



First Congregational Church

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

in Melrose

An Open and Affirming Congregation

Messenger

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VOLUME 100

March 16, 2018

Number 27

The Observer

During these weeks of Lent, I am offering here an invitation to an ancient spiritual practice called "Lectio Divina". It is a practice of contemplatively reading scripture in order to still one's mind and connect to God. Below are the steps to this week's exercise.

Text: "He said, 'Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.' Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?'" 1 Kings 19:11-13, NRSV

Lectio: Read this scripture passage aloud, slowly. Release any interpretation or opinion you may have about this passage, as you read it.

Meditatio: Let the passage "sink in" for two minutes. Sit with the passage. Hold it lightly – don't force any attempt to interpret it.

Repeat "lectio" and "meditatio" three more times.

Oratio: Pray aloud: "May I receive from the scripture what my soul needs for today."

Contemplatio: What does "sheer silence" sound like? How does God break through our set expectations?

Use this time to practice being the observer of your own self. What occupies your mind? Where is

there discomfort in your body? What emotions are associated with these sensations?

Does this phrase ring true to you: Suffering equals pain times resistance? Stay open to this concept by patiently observing any physical pain you experience. Stay open to it, surround it with loving attention, and gently release ideas or opinions about it.

In mindful Christian prayer you are the observer. This is an important concept because practicing non-judgmental observation of one's self can connect you to God who is constantly accompanying you in the same way. The observer within you, when you are deep in mindfulness meditation, is God. This divine seer directs loving attentiveness toward your every sensation, urge, and thought. God is compassionate awareness of all that manifests within you.

Your true Self is God, experiencing your particular, unique life on a particular planet in a particular time. Through mindful prayer practice you can experience God directly and personally.

I will be providing additional texts here to practice this ancient spiritual discipline to aid in our shared journey toward the crucifixion and the resurrection.

See you in church,

--Rev. Dominic

Sunday, March 18, 2018 Baptism Sunday

9:00 AM – Morning Star Voices Rehearsal
10:00 AM – Worship and Sunday School
11:15 AM – Coffee Hour
11:30 AM – Lenten Adult Education Class—
Living our Reformation Heritage

THE DAFFODILS on the Communion table are in loving memory of Rick and Becky Mockler, given by Sarah Mockler.



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

Our prayers and sympathy to the family and friends of Claire Griffin, who passed away on Thursday, March 8. Her funeral service will be here at church on Saturday, March 17 at 11:00 AM.

DURING THE WEEK

Tuesday, March 20

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

Wednesday, March 21

7:15 PM – Bells rehearsal

Sunday, March 25 – Palm Sunday

8:30 AM – Breakfast at First Baptist Church followed by
9:00 AM – Palm Procession to the Gazebo at Ell Pond for
9:15 AM – Blessing of the Palms at the Gazebo
10:00 AM – Worship and Sunday School
11:30 AM – Lenten Adult Education Class—

Living our Reformation Heritage

Thursday, March 29 – Maundy Thursday

7:00 PM – Joint Worship Service at Melrose Highlands

Friday, April 14 – Good Friday

Noon to 3:00 PM - First Congregational will be open to anyone who wishes to come and pray or spend quiet time in the sanctuary.

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



Lenten Adult Education Class— Living our Reformation Heritage

**Continues after worship on Sunday, March 18
Led by Rev. Dominic**

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 March 18th, and 25th. All are welcome and child care is available upon request.



One Great Hour of Sharing

is the Lenten Offering of the United Church of Christ that supports disaster, refugee, and development activities. The FCC offering date for the One Great Hour of Sharing offering is this coming Sunday, March 18, 2018.

Why give to One Great Hour of Sharing? Because we are committed to improving lives of people everywhere. Working through established and proven networks, we are making a difference:

- UCC Disaster Ministries has just contributed nearly \$34,300 for famine prevention in Somalia, where a prolonged drought has put 6.2 million people in need.
- Since 2004 the Darfur Program has reaffirmed its commitment to support the people and communities of Darfur and South Sudanese.
- UCC Disaster Preparedness Guide can help you survive an emergency, spare scarce public resources and be able to help others.

To learn more, visit: <http://www.ucc.org/oghs>



**YARD SALE –
Save the Date!**
All-Church Yard
Sale
May 5, 9am – 1pm
Mark your
calendars!!!

Melrose Recycling Committee Sponsors “BYOBag” Poster Contest

SUNDAY SCHOOL:

PreK-5th grade will be reading the story of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. We will talk about how Jesus went to the Garden to pray and seek God’s will for his life. We will be making terrariums and talking about finding time to spend being quiet and listening to God’s voice. The Grades 3-5 class will also be making Easter cards for our homebound and 90+ year old members.

Middle School will continue the lesson on Using God’s Money, discussing how we value and prioritize money, and about the concept of stewardship.

High School will continue learning about environmental issues and will discuss the role our faith has in honoring God’s creation.

Thank You! We would like to thank all those who contributed to the care packages for the people in need. It tied in well with our lesson on the Samaritan, and as we assembled the care packages, we talked with the children about helping others and providing things we often take for granted. We were able to make 20 bags! We hope to deliver them to a shelter before Easter.



BIBLE SUNDAY

We all enjoyed witnessing the 3rd Graders receive their bibles. The verses they chose and read during the service were:

Proverbs 22:6 – Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

Romans 12:16 – Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. [a] Do not be conceited.

Titus 3:1 – Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good.

2 Corinthians 5:7 – For we live by faith, not by sight.

1 Corinthians 13:13 – And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

As part of an effort to help the City of Melrose implement a new ordinance restricting the use of thin-film plastic bags, the Melrose Recycling Committee is inviting high school-age students to submit designs for a “Bring Your Own” Bag poster contest.

The Recycling Committee needs a poster to remind residents to “BYO” Bag when they shop. Melrose has a new law, effective July 1, that is designed to encourage residents to switch to reusable shopping bags by limiting the availability of plastic checkout bags. While most residents have reusable bags already, they need to develop the habit of bringing their own bags when they shop.

Entries will be judged on:

1. How effectively the design reminds/persuades people to bring reusable shopping bags.
2. How well the design reflects the local community

Prize: First prize will receive \$100.

Eligibility: Students in Grades 9-12 who either reside in Melrose or are enrolled in Melrose High School.

Timeline: The deadline to submit entries is April 1, 2018. The winner will be announced April 15, 2018.

To learn more, visit:

<https://melrecyclingcommittee.wordpress.com/2018/02/27/melrose-recycling-committee-sponsors-byobag-poster-contest/>



Easter Memorial Flowers - \$15 per plant

Send your order form by March 23rd to: Darby Drafts, 25 Adams St., Melrose MA 02176, (Last minute orders may be handed to Darby on Sunday, March 25th, Palm Sunday.)

Ordered by: _____

Phone #: _____

IN MEMORY OF:

of plants ordered _____ Amount enclosed \$ _____

Please make checks payable to First Congregational Church.



EASTER FLOWERS