This Election Season

I, like probably most of you, have never seen a presidential election quite like this one. Many of you have shared your opinions with me about the race and they have ranged from utter amazement to disgust.

While the separation of church and state prevents me from encouraging you to vote in a particular way, it does not prevent me from encouraging your involvement in the process. I truly hope that you will vote in what is clearly a determinative election that will have broad ramifications for our country.

I also want to encourage you to fill out your ballot as a person of faith. Our faith in Christ should be what informs our values and the choices we make.

From the youngest to the oldest, First Congregational Church teaches the importance of community building, respect for others, inclusion, and a celebration of differences. The spirituality imparted by Jesus Christ was made manifest in his intentional inclusion of the lost and forgotten among his followers. Jesus had a special place in his heart and his ministry for the poor and those unjustly treated.

Servant leadership defined his ministry. As his followers, these are the qualities that should come to bear on our voting decisions.

It is also worth noting that our United Church of Christ stands firmly for family values which not only includes things like kindness and charity but also racial justice, marriage equality, raising the minimum wage, welcoming refugees for resettlement, and severely cutting fossil fuel usage. Theologically, we feel these reflect the traditional Christian values of helping one another and protecting God’s creation.

Of course, if polls are to be believed, there are very few people still trying to decide how to vote. At the moment the current percentage of undecided voters stands at 7 percent. That may sound low on the one hand, but it represents 9 million people (out of 235 million eligible voters). Nine million. That’s still a lot of people.
Congratulations to Elizabeth and Nicholas Macdonald upon the baptism of their son, Seamus Murphy Macdonald, on Sunday, October 16th. As an expression of the church’s love, support, and care, Common Threads was pleased to present a handmade blanket to Seamus.

SUNDAY SCHOOL:
Presentation of Bibles

This Sunday is Third Grade Bible Sunday and we will be presenting special inscribed adventure bibles to the following children:
Grace Lillian Buser
Nikhil Peter Dhingra
Drew Rynak
Karolina Juliet Vogel

The children will also be participating in a special bible class later this fall.

In Sunday School, our toddler through grade 5 lesson is “David & Goliath”. Middle School will continue their lesson “Friends Forever”. High School youth are invited to participate in a discussion with Jen Crain on moral dilemmas and current events as part of “Your Faith.. Your Way”. Those who wish to remain in worship are encouraged to do so.

October 30, 2016: Annual Halloween Party in the basement after Worship

Save the Date!!!!
Winter Wonderland Fair – DECEMBER 2 and 3!!!
Watch the Messenger for ways you can help

30th Anniversary International Dinner
November 6, 2016
First Congregational Church
121 west Foster St., Melrose MA
Tickets: $40 ($35 if you buy before October 15)
Mail check to RIM at 6 Pleasant St., Suite 612, Malden, MA 02148
Sharing the Gifts of our Diverse Cultures
5:30 PM Hors d’oeuvres
6:30 PM Dinner: An International Buffet
Silent Auction and Awards Ceremony

By Lighting our Church Steeple in memory or in honor of loved ones, you can help our church financially. Contact the church office (781-665-2111 or info@fccmelrose.org) to sign up for a week beginning on a Sunday. Your gift will be announced in the Sunday Bulletin and “The Messenger”. A $25.00 per week contribution is suggested.
Mission of Deeds  
Small Household Items Drive  
Saturday, November 5, 2016  
10 am – 2 pm  
Sponsored jointly by the Melrose Rotary Club and the First Congregational Church of Melrose

Please bring your new or clean and gently used items to the parking lot of the First Congregational Church on Saturday, November 5. A Mission of Deeds truck will be parked to receive donations between 10 am – 2 pm. The following small household items are greatly needed by Mission of Deeds:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linens:</th>
<th>Kitchen:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New bed pillows</td>
<td><strong>Pots and pans</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Twin size sheets</strong></td>
<td>Silverware/utensils/knives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Twin size blankets</strong></td>
<td>Glasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Twin size comforters</strong></td>
<td>Mugs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full/Queen blankets</td>
<td>Baking Pans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full/Queen comforters</td>
<td><strong>Mixing bowls</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Towel/face clothes</td>
<td><strong>Coffee makers/tea kettles</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>especially needed</strong></td>
<td><strong>Toasters/Toaster ovens</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Blenders/mixers</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dish Towels/pot holders</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>especially needed</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children’s items:</th>
<th>Household:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>Lamps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DVD’s</td>
<td>Microwave ovens</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clean stuffed animals</td>
<td>Vacuums</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pack n’ plays</td>
<td>Framed artwork</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Clocks/alarm clocks</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Irons/ironing boards</td>
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<td>Fans</td>
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</tbody>
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*A receipt for tax deduction purposes can be provided.*

Your donations to Mission of Deeds will be used to help set up households for men, women and children of all ages, including: veterans, disadvantaged families, the previously homeless, survivors of domestic abuse, refugees, the elderly, survivors of fire and other disasters, and those with disabilities.
Polymnia Choral Society’s 63rd Season
SATURDAY October 22nd
TEMPLE BETH SHALOM
21 East Foster Street, Melrose

These performances will be dedicated to Bob Griffin, a longtime member of Polymnia and Blue of a Kind. Both shows will close with “The Parting Blessing”, a favorite of Bob’s, in his honor.

TWO SHOWTIMES: 5:00 PM 8:00 PM
Doors open at 4:30 Doors open at 7:30

PERFORMERS INCLUDE
Brendan Carroll, Murray Kidd, The High School, Spotlight Winners, and a host of featured singers

ADMISSION $25 • Students $15
Tickets available online at www.polymnia.org or at Miter Biter Frame Co., 479 Main Street; or by calling 617 633 5006