



First Congregational Church

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

in Melrose

An Open and Affirming Congregation

Messenger

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VOLUME 100

February 16, 2018

Number 23

Mindfulness

If someone were to ask me what the over-arching goal of Lent should be, my one-word answer would be: Mindfulness.

Of course Lent is about confession, repentance, prayer, fasting, and contemplation but those are really just tools that are offered to cultivate Mindfulness. Or, if you prefer, Attentiveness.

It is all about being mindful of the divinity that surrounds you and your response to it. It is all about attentiveness to God in your daily life. Lent offers the chance to remember that you come from God and you go to God and, while you are in this life, that God accompanies you through Jesus Christ.

In the coming weeks of Lent, I will be sharing a devotional practice here in the Messenger to help with your mindfulness this Lenten season. I will be offering a step by step practice of Lectio Divina each week. Some of you have probably heard of this ancient spiritual practice of encountering scripture. As much as we need to re-evaluate and re-invent Lent to make it relevant for our lives today, Lectio Divina is one of those spiritual practices from antiquity that can still add value to our faith formation today.

To set the stage for this kind of mindful contemplation that can enrich our Lenten journey, I invite you to try this simple act of prayer this week:

Look at an everyday, unremarkable thing – anything at all – for several minutes. It is best if the thing you choose is mundane like a piece of furniture or a cooking utensil rather than something that is obviously remarkable like a flower or a painting. Continue to simply look at the thing you have chosen until you notice something beautiful about it that you never saw before. Once this happens, acknowledge that this is a moment of wonder. This is an experience of God and it is around you each and every day. Conclude with a whispered “amen” to remember that what just occurred was, in fact, an act of prayer.

There are many aspects to Lent, but central to this holy season is the opportunity to find the holy in the ordinary—in the things around you, the people around you, the situations around you, and, most importantly, in you yourself.

See you in church,

--Rev. Dominic

Sunday, February 25, 2018

9:00 AM – Morning Star Voices Rehearsal

10:00 AM – Worship and Sunday School

11:15 AM – Coffee Hour

After Worship – Winter Congregational Meeting, sanctuary

Followed by the Chili and Cornbread Cook-off

Florida High School Shooting

Yet again tragedy has struck in the form of a mass shooting. This time in a high school in Parkland, Florida. By now, all of you know the details of the carnage: the number of dead, the shooter, the status of the investigation, etc.. Predictably, there have been calls for greater gun control laws and counter arguments that this had nothing to do with guns but everything to do with mental illness. These are the same reactions to shooting after shooting and nothing seems to change. It can certainly be demoralizing. The pointedness of those calling for gun control (which, as many of you know, I strongly favor) has increased which is a hopeful sign, but so much stands in the way. The truth, however, remains: As Senator Kamala Harris of California said: "We cannot tolerate a society and live in a country with any level of pride when our babies are being slaughtered."

As I have said before, I do not agree with those who say that "thoughts and prayers" are passive things. But I do agree that they are not enough. Our faith should lead us to public advocacy work on behalf of common sense laws to protect our children and youth. The problem is too rampant and the deaths too needless and preventable. This epidemic of violence must end.

--Rev. Dominic

DURING THE WEEK

Tuesday, February 27

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

Wednesday, February 28

7:15 PM – Bells rehearsal

Sunday, March 4

10:00 AM – Worship and Sunday School

11:30 AM – Lenten Adult Education Class—

Living our Reformation Heritage



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, Marilyn McCommas, Bill Albright, Anne Wing, Bob Hughes, Mary Sakata and Becky Faro (Trish Faro's daughters), Claire Griffin, Merle Copeland, Dot Allen, Bob Pierce.

**WARRANT FOR THE WINTER
CONGREGATIONAL MEETING OF
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH in
MELROSE, UCC
February 25, 2018**

To the Members of the First Congregational Church in Melrose, United Church of Christ:

In accordance with the by-laws, there will be a congregational meeting on Sunday, February 25, 2018 immediately following the worship service to receive and act upon the following Articles:

Article 1: To receive and act upon the Clerk’s Report for the calendar year 2017;

Article 2: To receive and act upon the Report of Invested Funds for the calendar year 2017;

Article 3: To receive and act upon the Report of Operating Income and Expenses for the calendar year 2017;

Article 4: To adopt a budget for calendar year 2018;

Article 5: To transact such other business as may come before the meeting.

Rebecca Fuentes and Sarah Fitzpatrick
Trustees of Human Resources and Congregational Records/Clerk

SUNDAY SCHOOL:

This week the preschool through 5th graders will be talking about Jesus feeling of sorrow when Martha and Mary told them of Lazarus death. To help Martha and Mary thru their grieving he reminded them of their faith. They affirmed Jesus as the son of God. Jesus promised as they had faith and believed that they would see the glory of God. This promise is available to us as well.

You may have received a hand out with the bulletin this past Sunday. It is for an upcoming activity! On Sunday March 4th, Pre-K to 5 will be reading the story of the Good Samaritan and **making kits for the homeless**. We are collecting items for this activity. Please bring the items to church on or before March 4th.

- Socks
- Band-Aids
- Anti-bacterial wipes (not sanitizer as it has alcohol in it)
- Small soaps
- Small shampoo (from your hotel stays)
- Wash cloths
- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste
- Combs
- Shaving cream
- Deodorant
- Gallon size zip lock bags
- Packets of crackers (no peanut butter)
- Granola or breakfast bars
- Individual packets of trail mix

In late spring, we are exploring stories about when Jesus took time to be by himself for prayer, reflection & mediation. We would like to coordinate this with a Yoga class during Sunday School for the children pre-K to 5. We are wondering if anyone in the congregation knows a yoga instructor for children. Please contact Lisa at (617)794-2641. If you have yoga mats that we could borrow for the class, please contact Dunia at 781-267-3719.

We truly thank you for your support and generosity for the Sunday school program.
Lisa and Sherri

500TH Anniversary OF THE REFORMATION

**Lenten Adult Education Class—
Living our Reformation Heritage
Resumes after worship on Sunday, March 4
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

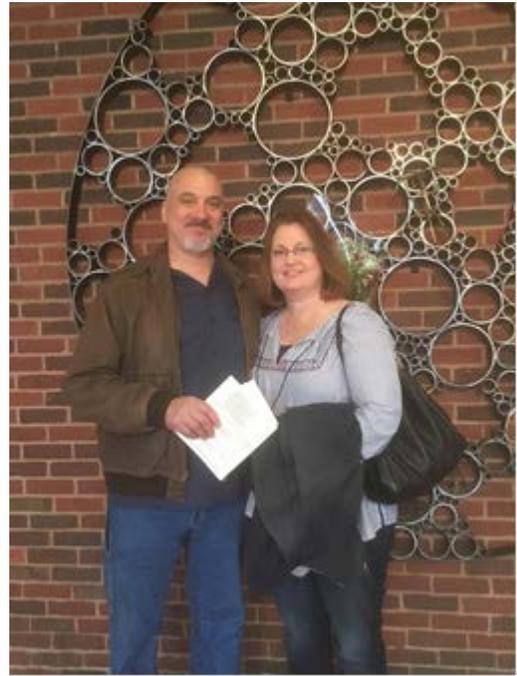
Come own your often over-looked heritage as we clear the dust off of 500 years of history and make our Reformation identity relevant for today! Classes will be held after worship on Sunday February 18th, March 4th, 11th, 18th, and 25th. All are welcome and child care is available upon request.



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

We hope to see you on the 25th. We need a congregation to test all the chilis and cornbreads! Hope to see you there!

Welcome to Paul and Tonya Hughes, who joined the congregation on Sunday, January 28:



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):
melroseracialjusticereaders.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)

Bread of Life Concert

FREE

Enjoy music along with Bread of Life guests, volunteers, and benefactors. All are welcome!

G. F. Handel, R. Vaughan Williams, J. J. Niles, M. Head, and more
Paul Albright, *Countertenor* • Chris Andaloro, *Baritone* • Theo Why, *Baritone* • Saehee Choi, *Piano*

Refreshments to Follow

Saturday, February 24, 2018 -- 3:00 P.M.
First Lutheran Church of Malden
98 Waite Street, Malden

Accessible by public transportation:

Take any bus on Salem Street to Church Street. Walk toward Eastern Avenue. The church is on the corner of Church Street and Waite Street, with the front door on Waite Street.

No donation necessary
Concertgoers may bring nonperishable food items
for the Bread of Life pantry

“Bread of Life is a faith-based ministry serving the communities north of Boston, with a mission to feed the body and to nurture the soul... Bread of Life brings together over 500 volunteers from our 45 partner organizations and the community at large to offer free food to hungry, homeless, and isolated people. Services include evening meals held four nights a week in Malden, food pantries in Malden and Everett, grocery delivery to senior citizens in public housing in Malden, Everett, Melrose, Medford and Wakefield, and food delivery to homeless families sheltered in local motels.” www.breadoflifemalden.org.