



First Congregational Church

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

in Melrose

An Open and Affirming Congregation

Messenger

Rev. Dominic Taranowski, Pastor

Mariko Matsumura, Director of Music Ministry

Dunia Velez, Administrative Assistant for Youth Programs

OFFICE 781-665-2111 - FAX 781-665-8824

E-MAIL info@fccmelrose.org Website www.fccmelrose.org

Rev. Dominic's Cell phone: 781-526-3428

VOLUME 100

February 16, 2018

Number 23

Ashing Questions for Lent

This week marks the beginning of the Lenten Season. Lent is a season of spiritual preparation for Easter. It is a time to assess our faith and discipleship and re-gain our footing in terms of our relationship with God through Christ.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday (this year, February 14th). On Ash Wednesday we partake of an ancient ritual of Imposition of Ashes when ashes are placed on the foreheads of believers to signify both their mortality and need for repentance. The ash is mixed with olive oil to additionally signify the healing and wholeness that Christ provides.

More than anything else, Lent is to be a time of introspective stock-taking about who we are as Christian people. Some find giving up a decadence of some sort during the six weeks of Lent to be helpful. Others find taking on an act of service to be of assistance.

In the end, my hope is that you take some contemplative time during this holy season to re-ground yourself as a person of faith.

To that end, I offer here some questions to contemplate. Hopefully, these will be the springboard for a deeper encounter with the divine in your life on this journey that begins with ashes and ends with the empty tomb.

Self-Examination Questions for Lent:

Where is love leading you today?

Who is hard for you to love, and why, and might there not be a way for you to love them anyway?

What is the difference between your highest values and the way you actually live?

What unfinished spiritual business do you have that ought to be completed?

What are you running away from, and what would happen if you stopped avoiding it?

What is below the surface of the image you present to the world? What would happen if you revealed what was below the surface?

What can you discover by taking time to keep silence, and finding the courage to look within?

What is getting in love's way, for you?

What kind of help do you need, and are you willing to ask for it and receive it?

What gift do you have to give today to others?

What can you do to make life better for vulnerable people in the wider world?

What message do you need to hear, but don't feel ready to hear? What can you do to get ready to hear it?

In addition to contemplating these self-examination questions, I hope that you make church attendance part of your spiritual practice during Lent and that you find this a truly fruitful season of the Spirit!

See you in church,

--Rev. Dominic

Sunday, February 18, 2018

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 FLOWERS are in loving memory of our parents, Doug and Connie Robinson, from Andy Robinson, and Susan, Jim, James and Jessica LeFave.

DURING THE WEEK

Monday, February 19

Presidents' Day – Office Closed

Tuesday, February 20

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

Wednesday, February 21

7:15 PM – Bells rehearsal

Sunday, February 25

10:00 AM – Worship and Sunday School

After Worship – Winter Congregational Meeting, sanctuary

Followed by the Chili and Cornbread Cook-off

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.

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, Merle Copeland, Dot



SUNDAY SCHOOL:

We have a Family Service on Sunday 2/18. Therefore, there will be no classes.

We received a wonderful thank you letter from **Operation Gratitude**. It is available for you to see on the bulletin board outside the office. We encourage you to point this letter out to the children and thank them again for their candy donations!!

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

Prayers and sympathy to the family and friends of Bill Copeland, who passed away on Thursday, February 8th. Funeral services will be held at the church on Friday, February 16th at 10:00 AM.

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



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.



Church School Kids help Bread of Life

Many thanks to the Middle School class, who made some delicious desserts for us to bring to our dinner at Bread of Life this month!



**CHILI AND
CORNBREAD
COOK-OFF**

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

**A REMINDER FROM THE FELLOWSHIP
DEACONS – February 18th** is the absolute deadline for signing up for the Chili Cook-Off and Cornbread Contest, **WHICH ARE ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25TH**. There can be no exceptions, because a lot of work has to be done to prepare for this event based on how many people sign up.

People who are in these competitions usually find them to be a blast, so don't miss out if you have any interest in joining in! Take a moment and sign up this Sunday at church.

Everyone else – We hope to see you on the 25th as well – we need a congregation to test all the chilis and cornbreads! Hope to see you there!

**500TH
Anniversary
OF THE REFORMATION**

**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:

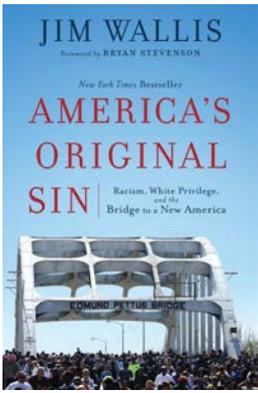
- Guess what? You're a Priest!
- Got Bible? Which do you like? An angry God or a cheap gospel?
- Predestination
- Luther's Sins--and Ours
- Fundamental Protestant principles

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.

*Welcome to Chip and Jeanne Frost, who joined the congregation on Sunday, January 28:
(Another photo to follow next week.)*



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)