It was already a week lacking in good news. During the Prayers of the People the previous Sunday there were an inordinate number of prayers for family’s who had suffered a loss or a difficult diagnosis. Then came the passing of Bill Chetwynd. A devastating loss not only for Joan, but also for our church and wider community.

As I was working on his funeral service, word came of yet another mass shooting; this time in Thousand Oaks, California at a bar welcoming college students. Twelve dead, many more wounded.

There are times when we feel flooded with bad news and we look for any sign of improvement. The status quo even looks good because it means things aren’t getting worse. Even a slight bit of good news is a glimmer of hope (like the “meh” attitude so many seem to have after the midterm elections).

I say that’s not enough. I say that as people of faith we are actually flooded with good news each and every moment and that wallowing in a morass of negativity when we, ourselves, are a direct product of God’s love is spiritual lethargy at best and sinful at worst.

The trouble is, we rely on the news of the day for our outlook on the world and the news of the day thrives on tragedy. One of the biggest struggles of our modern media age is that good news doesn’t sell. Bad news shocks and bewilders and sells. Good news is seen as nice, but mundane.

So with all of the dismal news of late, did you also hear about:

- The man who, on Halloween, discovered an empty bowl of candy on the porch of a home and filled it with the candy he had collected?
- The woman who dialed a wrong number only to find and a pizza delivery guy willing to pick up her sick brother?
- That Stephan King sold the rights to one of his stories to a group of teens for $1 so that they could make their own film version?
- That the ozone layer may be completely healed in our lifetime?
- That Muslims raised over $250,000 for the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh saying “anything you need, we are here for you”?

And that is just a small sampling!

I’m not saying we shouldn’t pay attention to the tragedies and challenges of this world. We most definitely should and we should activate ourselves to lessen the burden on those who are experiencing such things. But we should also remember that there is more light than darkness in the world, more good than evil, more life than death.

That is the testimony of our faith and we should never forget it.

See you in church,

~Rev. Dominic

New Office Manager!

This week Beth Grzegorzewski begins her orientation on staff as our new Church Office Manager. Welcome Beth!

Sunday, November 18, 2018
8:30 AM – Jubilate Ringers Rehearsal
9:30 AM – Morning Star Voices Rehearsal
10:00 AM – “Thanksgiving Sunday” Worship with Dedication of Pledges & Sunday School
11:15 AM – Annual Thanksgiving Dinner

During the Week
Tuesday, November 13
1:00 PM Staff Meeting
7:00 PM Deacons’ Meeting, Library
Wednesday, November 14
7:30 PM Jubilate Ringers rehearsal, Sanctuary
Thursday, November 15
4:00 PM – 7:00 PM Bread of Life (see below)
Saturday, November 17
9:00 AM – Noon Fall Clean-up: All hands needed to spruce up grounds
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

Bread of Life

Thursday, November 15, is our evening to cook, serve, and clean up at Bread of Life in Malden. Our volunteers are there from 4:00 PM until about 7:00 PM. You are welcome to join us for all or part of the time! We need the most help between 5:15 PM and 6:45 PM. If you can’t make it but want to help with this very important mission of our church, consider providing a dessert, large bottles of salad dressing, or some bottles of juice. For more information, contact Sallie Klemm (shklemm@verizon.net).

Site information
Salvation Army, 213 Main St. Malden, MA
Phone: (781) 324-1970
Park on Main St. or side streets (both available during serving hours)

Memorial Wreaths
Four beautiful Christmas wreaths will adorn our front entrance and Sanctuary during the coming holiday season. If you would like to donate a wreath in memory of a loved one, please call Beth at the church office 665-2111. The wreaths are $50.00 each. They will be hung before the beginning of Advent, to be enjoyed throughout the season.

Memorial Wreaths

Michael Watt, Phyllis Lanni, Trish Faro, Jackson Foltz – infant relative of Beth Grzegorzeki, Bud Burnham, Emelie Burnham, Marilyn McComas, Bill Albright, Anne Wing, Bob Hughes, Mary Sakata and Becky Faro

Keep in Your Prayers
(Trish Faro’s daughters), Merle Copeland, Bob Pierce.

Exciting RIM News

Good News from the Metro North Cluster of Refugee Immigration Ministry (RIM)! We have taken on the support of two new clients, a woman from Uganda (former teacher), and a woman from El Salvador who has been detained at the border in Texas, but will hopefully be released to come here soon. When the cluster takes on a client, we commit to providing housing, food, transportation and community support. The biggest challenge is housing.

Our congregation has shown through many years that we care about our immigrant neighbors through donations of both funds and time. Maybe you want to do more. The Metro North Cluster invites you to consider becoming a host home for an asylum seeker, either short term or a longer term of six months. If you want to learn more about being a host home, contact Debbie Anderson (dwanderson63@gmail.com).

Winter Wonderland Fair
November 30th, 6-8pm and December 1st, 9am-2pm

We will be decorating the Narthex for the Fair on the day after Thanksgiving – Friday, November 23 – in the morning (8:30 - 11:30). This mostly involves covering bulletin boards and hanging lights, snowflakes, and signs. We’ll need a couple of people who are willing to climb a ladder. Last year it took us less than three hours, and should be the same this year!

The week leading up to the fair requires volunteers to complete the final preparations. Many hands make light work. Please mark your calendars now!

- Decorate the Church: Friday Nov. 23rd, 9am-noon
- Raffle Baskets Assembled: week of Nov.25th-29th
- Set up: week of November 25th
- Gingerbread House Assembly: Tuesday, Nov. 27th and/or Wed. Nov. 28th, 6:30-8:30
- Break down and Clean up: Saturday December 1st, 2pm

Before the holiday season begins an assessment of your “stuff” can be a healthy sorting exercise. Call it downsizing, weeding out, or sharing treasures your contributions to the Fair Tables are invaluable. As you sort, please keep in mind:

Table............................Organizer
*Toys............................Kara Lazalere
*Books .........................looking for an organizer Christmas Decorations ... Janet Runge Collectibles.....................David Gauvreau Jewelry .........................Lois Gauvreau and Phyllis Lanni Baked Goods ....................Circle 4 Silent Auction..................Jim and Lisa Oosterman Themed Raffle Baskets ... Martha Williams

*please wait until church fair week to contribute

Children’s Room (organizer: Sallie Klemm) contains gingerbread houses and holiday crafts that are ready-to-decorate. These draw from families from the wider community.

Please sign up now to help support these opportunities!

The Steeple is lit this month in loving memory of Marion Ewell a 50+ year member of the church and long-time member of Circle 4.

By Lighting our Church Steeple in memory or in honor of loved ones, you help our church financially. Your gift will be announced in the Sunday Bulletin and “The Messenger”. A $25.00 per week contribution is suggested.
Donna Miner’s Stewardship Moment  
Sunday, November 11

I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today about why Ron and I pledge to First Congregational Church every year. Sometimes it helps me, when I’m writing, to have an outline, so with apologies to David Letterman, here are the Top 10 Reasons that we give to this church (in no particular order):

1. Being part of this church is like being part of a family. We care about one another and support one another when there is illness, difficulty, or loss, and we share and celebrate our joys as well.

2. In our church we treat children with love and respect, and here they learn that God unconditionally loves them. We encourage them to make good choices based on what Jesus taught us, to love one another. This helps to lay the groundwork for the development of good character.

3. Reverend Dominic’s sermons. They are inspiring, often comforting, always thought-provoking. Through his sermons and lessons from the Bible, Reverend Dominic encourages us to think critically about what really matters in life, and where Jesus and God would stand on the issues.

4. We have really good coffee. I promised Ron I would get that in.

5. The music program here is amazing. We have a music director who is a gifted teacher, musician and vocalist herself. It’s easy to be transported by the beautiful music we hear in this Sanctuary each Sunday.

6. Cake – Cake means something. This church loves to celebrate – birthdays, Pentecost, baptisms, confirmation, 50-year member Sunday, always with a cake! Celebrating special times for our parishioners is very important to everyone here. Life SHOULD be celebrated.

7. Everyone in this church is invited to help – to be part of things. Back in about 1988 I started out filling baggies with cereal for the church school breakfast, and now people trust Ron and me with the Thanksgiving Dinner! Participating in our events is fun, and you get to meet people – it’s how Ron and I have made some of our best friends.

8. If you want to help make the world a better place, this church is for you. Whether it’s Heifer Project, or Bread of , or RIM – There are many opportunities to help the world’s most vulnerable people.

9. Christmas. Fresh evergreen wreaths hanging in the Sanctuary. Lighting of Advent candles. The generous collection of gifts for City Mission Society. Christmas at our church is a mixture of tradition and new things every year. The chance to make a new Advent wreath for home. The feeling of a great gift being given to us all as we sing Silent Night and hold our lighted candles.

And finally – 10. There are forces in this church that make you think about people and issues beyond yourself. We have adult education opportunities. Opportunities to help others, teach others, sponsor others. We are a church full of people with open minds and open hearts, in a time when both are increasingly important to keep. Ron and I are both grateful to belong to this church. We are constantly reminded that, as our sculpture says, “No man is an island.” If you attend First Congregational Church, you will be made more aware, every week, of that fact, and I think that’s a good thing.

So…if you haven’t already, please consider reasons for making a pledge to First Congregational Church. It feels good to support a church that does so much. Thank you.

Donna Miner

Advent Workshop  
Sunday, December 2

Sunday, December 2, just after the Fair, we will have our annual Advent Workshop, right after church. This year we will be making gratitude boxes - a craft easy enough for even the youngest. There will also be the opportunity to make an Advent wreath for your home. Advent candles will be for sale. Please join us for this Advent Workshop, emphasizing gratitude this year - fun for all ages.

The simple act of shopping on Amazon can benefit our church!

AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon with the same products, prices, and shopping features as Amazon.com. The difference is that when you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization of your choice.

Every item available for purchase on www.amazon.com is also available on AmazonSmile (smile.amazon.com) at the same price. You will see eligible products marked "Eligible for AmazonSmile donation" on their product detail pages.

You need to select First Congregational Church in Melrose.  

On your first visit to AmazonSmile (smile.amazon.com), you are prompted to select a charitable organization from our list of eligible organizations. You can change your selection at any time.

To change your charitable organization:

1. Sign in to smile.amazon.com on your desktop or mobile phone browser.
2. From your desktop, go to Your Account from the navigation at the top of any page, and then select the option to Change your Charity. Or, from your mobile browser, select Change your Charity from the options at the bottom of the page.
3. Select First Congregational Church in Melrose.
CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS - $15.00 per plant

Send your order form by Sunday, December 9 to:
Jim Oosterman, 54 Ellis Farm Lane, Melrose MA 02176

Ordered by: ____________________________________________
Phone #: __________________ Email: ________________________

For Listing in Bulletin and Messenger:

IN MEMORY OF: ____________________________________________
-or-
IN HONOR OF: ____________________________________________

GIVEN BY: ________________________________________________

# of plants ordered_____ Amount enclosed: $_____

Please make checks payable to First Congregational Church.