



MESSENGER
of the
**First Congregational
Church**
**United Church of Christ
Melrose, Massachusetts**

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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Three Fundamental Truths

A church was holding a Sunday School picnic. At one end of a long table a teacher had placed a basket of apples with a sign that read: "Take only one, please-- God is watching." At the other end of the table was a plate of cookies. Next to it, a second grader had made a sign that read: "Take all the cookies you want--God is watching the apples."

There is no substitute for Sunday School. In our fast paced, ever changing and uncertain world, it may well be one of the most important institutions we have. Our church is blessed with a large, healthy Sunday School program that has, as its overarching goal, the cultivation of a relationship with God on the part of our children and youth. It is a relationship that we hope will evolve over time as children grow and mature (and realize that God is watching the cookies too!).

The foundation of the relationship with God that we seek to inspire in our children is based on three, interwoven truths that apply to young and old alike: God is good, we are valued, and God is with us in Jesus Christ.

We need to remember that God is good. There is so much in this realm, let alone the next, that we do not understand. At times things seem to be governed by nothing more than random-ness. And yet the power of our faith, in Sunday School terms, is that God sent Jesus to show us that though so much of life is a mystery, it is a mystery that we can trust because we are held in the arms of a loving, creative God—a God who calls us to recognize the many blessings we have. God is good.

We are also valued. More importantly, we are valued just the way we are. In a consumer driven society such as ours where we are continually told that we are not young enough, thin enough, beautiful enough or smart enough (without this or that product) this is a crucial spiritual truth. As we might learn in Sunday School: God created us and saw that we were "very good". That's original blessing and it is something we never lose. Of course, the fact that we are valued should not lead us to a place of arrogance but rather it should inspire us to help others recognize that they are valued too.

Through all that we experience in life, God is with us in Jesus Christ. We need to be reminded of this

Sunday, November 8, 2009 *Renewing the Covenant*

9:00 AM – Senior Choir Rehearsal

10:00 AM – WORSHIP

and Church School Pre-K – 12

11:15 AM – Coffee Hour, Narthex`

THE FLOWERS are given in loving memory of Walter Moore by his wife, Janet, and his daughters, Claire and Selena.

DURING THE WEEK

Monday, November 9, 2009

7:30 PM – Common Threads at Lisa Jamison's

Tuesday, November 10

3:45 PM – Bread of Life Dinner at St. Paul's, Malden

7:30 PM – Welcome Committee at the Oosterman's

Wednesday, November 11 – Veteran's Day

7:15 PM – Bells Rehearsal, sanctuary



Veterans Day

The following groups meet here regularly:

Boy Scouts – Tuesdays at 7:00 PM in the basement

Girl Scouts – Sundays at 5:30 PM, Rm. 1 and lounge, Mon. at 7 PM, Rm. 7/8, Wed. at 6PM, Rm.7/8, Fridays 2:30 and 5PM, 7/8

Pre-PAL – 9 11:30 AM – M, T, Th, Fri, Room 7

PAL – 3:00 PM, Room 7/8

Cub Scouts – Wednesdays, Thursdays

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. – Tuesdays at 6:30 PM, lounge

A.W.O.L. – Tuesdays at 7:30 PM, 7/8, lounge, Rm. 1

Mothers' Group meets Wednesdays 9-11 AM, lounge, 1, 7/8

CODA – Wednesdays at 7:30 PM, lounge

Vital Cycles - Thursdays at 7:00 PM, lounge

O.A. – Fridays at 7 PM, lounge

A.A. – Wednesdays at 7:30 PM, Fridays at 8:00 PM and Saturdays at 3:00 PM – Rm. 8

fundamental truth too because when we watch the evening news it may depart from our minds more easily than we would have thought. Yes, there is tragedy and hardship of untold proportions in this world. There are challenges that come into our own lives that seem insurmountable. And yet we are not alone. Ours is a God who never causes such hardship but is undeniably with us during our times of deepest grief and loss with a love that is eternal. God's solidarity with us is born of the pain and grief of the crucifixion. In that Good Friday experience, God walks with us through our darkest valleys and sealed tombs to bring us to a new, resurrection way of living.

God is good. We are valued. God is with us in Jesus Christ. We could all use a little Sunday School from time to time. May God continue to bless our church and our Sunday School program and the wonderful volunteers who make it such a special place each week.

See you in church,

Rev. Dominic



Barbara Wellington, Jennie Way,
Flo Hall, Marilyn McComas, Betty
Crane, Kate Watson, Anne Wing,
George Burrell, Bud Pendleton,
Barbara Jones.



The Melrose Energy Commission is
presenting the fifth annual
Melrose Energy Fair
Sunday, Nov. 15
12 noon – 5:00 PM
Memorial Hall,
590 Main St., Melrose

Featuring a children's magic show about energy conservation and recycling. The magic show begins at 1:30 p.m.

The fair and the magic show are free. The fair provides practical information about energy savings for homeowners, consumers and businesses. Local vendors, organizations and groups will offer hands-on demonstrations, sample products, printed materials and one-on-one advice about reducing your energy costs.

Plus, there are free refreshments and giveaways.



MEMORIAL WREATHS

Beautiful Christmas wreaths will be placed around the church during the coming holiday season. If you would like to donate one or more wreaths in memory of a loved one, please call Susan at the church office, 665-2111. The wreaths are \$45.00 each. They will be hung before the beginning of Advent (Nov. 29), to be enjoyed throughout the Advent season.

It'S Pledge Time

A Stewardship Moment

A little over 10 years ago, before David and I had Madeleine and Luc and before we moved to Melrose, we had a fire in the house we rented. It wasn't catastrophic but significant enough that we lost belongings and had to vacate for renovations. Out of those ashes there rose many phoenix but probably the most lasting is the message of this pledge moment.

After the smoke cleared, there was the influx of congregant "workers" from our previous and now defunct North Prospect UCC in Cambridge. I can still vividly recall the brigade of people carrying load after load of smoke-infested clothes from our house back to their homes to launder 2,3 and 4 times to remove the stench. I recall at the time thinking that it wasn't my co-workers nor my neighbors (though both perfectly lovely groups of people) but rather my fellow church members who came to assist us in our time of need. And, I recall at the time how it struck me that this somehow "surprised" me. Why would or should it surprise me that people I had known for a short time compared to those I knew much longer would come and help when the bond that we shared was compassion? Above all greater good that has come about from God sending Jesus to earth is this gift of compassion. Jesus was compassionate. He teaches us to be compassionate. Part of what our pledge supports is the mission of compassion. Compassion comes in many forms: the obvious which is helping those in need but also the less obvious which is supporting this institution of church that allows us to congregate and celebrate Jesus. When making your pledge this year please think beyond electricity bills, salaries, food (we seem to have so much of it!) to the many, many ways we support this important lesson of compassion.

Kris Carbonneau

Winter Wonderland Fair
Friday, December 4 - 6:00 – 9:00 PM
Saturday, December 5 – 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM



The **Winter Wonderland Fair** is almost here. Where do your talents lie? Contact our Fair Volunteer Coordinator, Sallie Klemm, at 781-665-0159. Opportunities abound before, during, and after the fair.

Here are some ideas how you can get involved:

Friday Night Supper – Tickets will be available in advance to help us plan quantities. The menu includes macaroni and cheese (Morton's restaurant recipe), meatball subs, hot dogs, salad, and delectable desserts.

Volunteer opportunity: Sell tickets in advance and on Friday evening.

Gingerbread Houses – The church is running this activity now! **Volunteer opportunity:** Help make the houses (Tuesday and Wednesday evenings 12/1 & 2).

Volunteer opportunity: Donate ingredients. Best Yet Graham Crackers (get them at Johnny's) and lots of candy such as Necco wafers, skittles, peppermints, holiday colored M&M's, and anything small and seasonal. No chocolate, please.

Volunteer opportunity: Help the children decorate their houses at the fair. **Contact person: Nancy Gift**



Mrs. Claus' Collection – Scarves, hats, blankets, all things knitted, crocheted and quilted. You don't need to be part of Common Threads to contribute! Your donations are welcome. **Contact person: Gail Stewart**

Silent Auction – This will include goods and services. For example: a weekend at your summer home; a soloist (duet, quartet) for an event; something fun like, 'Pizza and Poker with the Pastor'; or other clever idea - let us know. **Contact person: Jim Oosterman**

Decorating Rooms 7 & 8 – We need our vendors room to be bright and cheery, too. **Volunteer opportunity:** Donate large scale Christmas wrapping paper. **Contact person: Nancy Gift**



It is time to look through your jewelry and decide what you would like to donate to the **Jewelry table** at the Christmas Fair. Please drop off in the church office at anytime. We could also use the small boxes

that jewelry comes in. Thank you for any donations, rather it be one piece or more.

Other Fair Needs:

- Gently used Christmas decorations and ornaments
 - Gently used gift type items
- Be thinking about what goodies you would like to make for the Bake Sale.

Baskets for the Raffle

A tisket, a tasket, we need your wonderful basket! Once again please plan to challenge your creativity and gather items around a theme to fill a basket for the Church Fair on

December 4 & 5. Movie basket? Book basket? Baking basket? Knitting basket? Beach basket? Christmas basket? Yikes, the possibilities are endless! Sign up in the narthex, (there are also baskets for the taking when you sign up - while they last!) and plan to deliver your basket to church no later than Sunday November 29. As always, we will help with cellophane wrapping and bows if you need this "service". Questions? See Carolyn McVoy, Lisa Jamison or Martha Williams.



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS - \$12.00 per plant

Send your order form by Sunday, December 13 to: Nancy Gift, 74 Prospect St., Melrose, MA 02176, 781-665-1790

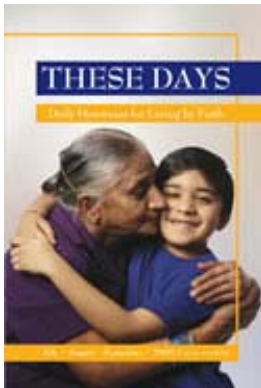
Ordered by: _____

Phone #: _____

IN MEMORY OF:

of plants ordered _____ Amount enclosed: \$ _____

Please make checks payable to *First Congregational Church*.



Did You Know?

There are copies (both regular and large print) of the daily devotional booklets – “These Days” and “The Upper Room” available for your use. They are on the magazine rack that is in the narthex near

the kitchen window. They are free for you to take, but if you would like to make a donation, there is a slot on the magazine rack where you may place your donation.

