



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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Faithfulness and Results

One of the most important elements of the Confirmation Class visit to help serve a meal at Bread of Life is a brief meeting we have after the clean-up with one of the program directors. Earlier this month, our confirmands did just that. Not only did they learn the history and current outreach of Bread of Life, they also learned about what motivates those who work day in and day out with such a disadvantaged population.

Motivation is important in any work with the poor because it is difficult to see progress. You can hang on to the success stories of people who overcome enormous personal and social obstacles and re-gain a stable work and family life, but you are also painfully aware of the increasing numbers of people who visit food pantries and meal programs. Each one has a difficult story. In short, it is easy to become depressed.

As with so many things in life, faith is the key. I would venture to say that most people who work for long periods in helping professions are deeply rooted in their faith. In a practical sense, it is a question of goals and remembering who is in charge.

For example, those who work with homeless people generally do so with the goal of being compassionate rather than with the goal of ending homelessness. Similarly, those who work in health care carry on as they do because of the comfort that they can bring to those who are hurting rather than with the goal of eliminating any and all illness.

We are here to be of use. We are here to be compassionate and just. It is enough that we answer these callings. The outcome of our work, our discipleship, is secondary. In our results-driven society, it is worth remembering that as people of faith we are to be less concerned with the harvest than we are with the sowing of the seeds.

Whether it is a ministry like Bread of Life or Refugee Immigration Ministry, whether it is the ministry of marriage or raising children, the bottom line is the same: we do none of this work alone. It is not all up to us. We don't have the complete picture that God has. What we *do* have is our calling to be compassionate and authentic, to be useful and to use our time with intentionality and kindness. To do this each and every



Sunday, March 7, 2010
Communion Sunday
Food Pantry Sunday
Renewing the Covenant

8:30 AM – Chancel Choir Rehearsal

10:00 AM – WORSHIP

and Church School Pre-K – 12

11:15 AM – Coffee Hour, Narthex

11:15 AM – Lenten Bible Study – Gospel Origins

7:00 PM – Confirmation Class

*The daffodils are given in loving memory of
Becky Mockler by Sarah and Rick Mockler.*

DURING THE WEEK

Monday, March 8

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

Tuesday, March 9

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

7:30 PM – Welcome Committee, Lisa & Jim Oosterman's

Wednesday, March 10

7:15 PM – Bells Rehearsal, sanctuary

Saturday, March 13

Turn your clocks ahead tonight!

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 – Tuesdays, 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



day (which too few of us do) is enough. Our faith then leads us to trust that God will use our efforts and our way of living to the right purpose.

When you live with purpose and trust with your whole heart, you come to realize that you are right where you are supposed to be. And faithfulness becomes less about results than about honesty.

See you in church,

Rev. Dominic



Betty Crane (Rosewood Rehab, 22 Johnson St. Peabody MA 01960), Jennie Way, Marilyn McComas, Kate Watson, Anne Wing, George Burrell, Bud Pendleton, Barbara Jones.



Do you sing in the choir? Are you a singer looking for a choir?

Are you interested in joining the choir but you're not sure if it's 'your thing'? Then YOU are invited to a choir party to get to know our

new music director, Kathy Troiano and others like you. We would love to see you on Friday evening, March 26, at Bob and Lisa Jamison's home, 52 Otis Street, Melrose, from 7:30 onward. Hope to see you there! RSVP (781) 662-7830

Congratulations to Justin and Rebecca Iwerks on the birth of their daughter, Cambria Lena Iwerks, born February 23rd. Proud grandmother is Nancy Gift.



GOSPEL ORIGINS—A LENTEN JOURNEY



Rev. Dominic will be leading adult education classes based on Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, following worship during Sundays in Lent: March 7th, March 14th, and March 21st. All are welcome!

Refugees are Grateful!

I have been asked to thank all of you on behalf of Filippo (husband) and Dawdi (wife), the couple from Eritrea whom we settled in Chelsea last week. They have been greatly moved by the outpouring of clothes and toys, toiletries, household items and welcome that Refugee Immigration Ministry has channeled from you to them. More important than the actual items is the knowledge that they have new friends here who care about them! At the moment, we have enough toys and books for the one-year-olds. We could use some toys/fun stuff for the two five-year-old girls and the six-year-old girl. We also need more clothes for those girls including two winter jackets. We got some great jackets Sunday but still need two adult coats. We also need car seats for the two one-year-olds. Thanks again for all your love and help. Two families are now moved in, in Chelsea, the Eritreans and an Iraqi family. The third family, also from Iraq, will arrive tonight and thanks to you will find gifts awaiting them.



Youth Mission Trip - Next Mission Trip meeting - March 7th, immediately after worship.

PARENTS NIGHT OUT TO SUPPORT MELROSE DAY CARE



MELROSE DAY CARE CENTER & PRESCHOOL, INC.

Host: Melrose Day Care Center & Preschool

Location: Melrose Elks Lodge
75 Myrtle Street, Melrose, MA 02176
Saturday, March 13, 7:00PM
Tickets are \$30/per person
RSVP to 781-662-6539

Please join us for a fun, low-key event, with drinks, dinner, raffles and a slideshow of our favorite little folks.

Not only is it a chance to score terrific prizes (Patriots and Red Sox tickets, hotel stays and family passes to Storyland), it's a great opportunity to meet and catch up with other parents.

This event is our opportunity to raise funds to support the fantastic enrichment programming that makes Melrose Day Care such a special place. See you there! Cheers!



Annual Trivia Bee - March 27th

Teams from local organizations will once again be displaying their knowledge of trivia on the stage of Memorial Hall on Saturday, March 27th. The Trivia Bee supports The Bridge, the non-profit group that connects the Melrose Public Schools with willing volunteers. The First Congregational team, the "Bee-lievers" has participated every year, with various church members filling the three spots on the team. Our team members from the past few years have decided to retire this year, so we are looking for three people who are willing to take a turn answering the questions! If you have questions about participating, please see Sallie Klemm, or ask one of our recent team members - Barbara Krol-Sinclair, Ed Arnold, or Frank Stewart. And mark your calendars for a fun (and cheap!) night out at Memorial Hall on March 27th!



**ONE GREAT HOUR
OF SHARING
OFFERING SUNDAY,
MARCH 14**

In his final moments with his disciples, the Good Shepherd asks Peter, "Do

you love me?" "Yes," Peter replies. Then, "Feed my lambs," Jesus tells him. "Tend my sheep." Three times, Jesus passionately repeats his instruction, pressing his followers: If you love me, take care of the people I love. (John 21:15-19)

The members of the family of God including those in parts of the world we may never visit, are God's flock, the sheep of God's pasture (Ezekiel 34:31). Yet, God's flock is often forcefully scattered as people are chased from their homes and livelihoods by brutal expressions of war, or as communities are blasted by natural disasters, or as societies and countries are ground down by unrelenting hunger, disease, and poverty.

On March 14th, you'll have an opportunity to offer your gift to One Great Hour of Sharing, empowering the United Church of Christ to offer disaster relief and refugee aid, meeting basic needs in Christ's name throughout the world. Soon, each of us will have the opportunity to decide how to participate in an offering that helps strengthen people to improve their own lives and communities.

Through One Great Hour of Sharing:

disaster victims quickly receive shelter, food, water, and medical supplies

local communities develop secure sources of food and clean water

minds and bodies grow stronger with new schools and medical clinics

refugees receive housing and long-term help to construct new lives

women and communities are empowered through micro-credit loans and community development opportunities.

In challenging times, we often wonder how much we can afford to sacrifice to help feed Jesus' beloved sheep, when our needs remain pressing. Perhaps only through prayer can we decide how to respond to Jesus' call to feed His Sheep. Remember the feeding of the 5,000: when Jesus asked the disciples to feed the hungry crowd, the disciples despaired (Mark 6:34-44). The five loaves and two fish seemed insignificant compared to the massive need. Yet when each gave sacrificially from what they had, through God's blessing, their gifts turned into a miracle of compassion for all.

Through One Great Hour of Sharing, our gifts meet compelling needs, while also bringing the blessing of compassion into our own lives. The current economic situation is challenging for many of us. For many others, it has pushed beyond challenging to be life-threatening. Heed Jesus' call to feed his sheep with a generous, even sacrificial, gift to One Great Hour of Sharing. Sharing your resources, you'll change lives — including your own.

Easter Memorial Flowers - \$13 per plant

Send your order form by March 27th to: Jennifer Gillette, 631 Pleasant St., Belmont, MA 02478, 617-484-0688. (Last minute orders may be handed to Jennifer on March 28th.)

Ordered by: _____

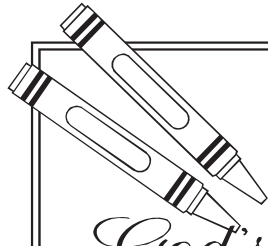
Phone #: _____

IN MEMORY OF:

of plants ordered _____ Amount enclosed \$ _____

Please make checks payable to First Congregational Church





Just for **KIDS**

God's teaching is like....

In Deuteronomy, Moses' words to the children of Israel remind us of spring, which brings growth and new life.

Use the flower code below to fill in the blanks, revealing Deuteronomy 32:2, NIV.



“Let my teaching fall like



and my words descend like



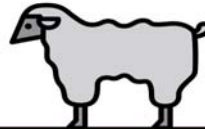
like



like abundant



Answers: rain, dew, showers on new grass, rain on tender plants



MARCH