



## First Congregational Church

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

in Melrose

*An Open and Affirming Congregation*

# Messenger

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## Abba's Day

Do you think Jesus would have celebrated Father's Day?

I'm betting he would and I think his take on it would be instructive for us.

We don't know what kind of relationship Jesus had with his father Joseph. It is pretty much agreed that Joseph died while Jesus was a teenager or a young adult. Joseph is present in the story of Jesus in the Temple at the age of twelve (Luke 2:41-52), but not after that. When Jesus begins his public ministry, only Mary is referenced as his parent. It is unlikely that Joseph left the family and more likely that he died—either from age if he were an older man or from an accident or illness if he were a younger man. The bottom line is that he is really not in the picture outside of the Christmas story.

Regardless, Joseph's absence from gospel accounts doesn't give us a clue as to Jesus' relationship with him. It may have been anywhere on the continuum from awesome to awful.

Some scholars try to get a clue from Jesus' use of the Aramaic word "Abba" in reference to God which is most often translated as "Father" but which is much more of an enduring word along the lines of "Daddy". Some argue that it gives us a clue as to how close Jesus was to Joseph. The idea is that he and Joseph were indeed very close and that upon Joseph's death, Jesus replaced his nearness to Joseph with his nearness to God. God became his new "Abba".

Others say, that sounds nice but the opposite could just as easily be true; that Jesus had such a terrible relationship with Joseph that he found a loving relationship with God instead. God was his "Abba" because Joseph wasn't.

The truth is, either (or neither) of these scenarios could be true. We just don't know.

And that's okay because both of these possible relationships between Jesus and Joseph and the accompanying interpretations of Jesus' use of "Abba" can be helpful on Father's Day.

If you have or had a close, loving, empowering relationship with your father, it is easy to celebrate Father's Day. A loving daddy can easily pave the way for finding God to have the same characteristics.

Not everyone has had such a relationship with their father, however. Father's Day can be a difficult holiday for those who have or had a strained relationship with their father. Having an absentee father or, worse, an abusive father can also pave the way for finding God to have *those* characteristics.

If the latter is your history with your own father, it may be helpful to consider that Jesus may have experienced the same thing. And yet, at some point, he made a decision that his negative experience with his earthly father would not color a positive experience with his heavenly father. In fact, it could be argued that a terrible relationship between Jesus and Joseph may have been the catalyst for Jesus' revolutionary way of relating to God—not as one who is judgmental, distant and angry, but as one who is approachable, loving, and validating.

It could even have been this change in approach, this choice on Jesus' part, that gave us the Christian faith that we have today. Something to consider this Father's Day.

See you in church,

--Rev. Dominic

## Sunday, June 17, 2018 Father's Day

**9:00 AM – Morning Star Voices Rehearsal**

**10:00 AM – Worship**

**11:15 AM – Coffee Hour**

**1:00 to 4:00 PM – Annual Church Pool Party at the Oosterman's**

*THE FLOWERS are in memory of Dana Franklin Batting and Richard Everett Ahlin, given by the Ahlin/Krueger families.*

**DURING THE WEEK**

**Wednesday, June 20**

7:15 PM – Bells rehearsal

**Thursday, June 21**

4:00 PM – Bread of Life Dinner, Salvation Army,  
213 Main St, Malden

**Sunday, June 24**

10:00 AM – Outdoor Worship

11:15 AM – June Cookout, playground behind the church

**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



Bud Burnham, Emelie Burnham,  
Marilyn McComas, Bill Albright,  
Anne Wing, Bob Hughes, Mary  
Sakata and Becky Faro (Trish  
Faro's daughters), Merle Copeland,  
Bob Pierce.

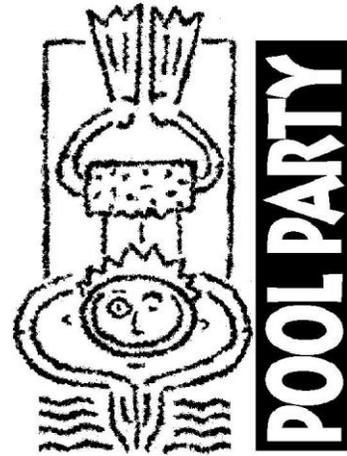


**We're gearing up for next church year, and  
WE WANT YOU!**

Would you like to learn about our Sunday School program and how you can help it be a success? We will be having 2 planning meetings over the summer, and we invite all those who have been teachers and also those who want to learn more about getting involved to join us.

Monday, June 25 and Monday, August 20 at 7 PM at church

**Family Service will be held on June 17 and June 24.**



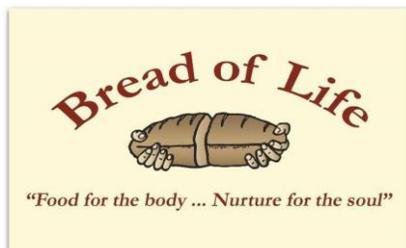
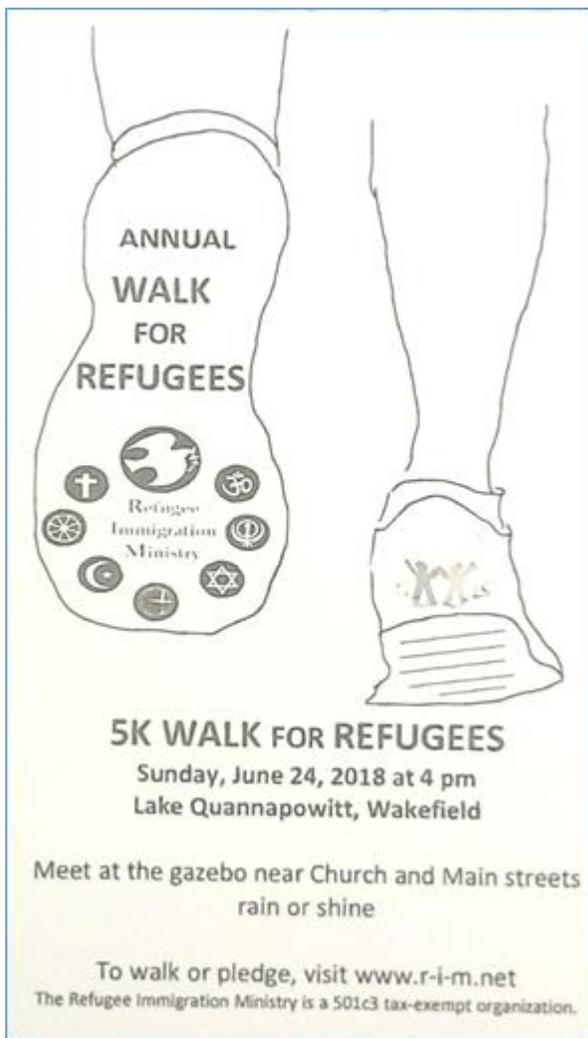
**7<sup>th</sup> Annual Church Pool Party on Fathers' Day, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 1 PM until 4 PM at the Oosterman's, 54 Ellis Farm Lane, Melrose**  
Lawn games, pool toys and snacks provided. Feel free to bring your own picnic, blanket, games, snacks, floatation devices, etc.



**JUNE 17<sup>TH</sup> IS THE LAST DAY TO SIGN UP**

HELLO EVERYONE! THE SIGNUP POSTER FOR THE **JUNE COOKOUT** ON THE 24<sup>TH</sup> IS IN THE NARTHEX! PLAN TO BE THERE SO YOU CAN RELAX, SOCIALIZE, AND HAVE SOME GREAT PICNIC FOOD, ALL AT THE SAME TIME! AND SIGN UP TO BRING YOUR SPECIALTY!

~Donna & Ron Miner



**BREAD OF LIFE –  
Thursday, June 21**

Our team from First Congregational Church volunteers from 4pm – 7pm on the Third Thursday of every month (volunteers are welcome for all or part of the time). We cook, serve, and clean up – it’s a fabulous opportunity to help feed the hungry and your soul at the same time! The location for the meals is:

Salvation Army  
213 Main St.  
Malden, MA.

If you have questions about this mission of our church, please speak with Sallie Klemm [shklemm@verizon.net](mailto:shklemm@verizon.net) or 781-665-0159.



**CITY OF MELROSE 2018  
Diaper Drive  
To Benefit Housing Families, Inc.**

Working to end family homelessness by providing safe, temporary shelter and quality affordable housing to homeless and at-risk families.

*Drop off any size/type diapers or wipes June 1-22 at:*

**Century 21 Sexton & Donohue, Inc.**  
29 Essex Street, Melrose

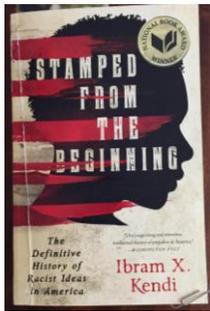
**Edward Jones**  
502 Main Street, Melrose

**Melrose Bank**  
638 Main Street, Melrose

**Melrose Day Care Center & Preschool**  
121 West Foster Street, Melrose

*Sponsored by  
Melrose Rotary Club  
Melrose Day Care Center & Preschool  
First Congregational Church in Melrose*

*Thanks to all who contributed to the Chelsea Fire Victims mission the last two weeks. \$380.00 in cash and gift cards were donated to help the family get back on their feet.*



**Our next Racial Justice Ministry book discussion** will focus on *Stamped From the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* by Ibram X. Kendi. It's a long book so we will hold our discussion after summer break, on September 30 after the worship service. We are also going to open this up to the wider Melrose and

nearby communities, so please spread the word. We have two copies of the book on our RJM book rack and there are several in the library system. It is also available from Amazon and other booksellers. I'm looking forward to discussing this book with you. Winner of the National Book Award, it's a fascinating exploration of how racist ideas developed in America. If you have questions or would like further information, please contact Betsy Garrett at [betsy.luebbe.garrett@gmail.com](mailto:betsy.luebbe.garrett@gmail.com).



### **Summer Reading**

Are you looking for some good books to read this summer? Borrow one of the books on our **Racial Justice Ministry Book Rack**, in the Narthex, next to the kitchen. There are several titles available for lending: look for the rectangular orange tag. The book rack will be up all summer, so feel free to browse and take home a book that looks interesting. For more information about our Racial Justice Ministry or the book rack, please contact Betsy Garrett at [betsy.luebbe.garrett@gmail.com](mailto:betsy.luebbe.garrett@gmail.com).