date that we are serving is:

October 19

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



We are planning a special class/event with the children to honor our Veterans and active service members on Sunday, November 5th. If you are a Veteran or

actively serving please contact me at 781-267-3719 or email me at duniavelez10@yahoo.com.

Dunia Velez



SUNDAY SCHOOL:

Thanks to the high school students, last Sunday many of you smelled the sweet aroma of chocolate chip cookies and brownies at the end of the service. The kids prepared these treats for our Care Packages to be sent out this week to our College bound students.

Toddlers - 5th grade: We will be exploring the emotion: anger and what God's word says about it. How do we express it constructively so that we are heard? How do we connect to God so we may continue to feel his love when we are angry? We know He loves us even when we are mad.

Middle School: Kris Carbonneau is focusing on Peace Heroes. This week they will be discussing the Story of John Perkins: Faith means no revenge.

High school: Catherine Dhingra continues with the different world religions.

Family Worship:

On most long weekends and holiday weekends, we hold Family Worship, rather than Sunday School classes. As you know, our Sunday School classes are taught entirely by volunteers, and we try to ensure that each teacher only teaches once per month. So, on the long weekends when attendance is typically lower, we give all teachers a day off from teaching so they can enjoy worship service. These Sundays are days we encourage you to worship as a family and to give children an exposure to what a full service looks like. This is also helpful when Church School Sunday rolls around each June so that the children are at least somewhat familiar with all aspects of our worship services when it’s their turn to run the show!

Nursery care is always available throughout each service, and on these Family Worship Sundays, there will not be Sunday School classes for grades K-12. For the rest of the fall, the following Sundays will be Family Worship Sundays: [November 26](#), [December 24](#), [December 31](#).

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.

Stewardship CAMPAIGN

First, on stewardship, it's about money and time.

Every cent you give goes to making this an even better place, if you can give a couple dollars more or start giving online, that's great. Right now, we are running in the black, but that ground always shifts and we can always do more. None of these pledges are going to buy the Reverend a private jet, or build a megachurch; they all go right into our mission.

A couple things, a little personal prerogative if you would, what a tricky year for me. I mean falling to the bottom and all. The thing about hitting bottom and being with people I know and people like you all is darn if there weren't a ton of people to pick me up and get me back. To me, that's stewardship.

There's a more technical definition of stewards in a big, working kitchen. In one of the first restaurants I worked in, we had a "steward". He was responsible for all the trains running on time, supervised dishwashers, ran food from the walk-in's and generally did what cooks call "mise en place", that's my bad French pronunciation for everything being prepared and in place for success. In a way, we are asking you as a collective to form that function. That all our preparation can help to advance our faith and works.

So, what is this church, particularly a Congregational church? It's you, and you, and Reverend Dominic and the choir and Jim and Candy standing "watch" over the narthex and bringing the banana bread, the Miners making coffee and promoting fellowship, etc., but it's really all of us and for those of us that have come from more hierarchical traditions, like myself, I think sometimes that's hard to understand. All that "stuff" was just done by someone else.

So here is my list of five reasons I think that stop a lot of us from being more active servant leaders in the church.

1. I'm just not that holy

Seriously in what world am I a deacon? I'm struggling up here just avoiding cursing. Rev. Dominic once said to me "you don't think Jesus was cursing when he overturned

the tables of the money changers in the temple." Touché Rev, but I really think you just want our spreadsheet skills. Don't think of your past or your perceived lack of piety holding you back. Faith is not a contest.

2. I'm Super Busy

Yup, I got it, it's ridiculous, our battles to be super mom or dad or uncle or aunt or sister or brother or employee can really be crazy. It's exhausting and sometimes overwhelming. I just can't stand it sometimes, but you know what, I read somewhere "to whom much is given, much is expected." We can help you to squeeze out a little time. There's tons of flexibility here at First Congregational Church.

3. What Can I possibly do?

We all have value here, hey there's weeding to be done right now, step on up. You don't have to be one of those people who does everything, hey those are the people begging for help. There's plenty of one off opportunities, extended "jobs", or hey even think about becoming a deacon next year. I'm a crappy deacon and it really doesn't take much time or skill. Rob and I will be working with the deacons to develop servant leadership opportunities that will fit many different time and effort frames. Consider volunteering for one of our upcoming events or to be a teller. For the love of God, please be a teller.

4. Nobody has ever asked me/how will I do this?

Well now you've been asked and as mention before we will be putting together a list of opportunities and an online signup. You are the heart and soul of this congregation and it is much more than a building, some good music and Reverend Dominic telling stories.

5. I Kinda Just Wanna Show Up

I feel it. Occasionally, I just want to space out and think, reflect, etc. It's hard, for a lot of us, this is our only time to reflect spiritually, perhaps to pray without interruption. Your service to the congregation doesn't have to take away from that, there are opportunities inside and outside of the hours of services to serve.

Stayed tuned for more information about leadership opportunities in the church

PERGOLA MEMORIAL DEDICATION

Sunday, October 15

11:15 AM



All are invited to a Memorial Dedication Service at the new Pergola following worship on Sunday, October 15th. This will be an opportunity to celebrate this new addition to our church grounds and remember the lives and ministries of Rick and Becky Mockler in whose memory the pergola will be dedicated. Rick and Becky's daughter Sarah will be joining us along with other guests for this time of reflection and gratitude led by Rev. Dominic and Mariko. The rain date for this event is October 22.



We are looking for communion servers!

If you would like to help serve communion--usually on the first Sunday of each month--please contact Betsy Garrett (betsy.luebbe.garrett@gmail.com) or Laura Pollica (laurapollica@gmail.com), your Deacons of Worship. Serving communion is a wonderful way to reach out and connect with people in the congregation and we hope that everyone has an opportunity to serve at least once this year. If you want to sign up for just one Sunday that's fine. Let us know if you would like to give it a try!



The 22st Annual Walk and Candlelight Vigil will be held on **Sunday, Oct. 22 at 4:00 pm**, starting and ending at the Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School, 350 Lynn Fells Parkway in Melrose. Our theme this year is "You Are Not Alone."

Please join us to commemorate the victims of domestic violence in Massachusetts over the past year and rededicate ourselves to preventing violence in the community. Event will include:

- A candlelight vigil honoring victims, brief remarks and music in the auditorium
- Community art project in conjunction with Follow Your Art
- Alternate activity for children
- 2-mile walk around Ell Pond in Melrose
- Participants walking in teams or as individuals
- Refreshments in the cafeteria at the conclusion
- Walk T-shirts for sale
- Team photos



SAVE THE DATE!!!!

**Winter Wonderland Fair
– DECEMBER 1 and 2!!!**
*Watch the Messenger for
ways you can participate
in this fun event*