



First Congregational Church

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

in Melrose

An Open and Affirming Congregation

Messenger

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The "Genesis" of Me Too

You know that a social catharsis is underway and a social remedy needed when a phenomenon like "Me Too" shows no signs of going away. And it shouldn't. As someone said: "Me Too isn't a fad, it is a truth and truths don't fade".

I am confident that everyone knows what "Me Too" is, which saves me defining it. What I want to add to the discussion is that, as much as we might not want to look at it, Christianity has a culpable role to play in the origins of the problem. That's because although we try to keep faith and culture separate, we really can't—especially in this country. Many social norms are flavored by Christian mores and many traditional Christian mores are based on patriarchy.

The idea that women should "know their place", that men are the "head of the household", and even "boys will be boys" all have their origins in the bible (most particularly Paul's writings about how the early church should function). These notions have led to the assumption that women are weak while men are strong; women are the keepers of purity while men are barely able to control their sexual urges. It is a mixed up set of assumptions, born of religious tradition, and none of it is true.

It has led, however, to a remarkable lack of sympathy for victims of sexual intimidation and abuse in some Christian communities—particularly evangelical communities (i.e. the Roy Moore debacle in Alabama). Even after the Catholic child abuse scandal revelations, there is still a knee jerk reflex on the part of some to instinctively believe men in positions of power simply because they are, well, men in positions of power.

To be sure, there are some looming cautions surrounding Me Too. Should an accusation be all that is needed to ruin a career? What is the role of redemption? That is, is there no room for evolution in a person's thinking and behaving over the course of their adult life? As healing as Me Too is for victims, there are

unanswered questions such as these that, until they are addressed, can lead to solutions that feel and sound more like vengeance than empowerment.

Still, I think it is important to remember that since much the problem stems from women being considered second class citizens to men (the "genesis" of which can, in fact, be found in the first book of the bible), it stands to reason that the solution should also begin, at least in part, in religious communities.

In this regard, it is once again good to know that, institutionally speaking, the United Church of Christ is ahead of the curve on this. For example, ordination of women began for us in 1852 and today most seminarians are women.

Nevertheless, on a day to day level we should always let the presence of our all-inclusive God inform our interactions with one another; not least because...God herself can come in many disguises!

See you in church,

--Rev. Dominic

Sunday, January 21, 2018

9:00 AM – Morning Star Voices Rehearsal

10:00 AM – Worship and Sunday School

11:15 AM – Coffee Hour

1:00 PM – Bible Study at Panera Bread, Saugus

(arrive by 12:30 so that you can order and receive your lunch before we begin)

DURING THE WEEK

Tuesday, January 23

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

Wednesday, January 24

7:15 PM – Bells rehearsal

Sunday, January 28 – New Member Sunday

10:00 AM – Worship and Sunday School

11:15 AM - Coffee hour

11:30 AM - Racial Justice Ministry book discussion, *Deeper Roots: An American Odyssey* by Katherine Butler Jones, Library

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. – Sundays 5:30 PM, Library, 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



Allen, Bob Pierce, Michael

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 Connelly, Francoise.



SUNDAY SCHOOL:

This week the toddlers through fifth graders will be learning about Epiphany, using the book *The Three Wise Women*, by a local author. We will discuss that while everyone knows the story of the three wise men, what if there were also three wise women? How can we all share God's light in the world? What gift do you identify with? What gift might you have given baby Jesus?

The Middle School class will be learning about hunger in our world with Kris, as preparation for the Souper Bowl of Caring on February 4th.

The High School class will continue a 4-part unit on Dismantling Racism this week, led by Beth Hampson. During this important 4 week unit, the students will discuss Exploring Systemic Racism, Understanding White Privilege, Ways to Respond When You Hear or See Racism, and Steps We Can Take to Dismantle Racism.

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.



Thank you to everyone who helped out with the advent services this year. We deeply appreciate all of you who stepped up during this busy

time to usher, serve communion, lay read, and set up the décor in the sanctuary. All told, there were over forty of us that were involved in some way this season.

Thank you, especially to the following people: John Buser, Kris Carbonneau, Nate Faro, Tom and Becky Foth, Nyal, Becky, Marisol, and Elena Fuentes, Jim Garrett, Jill Geisler, Carol Gyurina, the Hampson family, Cynthia Irish, Bob and Lisa Jamison, Hans and Sallie Klemm, Phyllis Lanni, the McAllister-Grande family, Ron Miner, Penny and Jim Muschett, Jim and Lisa Oosterman, Lauren Patalak and Lily Grace, Jim Sugrue, George Taranowski, and John Whalen.

*~ Betsy Garrett and Laura Pollica,
Deacons of Worship*



Bible Study at Panera Bread Sunday, January 21st at 1:00 p.m.



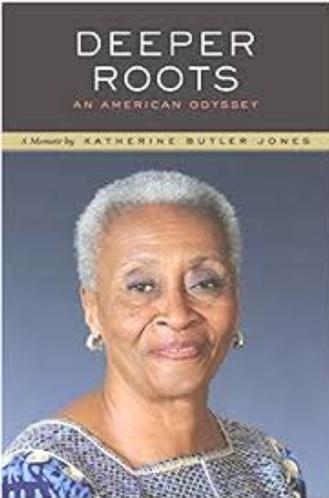
By Lighting our Church Steeple in memory or in honor of loved ones, you can help our church financially. Contact the church office (781-665-2111 or info@fccmelrose.org) to sign up for a week beginning on a Sunday. Your gift will be announced in the Sunday Bulletin and "The Messenger". A \$25.00 per week contribution is suggested.

Join Rev. Dominic and Bill Albright at Panera Bread in Saugus (next to Marshalls and across from Target on the Fellsway) for lunch and a bible study class! Rev. Dominic will lead things off with a consideration of the question: "Why is the bible relevant today?" Bill will then follow with a consideration of a particular text. As always, your valued input is anticipated as we live and grow in our faith by means of sharing with one another.

Please arrive by 12:30 so that you can order and receive your lunch before we begin. We have reserved the room within the dining area and hope to have everyone settled and ready to participate by 1:00 p.m.

Hope to see you there!

*February 9 at 7:30 pm –
Heidi Breyer Debut Album Concert
to Benefit the Refugee Immigration Ministry
program of Greater Boston*



**Racial Justice Ministry
book discussion Jan
28**

The Racial Justice Ministry will have a discussion on Sunday January 28 after the worship service on the book *Deeper Roots: An American Odyssey* by Katherine Butler Jones. Jones has been active in racial justice work in the Boston area and helped start the METCO

program in Newton. The book is a memoir of her childhood in New York City and her quest to find out more about her family's past. There is one copy of the book on the Social Justice Ministry book rack in the Narthex to the right of the kitchen. If you would like that copy, please put a donation in the slot to sustain the book ministry. You can also order the book from Amazon.com .

If you have any questions, please contact Betsy Garrett at betsy.luebbe.garrett@gmail.com

Melrose Enacts Plastic Bag Ordinance

As a follow up to the call to action for the earth: On Monday, December 18, the Melrose Board of Aldermen voted unanimously to approve the proposed Recyclable and Reusable Bag Ordinance. The new law requires businesses to provide checkout bags that are either a recyclable paper bag or a reusable bag. The new law takes effect July 1, 2018, for larger businesses (more than 8000 square feet) and October 1, 2018, for smaller businesses (8000 square feet or less).

The goal of the law is to promote reusable bags over single-use bags of any type (either paper or plastic). The Melrose law (and others like it) restricts the use of thin plastic checkout bags because of the many problem they cause. Specifically, plastic bags create litter, jam recycling equipment when improperly placed in curbside bins, require fossil fuels to manufacture, and contribute to plastic pollution on land and in the water. Plastic doesn't biodegrade; it breaks down into microparticles over time. These particles have been found in many species of marine life, in soil, and in 94% of U.S. drinking water samples. Reusable bags and recycled paper bags are much better solutions for human health and the environment.

To learn more visit the recycling committee blog at:
<https://melrecyclingcommittee.wordpress.com/2017/12/21/melrose-enacts-plastic-bag-ordinance/>

The net proceeds of this debut performance of Heidi Breyer's new album "Moonlight in Empty Rooms", will benefit the Refugee Immigration Ministry (RIM). Tickets are tax deductible: adults \$25; children under 18, \$15. Tickets can be purchased at <http://moonlightalbum.com/event/first-congregational-church/>

In a surprisingly private corner of the very public worlds of music and art, you will find the eminent Russian realist Alexander Volkov and his wife, award winning pianist-composer Heidi Breyer in their respective studios, working alone on their inextricably connected art forms. They have pushed the boundaries of collaboration beyond synergy to synonymity through sharing their lives, their observations of the world, and their love of art as a nourishing life ingredient. Alexander and Heidi have arrived at "Moonlight In Empty Rooms" an art and musical immersion that speaks to anyone looking for an opportunity for deep contemplation.

The collection of 12 piano and violin pieces were written specifically in response to Alexander's paintings of the same name. In this event, the two artists collaborate in live performance. Alexander speaks philosophically about art and life and Heidi plays solo or ensemble and pitches in with lighter comment as if steering at the helm of the ship. It is a rare and unique thing.



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