



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

An Open and Affirming Congregation

Rev. Dominic Taranowski, Pastor

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Community Building in Tough Times

The stock market is up. A recovery is being hailed. The stimulus package of last winter is paying off. Are happy days here again? Well, maybe. But for millions of people across the country and a significant number in our local area, the "recovery" has yet to arrive. Unemployment remains high. Very high.

Employment is a measure of a society's ability to provide for its citizens and when jobs are scarce, the repercussions reverberate far beyond the person who has lost his or her job. It is a frightening thing to lose one's job. The stress this places on an individual and a family is enormous. Relationships become strained at the very least. If there are children in the family, their sense of the instability experienced by their parents finds expression in poor school performance, behavioral problems and worse. Unemployment affects families. It affects schools. It affects communities.

At the same time, the current employment crisis has fostered something very positive: Community building. People who would normally have nothing to do with each other are coming together to network, expand their contacts and circles of influence. While the goal of this particular kind of community building is for the singular purpose of finding work, it is community building non-the-less. Friendships are fostered. People feel supported and less isolated. Empowerment, which is in such short supply for those without work, finds a footing.

I want to make everyone aware of the Professional Networking Group that is meeting in our area. The facilitator, Barbara Murphy, is a member of Green Street Baptist Church and is doing a wonderful job of bringing this much needed forum to our area. The group has an open door at J.J. Grimsby's on the Lynn Fells Parkway from 9:30 to 11:00 every Tuesday morning. This is a great resource for developing new perspectives for a job search.

Any economic recovery will fail to find traction until jobs become more abundant. In a climate where unemployment and under-employment is high, the power of community building cannot be overemphasized. Through our churches and community groups we can lessen isolation, replace fear with hope, and provide practical help.

To me, there is no more meaningful calling for us all.

See you in church,

Sunday, November 22, 2009

Pledge Sunday
Thanksgiving Sunday
Collection for Pilgrim Church
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`

11:15 AM – Youth Mission Trip meeting

THE FLOWERS on the Communion table are in loving memory of Mr. and Mrs. Emile Germonprez, given by their family.

DURING THE WEEK

Tuesday, November 24

7:00 PM – Interfaith Thanksgiving Service – Temple Beth Shalom, 21 East Foster St., Melrose

Thursday, November 26 – office closed

Happy Thanksgiving!

Friday, November 27 – office closed

Sunday, November 29 – First Sunday of Advent

Deck the Halls

Open Classroom – Children start joined by adults after worship

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

Thank You!

A special thank you to Rev. Wendy Vander Hart who shared the sermon time during worship last Sunday. Rev. Vander Hart is an Associate Conference Minister in the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ. She has oversight of the Metropolitan Boston Association of our denomination. Her presence reminded us all of the importance of Christian unity and our solidarity with other churches in the wider United Church of Christ. Thank you Wendy!



TUESDAY, NOV. 24

7:00 PM

Temple Beth Shalom

21 East Foster St.

Melrose



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



COLLECTION

Youth Mission Trip 2010 Update!

As you know, we've been trying to decide on a location for this year's Mission trip. Follow the links below to our 2 final choices.

***On Nov. 22nd,

immediately after church, we will be meeting BRIEFLY to pick a final location. If you can't be there, you need to contact me via email or phone (781-979-9292) to let me know what your choice is. Parents - please join us on Sunday, as we will need to get a fundraising schedule in place!

Option 1 - Denver Colorado:

<http://groupworkcamps.com/weekofhope/Pages/CampDetails.aspx?CampCode=10CO13>

Option 2 - Austin, Texas

<http://groupworkcamps.com/weekofhope/Pages/CampDetails.aspx?CampCode=10TX13>

Both camps run the week of June 27-July 2.

Any questions, please let me know.

Thanks,
Martha Jancaitis



Pilgrim Church Food Donation

This Sunday, November 22nd, is Thanksgiving Sunday when we hold our annual food drive for Pilgrim Church in Dorchester.

We typically collect non-perishable food, such as cereal, peanut butter, canned foods, and pastas, but this year Pilgrim Church sent this request:

Since last year's Ingathering, we have increased our efforts to reach our communities with food. Each Saturday, we bring food to Boston Common for 150 individuals who are experiencing homelessness. We also host, on Saturdays, a free Community Lunch at Pilgrim Church from Noon to 1:30 p.m. To continue these ministries, we are in great need of the following items:

FOOD, ESPECIALLY: COFFEE, COCOA, POWDERED CREAMER, SUGAR, #10 CANS OF FOOD.

CONDIMENTS: MAYONNAISE, KETCHUP, MUSTARD, SALT, PEPPER, SPICES, ETC.

DISPOSABLE: 9 IN. PLATES, 6 OZ. CUPS, SOUP BOWLS, NAPKINS, FORKS, KNIVES, SPOONS FOOD WRAP, ALUMINUM FOIL, PAPER TOWELS, FOOD STORAGE BAGS, ETC.

COMMERCIAL GRADE KITCHEN

UTENSILS: SLOTTED SPOONS, COLANDER (VERY LARGE), FRYING PAN (VERY LARGE), LARGE STOCK POTS, SPATULAS, ETC.

So anything that you can donate for us to take to Pilgrim Church--either food or other requested items--would be greatly appreciated. We will deliver everything to Pilgrim Church this Sunday right after church. (We're looking for a few additional drivers, too, so if you're available, please contact Barbara Krol-Sinclair by email at barbaras@bu.edu or by phone at 617-407-1030.)

Thank you for your support of our neighbors in Dorchester.

---Megan Littlefield & Barbara Krol-Sinclair,
Co-Deacons of Christian Mission



Deck the Halls

during that time and the adults will join in after worship over a light lunch. Come and join us to get the church ready for the Christmas during the Advent Season.

DECK THE HALLS Sunday, November 29th,

This is an open classroom Sunday and the kids will be doing the decorating

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.



Thanksgiving

It's Pledge Time

A Stewardship Moment

Throughout this year's Fall Financial Pledge Campaign we have heard some truly astounding testimonies. As this is the last Sunday before Pledge Sunday, I am here in my role to "wrap it all up". Rev. Dominic will put the proper spiritual spin on the closing of the campaign!

I have to tell you, though, the stewardship moments that we have heard over the last few weeks have been spiritual to the core. They have astounded me because they bring to life the truth that this church has an impact on people's lives well beyond Sunday morning. It shapes who people are and how they approach the challenges and dilemmas of life. This church changes people. It grounds people. It transforms people. It gives meaning and context to their lives.

I have always said that the church exists to facilitate the ministry of its members and that is certainly happening at our church. More and more people are looking at their relationships, their work life, their time in general as ministry. There is great power in this. Because of this, we should not only talk about what a better place the world would be if more people led faith based lives, we should also proclaim what a better place the world is already because so many are already living faith based lives--right here at First Congregational Church.

So let me conclude these Stewardship moments and position us for Pledge Sunday with this thought: Giving to this church is a counter cultural act that makes an immeasurable difference.

It is counter cultural because as much as we try to name what is important about this church and put a price on it, our giving is outside of the paradigm of the exchange of goods and services in which we are trained to function. That is, we give here not so much because of what we get, but because we get to simply give. In short, it is the least we can do. It is the least we can do as recipients of so much--of life itself. It is about the money, but it is not about the money. If we could run this church on the leaves that fall from the trees, we would be collecting those next Sunday. But money is what it takes. So we share that. We share our money out of the joy of giving because ours is a God who gives so freely to us--expecting nothing in return. When we do this we create a new paradigm of money: money for building up community rather than hoarding for our own security. We create a new paradigm not only of money but of what it means to be part of God's creation. We are not here to buy and sell, we are here to be co-creators with God and with one another so that tomorrow looks different than today and the day after that looks better than tomorrow.

The act of pledging, which we will do during worship next Sunday, invites us into that new world where truly all things are possible. Everything is possible because we place our trust in the best possible place--with God in Jesus Christ.

May this church continue to be blessed and may it continue to transform the lives of those who worship here. Amen.

Rev. Dominic Taranowski

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*.



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. **Advance tickets will be available starting Nov. 22.**

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 on Friday evening. **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**

Children's Shopping Table – We are gathering gift items that can sell for \$1- \$2. These can be handmade, white elephant items, or 'finds'.

Contact person: Lisa Jamison

Santa's Workshop – We need to have a lot of helpers down in Santa's Workshop assisting children paint ornaments, make reindeer food, and make gift purchases. We particularly need helpers for Saturday.

Contact person: Sallie Klemm

Photos with Santa – We need one or more photographers and computer-savvy individuals to help Rick Mockler take and produce great photos. **Contact person: Sallie Klemm**



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:

Another URGENT need:

We need money boxes - actually we need 6 more. If anyone has a donation of a money box or a loan of a money box that would be helpful. Or if anyone has cigar boxes we would appreciate that also.

--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. **Contact: Lois Gauvreau at 781-665-2247**

