



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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**Confronting with Courage, Making God's
Work Our Own**

The following is a message from our Conference
Minister, Rev. Jim Antal

This is the moment for which we have all been called. How fitting that every four years, the Inauguration of the American President is surrounded by the season of Epiphany - when the truth of Gospel is revealed to the world.

Millions of women, men and children flooded the streets in scores of cities around the world the day after the Inauguration because they resonated with what the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said 50 years ago in April 1967: "There comes a time when silence is betrayal."

As he did so often, King was channeling our Lord. Just before Jesus cries over Jerusalem, when the Pharisees ask Jesus to order his disciples to stop, Jesus responds, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out." (Luke 19:40)

A day after the Inauguration, [the twitter accounts of the National Park Service were silenced](#). But on Tuesday (January 24) "the stones" began to shout out as the Twitter account for South Dakota's Badlands National Park-a subsidiary of the National Park Service-began tweeting out [climate change facts](#). We have already reached the point where sharing truths - [sharing facts](#) - is a sign of both heroism and hope.

In 1966 Senator Robert F. Kennedy delivered [a speech for the ages](#), not long after Nelson Mandela had been silenced to the jails for 27 years. RFK addressed the Union of Students in Cape Town, South Africa - but he locates hope, not in those who have lived only a brief while, but in the qualities of youth:

"Our answer is the world's hope; it is to rely on youth. The cruelties and obstacles of this swiftly changing planet will not yield to obsolete dogmas and outworn slogans. It cannot be moved by those who cling to a present which is already dying, who prefer the illusion of

security to the excitement and danger which comes with even the most peaceful progress. This world demands the qualities of youth; not a time of life but a state of mind, a temper of the will, a quality of the imagination, a predominance of courage over timidity, of the appetite for adventure over the love of ease...."

And he concludes with these words:

"With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God's work must truly be our own."

Epiphany is the season in which the truth of the Gospel is revealed to the world.

But the scientists we employ with our tax dollars to carry out climate science [have now been silenced](#). Worse yet, their academic papers will be subject to review so that the incoming Director of the EPA (who is most known for having sued the EPA again and again and again) will be able to assure that their scientific conclusions are consistent with the views of the new administration.

Let's make Epiphany a time when we, as followers of Christ, shun "alternative facts" while clinging to the truth that will set us free.

Let us rejoice that the "world" which God so loved cannot be divided by political or ideological passion. It is the indivisible [blue marble](#) surrounded by a common climate which - at the moment - is almost 1.5° Celsius hotter than it has been for the past 11,700 years during which civilization developed. Seven billion people are living this fact. There is no alternative fact - no alternative earth - no planet B.

This is the moment for which we have all been called. Let us not be silent. It is, after all, the season of truth.

Jim Antal
Minister and President
Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ

Sunday, February 12, 2017

9:00 AM – Morning Star Voices Rehearsal
10:00 AM – WORSHIP and Sunday School
11:15 AM – Coffee Hour
7:00 PM – Confirmation Class

DURING THE WEEK

Monday, February 13

6:30 PM – Racial Justice Ministry meeting, at Garrett's

Tuesday, February 14

2:00 PM – Circle 4, Lounge

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

Wednesday, February 15

7:15 PM – Bells rehearsal

Thursday, February 16

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

Friday, February 17

1:00 PM – Staff Meeting

Sunday, February 19

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

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,

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

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

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



Brian Johnson, Bob Hughes, Ray Luebbe (Betsy Garrett's father), Mary Sakata and Becky Faro (Trish Faro's daughters), Ginny Niles, Nyal Fuentes, Claire Griffin, Herb Gray, Bill Albright, Bill Copeland, Merle Copeland, Gem Colvin, Dot Allen, Bob

Pierce, Anne Wing, Ella Boyle, Scott Chisholm.



Re-scheduled:

Circle 4 will meet at the Church on **Tuesday, February 14th at 2:00 P.M.**



SUNDAY SCHOOL:

Toddlers thru 5th grade will enjoy a lesson based on 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7. Love never fails.

K to 2 will be making a banner for the bulletin board

Middle School will be led by Trish Faro on the topic of making career choices and the role of the church

High School is invited to continue their session with Scott Crain



Mission Opportunity – Bread of Life

February 16th is the Third Thursday of the month... so the FCC volunteers are heading to Bread of Life in Malden! We would love to have a few more people join us. Bread of Life provides the food, we prepare and cook it, then serve the clients. Our team from First Congregational Church volunteers from 4pm – 7pm. You can make a difference, even if you can only spare an hour during that 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!!!)

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



RACIAL JUSTICE MINISTRY

A group of us have been meeting once a month at the Garrett's home to discuss racial justice issues. We have been reading the curriculum *White Privilege: Let's Talk—A Resource for Transformational Dialogue*, put out by the United Church of Christ. You can download the curriculum for free at <http://privilege.uccpages.org/>.

At our last meeting, on January 11, we discussed the cash value of whiteness and how that impacts our education and housing opportunities. Read Part Three of the curriculum to find out more about that. We also started discussing what we as a church can do to work toward social justice in our community and beyond.

We hope you will join us! The meetings are open to all in our church who are interested in this issue. Our next meeting is February 13 at the Garrett's home. (We have been meeting alternately on Mondays and Wednesdays). We begin at 6:30 with a social time so that we can start the meeting promptly at 7:00 PM.

For more information and to be added to our email list, please contact

Betsy Garrett - betsy.luebbe.garrett@gmail.com

Beth Hampson - bkashatus@gmail.com

We hope that you can join us at our next meeting!

~ Betsy

On behalf Music Hiring Committee, thank you to all who took the time to complete our Music Ministry Survey. In total, we received 52 surveys: 30 online and 22 on paper. Here are themes we collected from the surveys:

Positives

- The existing music ministry overall
- Inclusion of all ages starting with the Treblemakers
- Variety of music performance groups and styles incorporated into the service
- Support for Mariko: her enthusiasm, energy, ideas, and ability to work with all ages

Hopes and things to consider changing

- Increasing opportunities for kids, pre-teens, teens, and young adults to participate in music
- Revitalize Band of Praise
- More upbeat music (less dirge-like)
- A core set of familiar and easier hymns the congregation can sing well
- More contemporary songs
- Review the performance of secular / non-Christian music
- Concerns expressed by some that applause in response to performances is jarring to the contemplation

The responses from this survey are being compiled and will be used in future music ministry planning.

Noting that the mandate of this committee was to search for a new permanent music director, the committee is taking this input and finalizing the job description. The job description will be posted between February 15 and February 20 with a submission deadline of March 18. Submissions will be reviewed on March 23 and interviews will begin the first week of April. If you know of possible candidates, please provide that information to a committee member.

Some may ask why we are not going to simply hire Mariko. The committee feels it is important to engage in the full process of searching for a music ministry director and we hoped Mariko would apply. Rev. Dominic and Mariko have spoken about this: he said Mariko understands the need for completing the process and that she intends to apply.

Committee members:

Betsy Garrett, Ann Ahlin, Beth Grzegorzewski, Bob and Lisa Jamison, Jamie McAllister-Grande, Michael Leskiw, Rev. Dominic, Tom Foth



CHILI AND CORNBREAD COOK-OFF

**2017 CHILI COOK-OFF
& CORNBREAD CONTEST!
FEBRUARY 26, 2017**

*To Be Held In Memory of Connie Robinson –
Frequent Chili Cook-Off Champion and Loyal
Supporter of Fellowship events at our church.*

INTHE NARTHEX, RIGHT AFTER THE WINTER CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Everybody mark your calendars, the Annual Chili Cook-off and Cornbread Contest are not far off! Just two weeks from this Sunday! The signup board will be in the Narthex this Sunday, and **this is the last Sunday to sign up**, so take a look at the categories and see if one seems just right for your culinary expertise - or just your sense of fun! There will be some new categories this year, just to stir things up a bit! So indulge your enthusiasm for cooking and your competitive spirit and sign up!



Love ever gives,
forgives, outlives
and ever stands
with open hands.
And while it lives, it gives.
For this is love's prerogative —
to give, and give, and give.

—John Oxenham

**Meet our newest members that joined
January 29th!
Watch for more in the weeks to come.**



Sonia Curtin



I am delighted to introduce Sonia Curtin to our community at FCC. I first met Sonia as I was walking my daughter Anna home from the Lincoln School one day at the beginning of this school year. Sonia was walking home with her niece, Hillary, who is also a first grader at the same school. A couple of weeks later, I ran into her here at church during coffee hour, and our paths have crossed many times since.

Sonia grew up in Orange, MA before moving to Fort Meyers, Florida, where she lived for 30 years. There she worked in the personal finance division of Citi Group for 12 years and became a certified mortgage loan specialist. She has one daughter and one son, a 3-year-old grandson, and three step-grandchildren who all live in Florida. Sonia moved to Melrose in October of 2015 and currently lives with her brother and his family. She enjoys photography, jewelry making, and crocheting. Sonia first heard about FCC from her neighbor across the street, Michelle MacIntosh, who said to her one day, "You should come to my church!" And we are glad she did.

Laura Pollica