



First Congregational Church

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

in Melrose

An Open and Affirming Congregation

Messenger

Rev. Dominic Taranowski, Pastor

Mariko Matsumura, Director of Music Ministry

Dunia Velez, Administrative Assistant for Youth Programs

OFFICE 781-665-2111 - FAX 781-665-8824

E-MAIL info@fccmelrose.org Website www.fccmelrose.org

Rev. Dominic's Cell phone: 781-526-3428

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Jesus' Family Tree

Henry Louis Gates, Jr. hosts a show on PBS called "Finding Your Roots". In it, he shares the often unknown ancestry of famous people. We not only get to witness how these famous people react learning where they come from, we also learn more about what makes them who they are today.

There is a part of the Christmas story that feels very much like something you would find on "Finding Your Roots".

In this case, the famous person is Jesus and the passage is Matthew 1:1-17. Now, there is a really good reason why most people who start reading Matthew's Gospel start with Chapter 1 and then quickly skip to the start of Chapter 2. Chapter 1 doesn't make a whole lot of sense because it is pretty much just a list of names.

Matthew opens with the genealogy, the family tree of Jesus. These are "his people". Most of them are obscure names. Some of them may sound familiar from the Old Testament while others are completely unknown.

Remarkably, there are four women listed among the names. Who they are reveals something important about Jesus and about how God works.

In verse 3, the writer lists Tamar. In the book of Genesis, Tamar was widowed, disguised herself as a harlot, was taken by her father-in-law (Judah, who did not realize it), and bore a child named Perez. By the standards of their day, this was considered incest. Needless to say, this will *not* be part of our Sunday School curriculum.

The next woman listed, in verse 5, is Rahab from the book of Joshua, who was a prostitute, and bore a son named Boaz.

The third woman listed is Ruth (who has a book of the Bible named after her). She seduces Boaz (something considered a sin during that time), they marry, and have a child.

The fourth woman listed (though not by name) is Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, with whom King David

had an adulterous affair. The second child of David and Bathsheba was King Solomon. This is the lineage that eventually led to Jesus.

So Matthew decided to open his whole collection of stories about Jesus by saying that he descended from the incest of Tamar, the prostitution of Rahab, the seduction of Ruth, and the adultery of Bathsheba.

Why on earth would anyone ever open a book this way?

I think the reason is rather simple: The moral failings of the people who came before Jesus could not prevent God from accomplishing God's purpose.

And what was that purpose? To proclaim to the world for all time that God can create holiness out of any shortcoming, even any evil. Nothing and no one is beyond the redemption of God.

As you think about your life this Advent season, remember this Good News: As a person of faith, your family tree includes Jesus himself. Consequently, God's love, forgiveness and grace is greater than any failing in your life.

May his birth this Christmas remind you of the new life that is forever yours no matter your past. God doesn't give up on anybody. In fact, God cares so much about you that God chose to enter our turbulent world to make sure that you came to know that you can never, ever be outside of God's redemptive love.

See you in church,

--Rev. Dominic



2ND SUNDAY OF Advent
Sunday, December 10, 2017

9:00 AM – Morning Star Voices Rehearsal

9:30 AM – Pageant rehearsal

10:00 AM – WORSHIP and Sunday School

11:15 AM – Coffee Hour

4:00 to 6:00 PM – Youth to CMS Christmas Shop

DURING THE WEEK

Tuesday, December 12

7:00 PM – Deacons Meeting, Lounge

Wednesday, December 13

7:15 PM – Bells rehearsal

Thursday, December 14

1:00 PM – Staff Meeting

Sunday, December 17 – Third Sunday of Advent

10:00 AM Worship (Pageant) 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

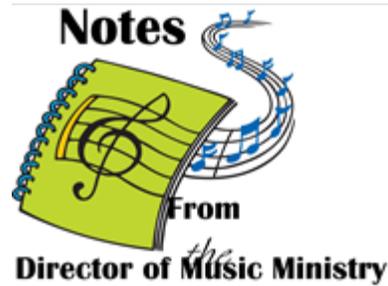


Dhingra family, Barbara Krol-Sinclair, Emelie Burnham, Marilyn McCommas, Bill Albright, Anne Wing, Bob Hughes, Mary Sakata and Becky Faro (Trish Faro's daughters), Nyal Fuentes, Claire Griffin, Bill

Copeland, Merle Copeland, Dot Allen, Bob Pierce, Michael Connelly, Francoise.



Congratulations to Justin Wonoski and Terrie O'Brien who were baptized on Sunday, November 26th.



Hello Carolers,

We have three options for you to spread some Christmas cheers!

Huge thanks to Terrie, we are now booked to appear at two places,

possibly for the third one.

Please plan on arriving 10mins before the schedule time.

At the moment, I cannot arrange a pick up/drop off.

However, as soon as the list is settled, if you need a ride, I will send a round of emails requesting help.

Remember, you only have to sign up for one or two, unless you desperately love to sing all three!

Sunday 12/10 at 12:30pm – We need more this Sunday!

The Fitch Home

75 Lake Ave. Melrose, MA 02176

We only have five singers signed up including my star singer from Treblemakers! Please check your calendar to see your availability and let me know (email me at marikouma@yahoo.com)

Sunday 12/17 at 12pm

Oosterman's Rest Home

93 Laurel St. Melrose, MA02176

This last option is still up in the air. I would like to see how many can attend since it is Thursday afternoon. Please sign up if you can do this, and Terri and I will confirm ASAP.

Thursday 12/21 at 4pm

Levi Gould

200 W Foster St. Melrose, MA 02176

I will have the signup sheet in the Narthex this coming Sunday.

If you cannot come this Sunday but need to sign up, just email me back, and I will sign your name for you!

Let me know if you have any questions!

Mariko Matsumura

Director of Music Ministry



SUNDAY SCHOOL:

This week the Toddlers through 5th lesson theme is based on Hebrews 13:5 it is about God taking care of us all. We will be reading a story about a child who learns how to pick out toys for children less fortunate. Teachers will focus on how kind deeds like buying for others less fortunate allows us to share Jesus love thru the season. We will be encouraging them to participate in the City Mission clothing and toy drive.

The Middle & High School class will be making no-sew blankets or scarves for City Mission.

Volunteers: We are always looking for volunteers to help out in our K-2 Sunday School class! There's no preparation required...just be ready to help out with crafts and keeping the children focused on the discussion. Please talk to Lisa, Sherri, or Dunia at church, or email Sherri at sltjmtj@hotmail.com.

Pageant

The Pageant Rehearsal will be on Sunday, December 10th at 9:30 am. If you have any questions please contact Dunia Velez at [781-267-3719](tel:781-267-3719).

Family Worship: As a reminder, we will be having a Family Worship service on Sunday, December 24th and on December 31st. There will be **NO** Sunday School classes those day (Nursery care is always available!), and families are invited to worship together.

Winter Wonderland Fair

What a weekend!! The fair was packed, and we saw lots of smiling faces!!!

This year's fair was not only a financial success, but it was a chance for people to work together and form new friendships! Many people, both long-time members and people new to our congregation shared this time together.



We'd especially like to acknowledge the tireless efforts of Circle 4 in making the fair possible. And to everyone else who generously contributed their time, talent and treasure to make the fair a success—many, many thanks!

CMS Christmas



The 2017 CMS Christmas Shop – Share the Joy of the Season!

The City Mission Gift drive collects clothing, toys, and toiletries, to be distributed to the homeless or near homeless in the greater Boston area each year. Circle 10 and our Youth

are partnering up again this year to support the City Mission Christmas Shop.

Circle 10 will be collecting donations on Dec. 10th and 17th, in the Narthex.

GIFT SUGGESTIONS

- We accept only NEW items. These are listed by priority:
- Winter coats, sweaters and sweatshirts (large sizes especially)
- Hats, mittens, gloves and scarves
- Socks and underwear
- Gift cards from Target, Marshalls, Walgreen's, CVS, Kohl's, Walmart, Stop and Shop, Shaw's and other merchants
- Blankets and backpacks
- Toys (culturally relevant dolls), games, and books for all ages

On Dec. 10th our Youth will go to the Christmas Shop from 4:00 – 6:00 PM to inventory, sort, and help prep for distribution.

With our congregation's support, the Christmas Shop brings hope and joy to those most in need during the holiday season.



Saving our planet one city at time

In the coming weeks, Melrose citizens have a unique opportunity to act locally to help protect God's Creation.

The Board of Alderman will be considering an **Ordinance Regarding the Reduction of Plastic Bags in Melrose.**

This Ordinance will protect our waterways, minimize litter and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Please contact your ward Alderman and the Aldermen at Large to let them know you support the ordinance.

**CHRISTMAS FLOWERS -
\$15.00 per plant**

Send your order form before
Sunday, December 10 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.***

PUZZLE

JOURNEY TO
BETHLEHEM

In the Christmas story in Luke 2, an angel tells some shepherds to go see baby Jesus in Bethlehem.

START *Directions: Follow the maze to arrive in Bethlehem.*

BETHLEHEM