



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

An Open and Affirming Congregation

Rev. Dominic Taranowski, Pastor

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

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

Cell phone: 781-526-3428

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Pilgrims

Have you noticed that about the only time you hear the word “pilgrim” is at Thanksgiving. In our church we take special pride in the pilgrims of Thanksgiving because we trace our United Church of Christ heritage back to William Bradford himself and his hearty followers in Plymouth back in 1621. “Pilgrim”, however, denotes more than the hallmark card image of the first Thanksgiving. It is, in fact, the very definition of a deeply spiritual person. Does it describe you?

A pilgrim is someone who is, first and foremost, on a journey. The first American “pilgrims” were on a journey to a new land, a new world, or, as they would have put it “the new Jerusalem”—a place where they could literally build the Kingdom of God as they understood it. Whether it is a journey of the heart or over oceans, a pilgrim is on a quest to discover more—to be more. Pilgrims undertake pilgrimages to holy places. Again, sometimes these are literal places (as in the Holy Land) or figurative (as in communing with the Christ of our hearts). In short, though, it is pretty hard to be a pilgrim and stand still.

So, where are you going? Where does your pilgrim road lead? Maybe it leads to a new job, a new relationship or another kind of new beginning. It could mean that you are on a quest for a new orientation in life—to be more committed to serving others as a core value or to making sure your family does indeed come first like you say it does. Assuming that stagnation is not part of the picture, what is the next chapter for you? As the pilgrims sailed into an unknown future, when does your Mayflower leave and what is its destination?

A pilgrim is also someone who trusts God implicitly. Taking the Pilgrims of the first Thanksgiving as an example, every day, every meal, every meeting, every decision began with prayer. The balance between God’s will and our free will was decidedly weighed in favor God’s will. We are where we are, we experience what we experience because God has led us to it. And God is by definition good. Therefore, no matter the joy, tragedy, blessing or hardship, God is to be praised (ergo, the first Thanksgiving).

What role does God play in your daily living? Does God have a place in your long term living—your planning, visioning and decision making? How much



First Sunday
OF ADVENT

Sunday, November 29, 2009

Renewing the Covenant

9:00 AM – Senior Choir Rehearsal

10:00 AM – WORSHIP

and Open Classroom (Deck the Halls begins)

11:15 AM – Coffee Hour, Narthex` - Deck the Halls continues with adults joining children.

DURING THE WEEK

Tuesday, December 1

7:15 PM – RIM Meeting, Middle School Room

Wednesday, December 2

7:15 PM – Bells Rehearsal, sanctuary

Friday, December 4

6:00 – 9:00 PM – Winter Wonderland Fair

Saturday, December 5

9:00 AM – 2:00 PM – Winter Wonderland Fair

7:30 PM – Polymnia Choral Society, sanctuary

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

credit do you give yourself verses God for the triumphs and failures of your life?

This Thanksgiving, let us claim our heritage as pilgrims: People on a journey to a deeper faith who keep praise and gratitude always close at hand as they forge a life founded on prayer. It is a tall order to be sure. Yet our lives will be the richer for intentionally incorporating such qualities into our discipleship.

See you in church,

Rev. Dominic



Donna Miner, Barbara Wellington,
Jennie Way, Marilyn McComas
(Essex Park Rehab, Beverly MA),
Betty Crane, Kate Watson, Anne
Wing, George Burrell, Bud
Pendleton, Barbara Jones.

Please keep in your prayers:

† *The Fitzpatrick family: Rick, Laura, Sarah and Sean.
Rick's father, Bill Fitzpatrick passed away on November
13th at the age of 98 in Santa Barbara, California.*
† *Lisa Mortimer and family: Lisa's mother passed
away this week.*



Deck the Halls

DECK THE HALLS
Sunday, November 29th,

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



If you have a student at college, we would like to have their address to be in touch with them this holiday season. Please call the church office (781-665-2111) or info@fccmelrose.org



**Memorial Wreaths that adorn the church this year are
In Loving Memory of: Given by:**

<i>Marjorie E. Thayer</i>	<i>Donald F. Thayer and family</i>
<i>Our parents:</i>	<i>Sallie and Hans Klemm</i>
<i>Karl and Maria Klemm,</i>	
<i>and Francis and Helen Lathrop</i>	
<i>Troy P. Oosterman</i>	<i>Bob, Cheryl, Kate and Lauren</i>
<i>Cynthia Henry</i>	<i>Family and friends</i>

Polymnia Choral Society
Saturday, December 5, 7:30 PM
in the Sanctuary

A VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS

*A festive holiday concert with selections from Handel's
Messiah, Buxtehude's In Dulci Jubilo, Jennifer Higdon's O
Magnum Mysterium and other choral works to ring in the
holiday season.*

*\$25 Adults, \$15 Seniors & students,
\$5 Children 12 and younger*

CITY MISSION HOLIDAY DRIVE

CMS Christmas



Gifts

Each year, City Mission Society, a UCC MA Conference mission activity, organizes a Christmas Shop, where needy families and individuals are invited to come and select gifts for themselves and their children.

Circle 10 is proud to be organizing our Church's collection efforts again this year. Look for our drop-off table before service in the Narthex. Donate this coming Sunday, Nov. 29th through Dec. 13th (Preferred Date) or Dec. 20th (Final donations).

City Mission recommends the following **new/unused** donations:

- ❖ **Winter coats, sweaters and sweatshirts (large sizes especially)**
- ❖ **Hats, mittens, gloves and scarves**
- ❖ **Socks and underwear**
- ❖ **Blankets and backpacks**
- ❖ **Toys, games, and books for all ages**
- ❖ **Gift cards – Grocery, Target, CVS or other Merchants.**

Contact Jen Crain at jen_crain@hotmail.com or another Circle 10 member with any questions or to arrange a pick-up of a donation.

To sort gifts at First Church in Winchester, contact Carl McDonald at CMS to arrange a date/time in advance—(617) 742-6830, ext. 210 or information@cmsboston.org.

Winter Wonderland Fair

Friday, December 4 - 6:00 – 9:00 PM

Saturday, December 5 – 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Be sure to come and enjoy the festivities! Do some Christmas shopping, have supper and lunch, enjoy some time with friends as you shop!



The Winter Wonderland Fair is next Friday and Saturday!

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.

We will start accepting your baked goods and homemade candy items on Thursday. We hope to sell these items on Friday night this year and therefore will need some items in early so they may be priced. We will also accept items all day Friday and Friday evening and of course, early on Saturday. **Contact: Lois Gauvreau at 781-665-2247**



“From Jesus’ fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.”
John 1:16

Stewardship Sunday, November 29

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*.