



First Congregational Church

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

in Melrose

An Open and Affirming Congregation

Messenger

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The Better Angels of our Nature

The past year has seen a noticeable uptick in bullying. This is the case not only in our schools but also in the work world and social media world as well.

This is disappointing, of course. Schools in particular have gone to great lengths to provide anti-bullying education to students of all ages. It is not as if this work has been for nothing, it is just that it is clear that there are forces working against what would otherwise seem to be a no-brainer: encouraging respect for everyone.

While it is disappointing, it is also understandable. People, kids in particular, take their cues from what they witness to be acceptable behavior. Since the last election, we have all witnessed a leadership style that is based to a large degree on intimidation and name calling. Some may be reluctant to connect those dots but when a little boy on a playground calls a little girl by a derogatory name for her genitals, it is not only that boy who is to blame.

I have always been mystified by bullying. It does not seem to benefit even the one doing the bullying. But maybe that momentary flash of extreme power over another is its own reward; regardless of the damage done.

It has long been established that the psychological profile of a bully is, in fact, a weak person. A bully is typically someone with extremely low self-esteem, lacking parental affirmation, and desperately needing to feel relevant. Lately, instead of offering help to such people (or at the very least resistance when they act out), bullies have found encouragement in their ways.

Not only does this cause trauma to those who are bullied, but there is also a shredding of our social fabric that takes place when this becomes normalized. As Katherine Stewart writes in *The Nation*: "Manufacturing bullies is not all that complicated. You take the fear and anxiety of ordinary life, and you give people the license to focus it on other people...The way to solve your

problems is to take it out on 'them.' Release your rage on the target of your choosing."

Such a dynamic, taking place over time, will surely divide people more than unite them.

Countering this means elevating love in our world. I know that sounds like a hippy placard right out of the 1960's. It also happens to be true. Love is not just bunnies and flowers. Love is a force to be reckoned with. It is most notable by its absence, you know it when you see it, and it is, in fact, the very definition of God.

Kindling love in our society requires us to call upon "the better angels of our nature". Ironically, it was a president who first used that phrase. In his first inaugural address, Abraham Lincoln said:

"The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

Individually and as a society, I have no doubt that those "mystic chords" will once again swell. We will find our way to a society built upon the better angels of our nature and First Congregational Church will help lead the way.

See you in church,

--Rev. Dominic

Sunday, February 11, 2018

9:00 AM – Morning Star Voices Rehearsal

10:00 AM – Worship and Sunday School

11:15 AM – Coffee Hour



Ash Wednesday Worship Service

7:00 PM

February 14, 2018

Here at First Congregational

Joint service with Melrose Highlands

–Service

Please join us for this very meaningful service to begin the Lenten season

DURING THE WEEK

Tuesday, February 13

7:00 PM – Deacon's Meeting, Library

Wednesday, February 14 - Ash Wednesday

7:00 PM – Ash Wednesday Worship Service [here](#)
(Joint with Melrose Highlands Congregational.)

Thursday, February 15

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

Sunday, February 18

10:00 AM – Worship and Sunday School

11:30 AM – Adult Ed class – 500th Anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, 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

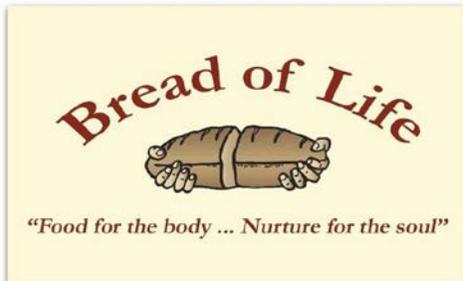
PM, Fridays at 8:00 PM and Saturdays at 9:00 AM (men) and 3:00

PM – Rm. 8



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.



Bread of Life

Every third Thursday of the month, members of FCC cook and serve dinner for Bread of Life in Malden at the American Legion Post 69 on 368 Pleasant St. **This month the date is February 15.** Volunteers are needed any time between 4 and 7 pm.

Other ways you can be a part of this food ministry are by donating a dessert, containers of juice, or large bottles of salad dressing.

If you'd like to help out with the meal or want more information, contact Sallie Klemm at shklemm@verizon.net



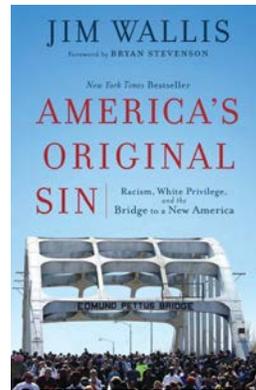
SUNDAY SCHOOL:

This week the children from PreK-5th will be learning about how compassion leads to action. We will read the story of the Prodigal Son. We will talk about how some of the Parables are stories that symbolize how Jesus wants us to act towards others.

The Middle School class will continue with Hunger in our World with Kris.

The High School class will continue their discussion on Dismantling Racism with Jim.

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

RSVP (for space and sweets planning):
melrosracialjusticereaders.eventbrite.com

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

Each house of worship 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)

TBS: Sue Herz (susaneherz@gmail.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/>

***Welcome to six new members, who joined
the congregation on Sunday, January 28:
(More photos to follow next week.)***



Terrie O'Brien



CHILI AND CORNBREAD COOK-OFF

**SEVENTH CHILI COOK-OFF IS ON
FEBRUARY 25TH THIS YEAR!**

It really does not seem possible, but this year's Chili Cook-off will be our seventh! The first year that we held the Cook-off was in 2012! And in that first Cook-off our congregation met the challenge and created some unique and delicious chili recipes. Each following year we have had some of the same chili chefs and new ones making the chili and, since last year, cornbread!

This year the Chili Cook-off and Cornbread Contest will be on February 25th, right after the Congregational meeting, which is right after our church service. A signup board is on the windows of the Narthex.

Help us celebrate one of the newer traditions of our church and sign up to make chili, or bake cornbread, or be one of the expert samplers the day of the Cook-off (that's pretty much all of us, right?) If you have any questions about being in the Cook-off/Contest, see Donna Miner at the Coffee table.



Stephen Taylor



**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.