



First Congregational Church

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

in Melrose

An Open and Affirming Congregation

Messenger

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Black and Orange Pride Day

I heard this on the radio and then had to look it up on the web when I got back to the office just to make sure I heard this right.

Boyden Elementary School in Walpole is canceling Halloween this year. In its place? "Black and Orange Pride Day".

Wait, what?!

From what I can gather, in an effort to be culturally sensitive to those in the community who do not celebrate Halloween, the school is not recognizing Halloween with the usual costume parade, but is instead offering a Black and Orange Pride party after school hours.

And Boyden Elementary is not alone. Black and Orange Pride Day is a trend moving throughout many schools across the country and Canada.

What I can additionally gather is that this is not acquiescing to Christian fundamentalists who have long felt that Halloween is a demonic holiday that manages to rise up from the pits of hell every October 31st (although I'm sure that they applaud this change). Instead, this seems to have to do with a well-intentioned desire to make sure everyone is included and no one is offended; particularly those from other countries where Halloween is not celebrated.

Like the move toward "Happy Holidays" instead of "Merry Christmas" (and this year I understand the preferred phrase is "Best Greetings of the Season"), I get the desire to not presume another person's customs. The problem, however, is that we end up white-washing over cultural traditions of all kinds and end up with a lowest-common-denominator which is often nothing at all.

Halloween is our culture's time to stop suppressing our fear of the unknown, the "dark side", and confront evil square-on and laugh at it so as to take away its power. I think Halloween would be a great occasion to learn about other cultures' traditions of doing the same

thing since this is not an uncommon practice around the world.

Instead there is Black and Orange Pride Day; something immigrants from other countries haven't even asked for. On the contrary, most immigrants I know are always looking to learn more about American traditions and Halloween is a big one.

I know that if I were visiting or living in another country, I would not expect or want them to stop celebrating their holidays because I didn't grow up with them. I would feel deprived if they did.

Black and Orange Pride Day is a missed opportunity to learn more about multi-cultural traditions while at the same time celebrating the traditions that we hold dear.

Today, in particular, we need to be learning about other people's religious and cultural traditions and teaching them ours. Diversity is not celebrated by pretending certain holidays don't exist.

See you in church,

Sunday, October 29, 2017

9:00 AM – Morning Star Voices Rehearsal

9:10-9:35 Treblemakers I

9:35-9:45 Treblemakers II

10:00 AM – WORSHIP and Sunday School

11:15 AM – Coffee Hour

After Worship – Annual Halloween Party in the basement

THE FLOWERS are in memory of Sandra Batting Bray and Elaine Gould Batting given by the Ahlin/Krueger families.

DURING THE WEEK

Tuesday, October 31

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

Wednesday, November 1

7:15 PM – Bells rehearsal

Saturday November 4

Turn your clocks BACK before you go to bed.



Sunday, November 5

All Saints Day, Veterans honored

9:00 AM – Youth Singers rehearse

9:40 AM – everyone involved in Veteran's Moment

10:00 AM Worship and Sunday School

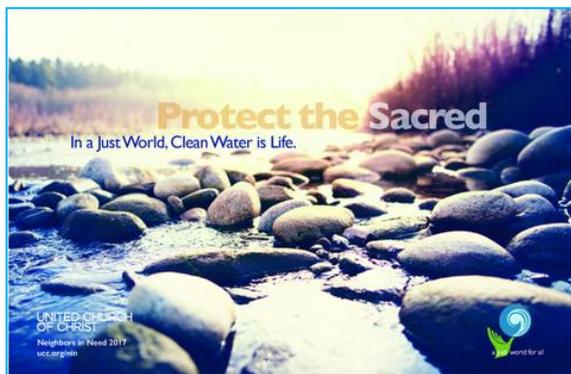
The following groups meet here regularly:

- Boy Scouts** – Tuesdays at 7:00 PM in the basement
- Girl Scouts** – Sundays, 3:00 to 5:00 PM
- Makam Music Group** – Sundays 4:45-6:30 PM – Lounge
- 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 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, 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



Barbara Krol-Sinclair, Sam Lynch, Emelie Burnham, Bill Albright, Anne Wing, Bob Hughes, Mary Sakata and Becky Faro (Trish Faro's daughters), Nyal Fuentes, Claire Griffin, Bill Copeland, Merle Copeland, Dot Allen, Bob

Pierce, Michael Connelly, Francoise.



NEIGHBORS IN NEED

On November 5th our congregation will be celebrating in the Neighbors in Need offering. Our collection supports the UCC ministry of justice and compassion throughout the USA. Over 2/3 of the money raised will support national justice and advocacy initiatives on voting rights, immigration, health care, hate crimes, civil liberties and environmental justice. The other 1/3 supports the UCC Council for American Indian Ministries. Please come prepared to share in this offering opportunity.



We are planning a special class/event with the children to honor our Veterans and active service members on Sunday, November 5th. If you are a Veteran or

actively serving please contact me at 781-267-3719 or email me at duniavelez10@yahoo.com.

Dunia Velez



SUNDAY SCHOOL:

Toddlers-5th: This week the kids will be learning about Prayer. We will be reading and studying Psalm 23.

Looking at nature and how we find God in it.. How the colors and nature around us can remind us of this comforting prayer. How to connect to God thru the types of prayers we recite. It is good to have different types of prayers those we talk to God and those we memorize

Middle School: Will be decorating for the Halloween party in the basement.

High school: Catherine Dhingra continues with the different world religions.

We are asking all Middle and High School students to be present [on 11/5](#) for the special Veteran's Appreciation Service. We are planning a special speaker for them.

If you'd like to be added to the list of volunteers to help out in Sunday School classes as a 2nd adult, please let one of us know at church, or email Sherri Jackson at sltjmtj@hotmail.com.



**HALLOWEEN PARTY
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 29**

All children are encouraged to wear Halloween costumes to church and join our Middle School and High School youth for a Halloween Party directly following worship in the church basement. We'll have games, crafts, snacks and pizza. The youth are planning a glow-in-the dark game room. Be sure and join the fun!

Stewardship CAMPAIGN

Why do I volunteer my services to the Church?

Please listen as I explain, I promise the answer is in the following story.

I am grateful this church is supportive of my passion to teach toddlers / preschool and write curriculum for T to 5

It may surprise you that the end of August is a hard time of year for me. I am transitioning my own children to school, finishing up the Sunday school program, finding time to meet with the Deacons and teachers, designing the bulletin board, working with the staff to finish up the binders for the teachers. This August I hit a low. And I found myself praying...God why can't I go to a cathedral sit in your presence in the quiet space and be one of many.

God is still speaking and some answers come quicker than others...this answer came minutes after the words were whispered. The children need to hear my message through you. This response was quite humbling. I thanked Him and quickly regained my focus.

The message for this Sunday School year is: God loves you no matter how you feel. Know that God is listening to your prayers when you express your feelings to him. The book series we are using this year is a Talking to God series by Guidepost. I was inspired to use the emoji's and pair them with God's word. I carefully selected the verses to match the emoji's. Hopefully, with the lessons and the crafts we are doing they will remember the verses or start to associate those common symbols with a new meaning. I encourage you to find how you are feeling on any given Sunday and read the verse.

In the spring, Toddlers to Middle school will study Jesus' feelings and how he expressed them. The children don't readily think of Jesus having feelings, too. This will help them relate to Jesus and know he has felt how they are feeling. It will be easier for them to develop a friendship and talk to God when they know he has feelings, too! For middle school, they will focus on situations and learn how Jesus responded. We hope they carry this message into their own lives.

I am able to focus on the curriculum for toddlers to 5 and influence the middle and high school programs because I have such great support in the administrative staff. If

you haven't met Dunia she has been a fantastic support. She puts all the binders together for the teachers, emails them weekly with the next Sunday's plan, makes sure we have all the supplies, puts them in the bins so the teachers have everything they need for their class, makes samples of the crafts and preps the crafts for the Toddlers. Somehow from my sketch for the Sunday school board she was able to put together the eye catching emoji's and the verses in just the right way.

Sherri is the co-deacon of Christian Education. Sherri is amazing not only coordinating teachers for all grades and their schedules but also the second adults and nursery support. This year she is one of the teachers for 3 to 5. She is able to track so many details I couldn't do it without her.

I am grateful to all the teachers who lead your children every Sunday in lessons and share God's word. I thank them truly from the bottom of my heart for their commitment to you and to the children.

Why do I do Sunday school...it is not just me. It is us. It is the deacons, the staff, the teachers and most importantly, God. It's a community and I am proud to help support the mission of this church.

Thank you,
Lisa Warner



Thanksgiving Dinner

The Annual Thanksgiving dinner will be on November 19 this year. The signup board is already up in the narthex! More details to follow!



Winter Wonderland Fair
December 1 – 6-8 pm
December 2 – 9am-2pm

The following tables depend upon your generous spirit. The Gift and Christmas tables are also an opportunity for you to 'weed out'.

Contact persons

Glenda Amirault (781-665-0923) and Ginny Altmann (607-643-5397) are **contact** people for the **Gift Table**. Please donate gently used scarves and purses. If you are a knitter or stitcher please donate these handmade soft goods to the gift table this year.

Janet Runge (781-665-2713) is the contact person for the **Christmas Table**. Donations can include gently used ornaments, wreaths, angels, and lights. These items always brighten the season for others. Byer's Carolers and Dept. 56 are popular Christmas collectibles.

Baked Goods are always in great demand.

Cookies, muffins, scones, fudge, and gluten free baked goods are welcomed and popular goodies. This year, more than ever, bakers are needed to fill the demand. Emelie Burnham and **Circle 4** are contacts and will be calling YOU.

Martha Williams (781-942-4547) will answer your questions about **Raffle Baskets**. Pick a theme and have fun choosing the items (remember these must be new items) to fill your basket (container). The basket elves will arrange your basket, wrap it in cellophane, add a bow and a tag if you would like. Remember to include the container and bring it to church by November 26 if you desire this "elf service".

Of course, the popular **Gingerbread Houses** will be ready for decoration. This crowd pleaser is a real money maker since the materials are donated and construction is done by volunteers. **Materials:** graham crackers, 2lb. bag of powdered sugar, bags of hard candies can be donated starting now. Sign up for the 'construction' of houses the week of the fair. Nancy Gift **contact**