



First Congregational Church

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

in Melrose

An Open and Affirming Congregation

Messenger

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Lost in Translation

There are new computer and phone apps coming out every day. Some are quite amazing.

Take, for example, the fact that up until recently you really needed a guide book of simple phrases if you were traveling to a country where you did not speak the language. Unless the person in front of you from that country spoke English, you were reduced to pointing at the book, gesturing and hoping for the best.

No more! There's an app for that! Today you can easily converse with someone from a foreign country who does not speak English simply by speaking into your cell phone. The app will translate your words immediately into the language of your choosing. Amazing!

What occurred to me, however, is this: How is the word "God" translated? Of course, the app would use the equivalent word in, say, Spanish: "Dios". That's not what I mean. I mean how can we translate this word when talking to each other—even those who speak the same language? After all, there have been many times when I have been talking about God to someone and they understand that word *entirely* differently than I do. No app is going to help with that!

It goes the other way, too. When I hear some people talk about God as a divine, judgmental being who hates gay people, created racial divides for our benefit, and calls down hurricanes to punish people, I feel like I must be getting a very poor translation of the word "God" because it bears no resemblance to the word as I understand it.

So here's an idea: What would happen if we replaced the word "God" with the word "Love"?

It would be interesting to see what would happen if this was the programming on translation apps, but it would be even more interesting (and, I believe, beneficial) to see what would happen in our discussions with people where there is little common ground.

This really wouldn't be such a great leap. After all, in the First Letter of John we read: "God is love. Whoever abides in love abides in God, and God in him. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love." (1 John 4:16). The Apostle Paul said that "Faith, hope, and love abide and the greatest of these is...love" (1 Corinthians 13:13).

Don't get me wrong. I'm not in favor of watering the word "God" down to the point where it stops being religious. I'm just wondering what impact using "love" instead might have on bridge-building with people who are not religious, belong to a different faith, or who are also Christian yet have very different beliefs.

I have a feeling the divides we too often struggle with might be reduced and we will find ourselves speaking the same language; without the need for an app.

See you in church,

--Rev. Dominic

Sunday, January 28, 2018 New Member Sunday

9:00 AM – Morning Star Voices Rehearsal

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

DURING THE WEEK

Tuesday, January 30

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

Wednesday, January 31

7:15 PM – Bells rehearsal

Sunday, February 4

Souper Bowl of Caring

10:00 AM – Worship and Sunday School

11:30 AM – Souper Bowl Soup Luncheon

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



Ryan Chisholm, 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.



SUNDAY SCHOOL:

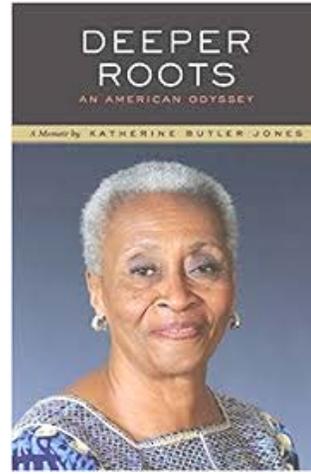
The toddlers through fifth graders in months leading up to Easter will be learning about Jesus and his feelings. It is the goal of these lessons to have the children connect with God thru understanding Jesus' feelings. We will look at how Jesus' feelings led to positive actions. We want to encourage the children to think of their feelings and make positive choices on how to express them. We are opening this series with a fun craft of making gluten-free Rice Krispy emoji's! This will be an open classroom in 7/8.

Lisa will lead the lesson and we will need a few volunteers to assist with the craft.

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

The High School class continues with the 4-part unit on Dismantling Racism with Beth. This week they will learn the different ways to respond when they hear or see 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.



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.

You can order the book from Amazon.com.

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

Racial Justice Readers

Interested in learning more about white privilege and the history of racism in America?

Join us for the first in a series of periodic book discussions open to the greater-Melrose community. Together, through exploring various texts on racism, we will look at the role faith-based communities' can play in dismantling racism. All are welcome!

FIRST BOOK: America's Original Sin by Jim Wallis

WHEN: Sunday, March 4
12:00-1:30 PM

Bring your own lunch and an appetite to share your thoughts on the book. We'll have sweet treats to share!

WHERE: First United Methodist Church, 645 Main Street, Melrose

Co-sponsors: First United Methodist Church, First Congregational Church & Melrose Highlands Congregational Church

Each church has a few copies of the book to lend out. To get a book or with any other questions contact:

FUMC: Jane Allen (janeappleyardallen@gmail.com)
FCC: Beth Hampson (bkashatus@gmail.com)
MHCC: Julia Motl Lowe (juliamotl@yahoo.com)



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

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.

Join us for a bowl of soup!

at the annual

**SOUPER BOWL
of CARING**

Bring your Friends for
Worship and Soup



February 4th, 2018 The First Congregational Church Middle School Youth team will prepare and serve up soup at their annual **Souper Bowl of Caring** luncheon immediately following the worship service.

Souper Bowl of Caring is a national movement of young people working to fight hunger and poverty in their own communities around the time of the Super Bowl game.

Join us for 10 am Worship and delicious soup following the service at 11:30. Donations will be accepted and 100% of the proceeds will go to local food pantries.





**Lenten Adult Education Class—
Living our Reformation Heritage
Beginning after worship on Sunday, February 18
Led by Rev. Dominic**

The Protestant Reformation began 500 years ago. Some of the life-threatening, flabbergasting ideas that exploded out of those years are now part of the air we breathe. 500 years ago, people died for them. But time turns the revolutionary into the everyday. We take key Reformation claims for granted. They are just part of who we are. Other Reformation claims are covered in dust, obscured and stuck away in a neglected corner of the church, like a long-forgotten Van Gogh languishing under wraps in someone's attic.

In a lively, engaging, discussion-based way, this class will explore where we come from and some of the basics of what makes us who we are as Protestant people. Topics will include:

- Guess what? You're a Priest!
- Got Bible? Which do you like? An angry God or a cheap gospel?
- Predestination
- Luther's Sins--and Ours
- Fundamental Protestant principles

Come own your often over-looked heritage as we clear the dust off of 500 years of history and make our Reformation identity relevant for today! Classes will be held after worship on Sunday February 18th, March 4th, 11th, 18th, and 25th. All are welcome and child care is available upon request.

ANNUAL MESSENGER SUBSCRIPTION

It is time for the Annual renewal of your Messenger subscription. The subscription rate for one year is \$25.00.

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_____ Enclosed is \$_____ to help defray the cost of a subscription for someone else.

_____ **Please sign me up for e-mail delivery of the Messenger at no charge and discontinue mailing it.
My e-mail address(es) is/are as follows (Please print neatly):**

If you choose to be added to the e-mail list, you will receive "Messenger from First Congregational Church of Melrose" to your email. You can view it by opening the email. NOTE: If you are already receiving the Messenger by e-mail, no action is required.

NAME: _____ ADDRESS: _____
