Noticing the Light

The season of Advent is all about light: The light of Advent wreath candles and Christmas tree lights and yard decorations. It is all about light. All of that emphasis on light is to help us recognize one thing: the light of God coming into the world in the person of Jesus Christ. Advent always falls at the darkest time of year so the promise of light, like the promise of God’s companionship and help in times of challenge, is critical to our faith formation.

The reality, however, is that the light of God is around us each and every day; whether it is Advent or not. Most of the time, however, we don’t see it and simply walk right by.

There is a wonderful tradition that says that the burning bush of God that Moses encountered on the mountain was not there strictly for Moses. He just happened to be the one who noticed it. Others had passed by on that very path but were either too busy and in a rush or too lost in their own problems. They simply walked right on by without noticing the burning bush; that divine reality right in front of them. It was Moses who was attentive enough to see it.

I think that is the case for all of us too. We are so often in a hurry or so often focused on our own problems that we walk right by God’s presence in our lives.

Ironically, this is especially the case during Advent. After all, there are family and neighborhood gatherings to attend, shopping to do, meals to prepare, travel plans to make, etc. etc. All of these are good things to be doing, mind you. They bring us closer to each other and bring joy into our lives. But in the hubbub of it all, let’s not forget to seek out the light. Not just the light of Christmas decorations, but the true light that they represent: The light of God that comes to us in burning bushes, family and friends, world events and those in need.

May we be attentive enough, like Moses, to stop and notice so that we can hear God’s message to us during this holy time of year.

See you in church,
Sally Pollack, Mary Sakata and Becky Faro (Trish Faro's daughters), Ginny Niles, Nyal Fuentes, Bryan McAllister-Grande, Claire Griffin, Herb Gray, Bill Albright, Barbara Wellington, Bill Copeland, Gem Colvin, Dot Allen, Bob Pierce, Anne Wing, Ella Boyle, Scott Chisholm.

Prayers and Sympathy to Judy Murphy and family on the passing of her brother, Tom McLoughlin.

FOOD PANTRY

SUNDAY – December 4

This mission of our church is a great way to make a difference in the lives of our neighbors! You can involve your whole family by talking about the food you are donating and discussing how it will help others.

Sharing Prayers of the People

Each week during worship, Reverend Dominic invites the congregation to share moments of concern or celebration for people they know. A candle is lit from the Christ candle signifying the light of Christ’s love surrounding them. This is a very special and meaningful part of our worship together.

Names of friends, relatives, and co-workers outside of our congregation are often raised during Prayers of the People. It would be comforting for these people to know that their name was raised in prayer here at our church.

If you would like the person(s) whose name you raised during worship to receive a note to this effect, we invite you to write their name and address in the purple notebook on the Card Ministry table in the narthex. Notes will be sent for concerns, not celebrations, and will be signed by Reverend Dominic on behalf of First Congregational Church.

We also invite you to visit the Card Ministry table after the service to sign cards for members of our church family.

We thank you for your help in reaching out to others.

Ginny Altmann and Becky Foth
Co-Deacons of Spiritual Care
Winter Wonderland Fair
December 2 – 6:00-8:00 pm

December 3 – 9:00 am-2:00 pm

Baked Potato Bar – Friday nite
Comfort Food Cafe – Saturday lunch

Gingerbread Construction Tuesday and Wednesday evenings 11/29 & 30

Volunteers to work in the Children's Room

Volunteers to take down and vacuum at Fair's end - 2:00pm Saturday 12/3

Reflect and Respond
Rev. Dominic will be hosting a Reflect and Respond session after worship on Sunday, December 4th. This will be held in the Library and will be a time to discuss the themes of the worship experience. All are welcome to ask questions, share, and benefit from the reflections of others. Please let Rev. Dominic know if you would like child care. It can be easily provided if needed.

CITY MISSION HOLIDAY DRIVE
Now to December 18th

Each year, City Mission Society, a UCC MA Conference mission activity, organizes a Christmas Shop, where needy families and individuals are invited to come and select gifts for themselves and their children.

Circle 10 is proud to be organizing our Church’s collection efforts again this year. Look for our drop-off table before service in the Narthex on December 4, 11 and 18. Donate now through Sunday, Dec. 18th.

City Mission recommends the following new/unused donations:

- Winter coats, sweaters and sweatshirts (child, teen, and adult-larger sizes especially needed!)
- Hats, mittens, gloves and scarves
- Socks and underwear
- Blankets, and backpacks
- Gift cards – Grocery, Target, Marshall’s, Walgreen’s, CVS or other Merchants or generic VISA
- Toys, games, and books for all ages

Contact Jen Crain at jcrain1@gmail.com or 503-806-1338 with any questions or to arrange a pick-up of a donation.

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.
CHRISTMAS FLOWERS - $15.00 per plant

Send your order form by Sunday, December 11 to: Darby Drafts, 25 Adams St., Melrose MA 02176

Ordered by: ____________________________________

Phone #: __________________

IN MEMORY OF:

____________________________________

# of plants ordered_______  Amount enclosed: $______

Please make checks payable to First Congregational Church.