

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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An Engaged Faith

Maybe it's just me, but given how many "left over" Annual Reports we often have kicking around the office each spring, I am not so sure that many people read them. The optimistic side of me usually tries to say that people have read them and, in the interest of recycling, are returning them to the stack. Yeah, maybe.

So when you see the Annual Report show up in the Narthex in preparation for our Spring Congregational Meeting on June 12th, pick up a copy and give it a read. After all, it is a wonderful summary of this year's activities and, more importantly, not everyone has the option of having their report printed in the Messenger like, say, I do!

Pastor's Report:

I could give a blow by blow account of all of the many activities, events and ministries that have come to fruition over the past year, but I believe you have either helped enact them or are now living in the glow of the positive energy that has resulted from them.

So, as I reflect on this past program year and in the face of these challenging times for many mainline churches, here are two things that strike me that First Congregational Church is:

1. We are a church that, first and foremost, captures the positive energy of the Holy Spirit. This is something that we experience in many aspects of our shared life but it all has its origins in worship. Through our regular worship services, special/seasonal services, music and active lay participation, we have a worship life that inspires and uplifts not only individuals, but our church community as a whole. It is a sign of the Spirit's active presence and our church's health.
2. We are a church that is engaged in living out our faith. Along with those who put their heart and soul into such things as the Thanksgiving Luncheon and the Winter Wonderland Fair, we have people in our church whose personal passion carries the whole community forward. We have those who are absolutely committed to environmental justice

**Sunday, June 5, 2016
Graduation Sunday**

8:45 AM – Morning Star Voices Rehearsal

9:15 AM – Graduation Breakfast for graduates and their families, lounge

10:00 AM – WORSHIP and Sunday School

11:15 AM – Coffee Hour

11:15 AM – Joint Praise Band and Treblemakers Rehearsal, lounge

DURING THE COMING WEEK

Tuesday, June 7

3:00 PM – **Circle 4** Annual Wine and Cheese Event, lounge. Members please note change of time & location.

Wednesday, June 8

7:15 PM – Bells Rehearsal

Saturday, June 11

5:00 PM – Recital, sanctuary

6:00 PM – Praise Band Rehearsal, sanctuary

Sunday, June 12

Church School Sunday

The following groups meet here regularly:

Boy Scouts – Tuesdays at 7:00 PM in the basement

Girl Scouts – Sundays, 2:00 to 4:15

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, Rm. 1), 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

ministries, feeding ministries, and racial justice ministries. We have people who are so committed to Christian Education and so disappointed with popular curriculum out there, that they decide to write their own curriculum and it causes our Sunday School to light up. It is when such passion and commitment is offered to the wider congregation that a deeper dimension of our church life emerges: People want to learn more. They want to join in. They want to make a difference by activating their faith—and it becomes contagious.

Capturing the Holy Spirit's positive energy and living out our faith from the personal to the communal. You can't ask for more than that! Thanks to all of you who have made sure that this church will live on with vibrancy for many years to come by sowing and nurturing the seeds of compassion, love, optimism and faith-made-real.

I can't wait to see what that Holy Spirit has in mind for our next program year!

See you in church,



Ugly Tie Contest!

In preparation for Father's Day, Rev. Dominic is having the Sunday School Children bring in ugly ties that will be voted on! Children AND ADULTS are welcome to bring in ties to contribute to this effort over the next two weeks and even to Father's Day Sunday itself and give them to Rev. Dominic as we learn a new angle on Jesus saying: "The last shall be first and the first shall be last".



Allen, Bob Pierce, Anne Wing.

Matthew Larzelere, Ilia Grzegorzewski, Herb Gray, Herb Schurian, Ella Boyle, Flo Hall, Ralph Revesz, Bill Albright, Barbara Wellington, Becky Faro, Bill Copeland, Gem Colvin, Dot

Circle 4 will meet on **TUESDAY, JUNE 7th, at 3:00 PM at the Church** for our Annual Wine and Cheese Event. Members please note change of time and location.

WARRANT FOR THE SPRING CONGREGATIONAL MEETING OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH in MELROSE, UCC

To the Members of the First Congregational Church in Melrose, United Church of Christ:

In accordance with the by-laws, the 168th Spring Meeting of the First Congregational Church in Melrose, UCC is called to be held in the church on Sunday, June 12, 2016 at 11:15 am. This meeting is called by the Deacons and Trustees to act upon the following Articles:

Article 1: To receive and act upon the reports of staff members;

Article 2: To receive and act upon the reports of the Deacons and Trustees;

Article 3: To receive and act upon the reports of other committees and affiliated boards;

Article 4: To receive and act upon the reports of the Deacons and Trustees acting as a Nominating Committee and to elect Deacons and Trustees for terms beginning July 1, 2016.

Article 5: To transact such other business as may legally come before the meeting.

Becky Fuentes and Darby Drafts,
Co-Trustees of Congregational Records / Clerk



SUNDAY SCHOOL

This week, our Nursery and Kindergarten through Grade 5 class lesson theme is Fruit of the Spirit. The children will talk about how to live "fruity", and will bring home with them their journals and special fruit stickers. Over the summer, we encourage them to use their journals and write about when they did "fruitful" things.

Middle School youth will have a regular Sunday School class in the library.

High School youth are invited to remain in Worship.

This Sunday is Graduation Sunday! We look forward to celebrating this year's graduates as a church family.

Reminder to Sunday School Parents: Church School Sunday is June 12! Beginning this week, children will be bringing home their parts to practice. Please support their efforts!

We Need CHANGE!

It's time for Change! We need CHANGE NOW!

To be more precise, we need YOUR CHANGE, from your sofa cushions, that jar in your bedroom, the one in the laundry room, the little tray in your car, the coins that seem to weigh down your pockets and purse.

We will be collecting change in the Narthex every Sunday in June to raise money to send our youth and chaperones to the UCC National Youth event in July.

Won't it feel great to finally put that old coin collection to good use?

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.



On May 22nd we celebrated with our 50+ year members.

We are still profiling some of them in the Messenger over the next few weeks.

Emelie Burnham



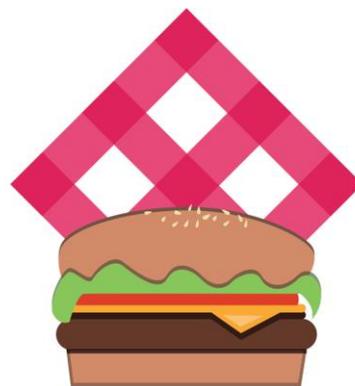
Emelie joined our church on Christmas Eve 64 years ago when she was in the 8th grade. She has had a "song in her heart" ever since then as a member of our choir with almost six decades of dedicated service. Emelie

fondly remembers when the large robed choir of 40 members used to process in to the old sanctuary, and earlier times when they had the numbers and talent to sing more challenging pieces. Ken Wilson, a music director in the old church, hosted a radio program, and Emelie remembers the entire choir being invited to go to the Channel 5 TV Studio to record as part of a Christmas show, quite a thrill. The choir also used to put on wonderful shows at the church's Strawberry Festivals, which were a lot of fun for both the choir and the audiences.

Emelie was baptized by Reverend Tracy, one of our former legendary pastors, and grew up in the church. Emelie's parents had met in the church choir, and Emelie's mother served as our church secretary for many years in the old building and was the secretary at the time of the fire. Emelie was scheduled to be married in the old sanctuary, but her wedding had to be moved to the Highlands Church when our church was destroyed by fire. Emelie remembers the great "character" of the old building, and while some in the congregation favored rebuilding in the same style after the fire, the cost of recreating such a magnificent building was prohibitive. When asked how church life has changed since she became a member, Emelie responded that in past decades there were fewer competing priorities for peoples' time, and the church was much more the center of people's lives.

Besides her faithful service in the choir, Emelie has served in many other key roles in the church, including as a member and leader of the former Music Committee, the Fellowship Commission, the Personnel & Leadership Commission (including the subcommittee that called Tom Evans as our interim pastor), and Circle 4, in which she is still active, working on our fairs (including co-chairing the holiday fair) and yard sales. Emelie remembers the "old days" when the list of church members serving on its various committees and boards

would fill up two full pages of double-columned listings! Emelie has also served for many decades on the board of the Fitch Home and as a trustee there. Emelie provided one more example of how times have changed over the years - she recalls that when Reverend Chuck Fuller celebrated his 25th anniversary at the church, the congregation gave him a brand new 1957 Plymouth station wagon! Perhaps we can be more "green" and shoot for a new bicycle for Reverend Dominic when he hits 25 years!



End of Year Cookout

END-OF-YEAR COOKOUT ON JUNE 26TH!

The end of June will see a very popular event at First Congregational - the End-of-Year Cookout!

For those who haven't been at church for this yet - this cookout is a celebration of all of us together as a church, at the end of our program year. The cookout takes place right after our outdoor worship service, and it is a potluck lunch that is always spectacular! Hamburgers, hot dogs, and veggie burgers, and rolls and condiments are provided, as are ice water and lemonade.

The cookout is also a great time to meet new friends, catch up with "old" friends, and maybe talk about vacation plans. There will be a signup board in the Narthex - please take a moment to sign up and indicate what kind of contribution you'd like to make to the buffet. There are lots of categories, something for everyone.

See you there!
Donna and Ron Miner

**Bell Choir Seeks Ringers –
Let us “show you the ropes”**



In the early days of bell ringing, before the days of hand bells, bell choirs practiced peals in bell towers, with one person pulling the rope for one bell. When someone “shows you the

ropes” they are literally showing you how to ring the bells!!*

Have you ever wanted to be in our bell choir, but thought that there wasn't a place for you? Have you listened to and watched the beauty of the bells, and thought “I can do that!”? Maybe you've said “How do they do that?!” Maybe now is the time to give it a try and find out how easily qualified you may be!

The Jubilate Ringers will host a few “open rehearsals” during the month of June, so that anyone who may have an interest in joining the bell choir can come and give it a try. While no formal musical training is required, (many of us in the bell choir readily admit we can't “read music”) it does help if you played some other instrument some time in your life, or sang in a choir, and know the notes on the musical staff. If you can clap in time, and can count to four (OK, sometimes you'll need to count to six or eight, occasionally 12) then you may be a good candidate to play bells!

We meet every Wednesday at 7:15 in the Sanctuary, and rehearse for about two hours every week. If you'd like to come and give it a try, join us on Wednesday June 8th and/or 15th at 7:15 and we'll show you the ropes! If you have any questions, feel free to contact Jim Oosterman at 781-662-7445 or email him at oosterman@aol.com.

*OK, I made that up, but is sure does sound like it could be, right? Like many other phrases, this expression has its origins in the world of sailing. Senior members of the crews of these ships were the ones who knew the ropes and understood how to use them to control the sails. The ambition of any sailor was to know the ropes as quickly as possible. But did you know a ship's bell rings in ½ hour increments over a 4-hour shift? What time is it at 8 bells? That may or may not be connected to hand bell ringing, but come to one of our rehearsals to find out for sure!

SUMMER



MESSANGER DEADLINE for items to go in the last Messenger for the season is Friday, June 17th. That Messenger will be sent out June 22nd.

We are looking forward to seeing summer items and also previews of upcoming fall events.

Please think ahead to your activities that will take place this summer and in the fall and give us information to publicize those activities.