

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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A Religious Oxymoron?

The Dalai Lama, leader of Tibetan Buddhism and Nobel Peace Prize winner, said something interesting the other day:

“Any person who wants to indulge in violence is no longer a genuine Buddhist or genuine Muslim for that matter, because it is a Muslim teaching that once you are involved in bloodshed, actually you are no longer a genuine practitioner of Islam. All major religious traditions carry the same message: a message of love, compassion, forgiveness, tolerance, contentment, self-discipline - all religious traditions. These are the common ground, and common practice. On that level, we can build a genuine harmony, on the basis of mutual respect, mutual learning, mutual admiration.”

His statement is in keeping with the idea that a “religious terrorism” is an oxymoron because to be truly religious precludes being a terrorist. Those who commit acts of terrorism in the name of Islam are, in fact, not really Muslim at all.

I like the sound of this and certainly would also agree if “Muslim” were replaced with “Christian”. It is also true that every major religion has, at its heart, teachings of peace, love, justice and wholeness.

What should not be lost, however, is that there are also teachings within each major religion, including Christianity, that can be interpreted as calls to violence, retribution and being an instrument of “divine justice”. No religion is all bunnies and flowers.

Every religion is complicated and their founding texts usually reflect this. An honest assessment of the bible, for example, would reveal countless contradicting teachings when it comes to peace and violence, hospitality and exclusion.

For Christians, particularly early Christians, this was especially problematic because Jesus was so often invitational over doctrinal. He would commonly teach by asking questions or telling stories rather than declaring what is right and wrong. It is no wonder that there were so many early, committed followers of Christ

Sunday, October 9, 2016

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

DURING THE WEEK

Monday, October 10 – Columbus Day

Office closed

Tuesday, October 11

7:00 to 8:00 PM – Morning Star Voices Rehearsal

7:00 PM – Deacons and Trustees Meeting, Library

Wednesday, October 12

7:15 PM – Bells rehearsal

Saturday, October 15

9:00 AM to 2:00 PM – Melrose Arts and Crafts Society
Annual Exhibit & Sale, Narthex

Sunday, October 16 – Baptism Sunday

10:00 AM – Worship

11:30 AM – Band of Praise open house meeting and rehearsal,
chapel

4:00 PM – MAAV Walk and Candlelight Vigil at Melrose
Veterans Memorial Middle School

The following groups meet here regularly:

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

Girl Scouts – Sundays, 3:00 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), Tuesdays at 4:30 PM,

Women's AWOL 7:30 PM, Wednesdays at 4:30 PM, & 7:30 PM,

Thursdays at 4:30 PM and 7:00 PM, Fridays at 4:30 PM & 8:00 PM

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

who strongly disagreed with each other and why there are so many denominations today.

Slave owners felt they were faithful Christians. White supremacists today still do. On the other side, so do Christian socialists and Black Lives Matter supporters.

Who is right, then? It depends on what you see as the goal of religion. This is where I wish the Dalai Lama had used the phrase “should be”. The heart of every religion *should be* peace and love. The practice of every religion *should be* only the expression of justice and compassion. It isn't always, but it *should be*.

The good news is usually is. It is just that a minority of misguided followers commonly have the spotlight due to their destructive behavior.

See you in church,

Rev. Dominic



Anne Wing, Ella Boyle, Scott Chisholm.

Nyal Fuentes, Keith Williams, Bryan Mc Allister-Grande, Bob and Claire Griffin, Herb Gray, Bill Albright, Barbara Wellington, Becky Faro, Bill Copeland, Gem Colvin, Dot Allen, Bob Pierce,



SUNDAY SCHOOL:

This Sunday, the kindergarten through grade 5 children will be participating in an activity based on our "growing" theme in Open Classrooms. All children should report to room 8.

Middle School and High School youth are invited to assist with the Open Classroom activities or remain in Worship.



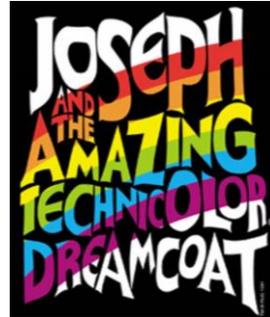
Planning for Spring

on October 9th, arrangements will be made for pick-up or delivery. If you have questions, contact Debbie Anderson, RIM Volunteer, Metro North Cluster (781.665.8801). Thank you for supporting RIM's important work.

RIM'S FALL BULB SALE!

Bulb orders will be available for pick-up on Sunday, October 9. If you aren't available

CALLING ALL YOUTH and The Treblemakers!



This Sunday, October 9, after church, all youth and all Treblemakers are invited to come to the music room and meet the interim music director, Mariko Matsumura.

The purpose of this meeting is to finish preparation to sing Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat", of "Jacob and Sons" and "Joseph's Coat" for a special presentation during the October 16th worship service.



Are you interested in joining the Band of Praise?

If you are interested, we will be meeting after church on Sunday, October 16th for an informal meeting and rehearsal in the chapel. Anyone in middle school, high school, or anyone older is invited to attend. We are especially looking for those who play drums, guitar, or keyboard and would like to sing and play in the praise band in church. We hope to see you there.

Bob and Lisa Jamison

MAAV's
ANNUAL WALK & CANDLELIGHT VIGIL
Sunday, October 16, 2016



*The Women's Guild of the Most Blessed
Sacrament Church in Wakefield
Cordially Invites you to a*

FALL INTERFAITH LUNCHEON
Thursday, October 13, 2016

12:15 PM Sandwiches and Desserts
1:15 PM Musical Program

*at Most Blessed Sacrament Church Parish Center
1155 Main Street, Wakefield, MA*

**R.S.V.P. Necessary! By Friday, Sept. 30 to
Rosemary Catterson @ 781-662-1814**



Walk Teams Forming Now!

Interested in forming a team for this year's MAAV Walk? Teams can be as big or as

small as you'd like, and can be made up of friends, co-workers, or anyone who simply wants to walk together! Contact Liane Cassavoy (lcassavoy@maav.org) for more information.

MAAV's 21st Annual Walk & Candlelight Vigil will be held on Sunday, October 16 beginning at 4pm at Melrose Veterans Memorial Middle School. The event begins with a Candlelight Vigil, followed by a 2-mile walk around Ell Pond. Refreshments are served after the Walk in the Middle School Cafeteria.

We're so grateful to the teams and individuals already on board and raising funds for MAAV! Check out some of their fundraising pages on [FirstGiving.com!](http://FirstGiving.com)



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