



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

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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Rediscovering Repentance

The word that resonates the most during the season of Lent is "Repentance". I think we can all agree that repentance is not a popular word. In fact, many people aren't sure what it means—just that it is a churchy word that seems to carry a lot of weight and its implications don't sound so good. It leaves you feeling like you are in trouble. Who wants to focus on that? Why can't we just get to the good stuff of Easter?

Lent takes one of those tear down to build up approaches to things. The truth is that you are in trouble—not in the sense that you are about to get detention after school but in the sense that no one's life is as aligned as it should be with the presence of God. We fall short of our potential and, if we dare look closely enough, not everything we do is in the interest of the greater good or even our own good.

Admitting this can be painful. Actually, it should be painful if it is honest. But that admission is the first step of repentance. The step that completes the process of repentance is changing your behavior to live a life that is far more centered in God than it has been. To aid in this personal process, people have traditionally given things up during Lent to help focus their attention on what really matters. The traditional, spiritual practice of fasting, for example, while not a pleasant experience, is seen by many as vital to re-ordering one's priorities. The discomfort allows for positive growth.

In every aspect of our faith, there is a personal and a collective approach to be taken. At Christmas, for example, we can look at the meaning of the birth of Christ in our personal lives and also what the incarnation means for our shared life together—our culture and our national life.

This same principle applies to repentance as well. We are in trouble as a nation. The recession and the gridlock in Washington are just two examples of this. Repentance is needed. That is, turning in a new direction is needed. However, just as in our own personal approach to repentance, this is quite difficult. Honest repentance, remember, is painful. We Americans are masters of pain-avoidance—even if we know that short term pain may lead to long term gain. Giving something up (such as Wall Street bonuses or "too big to fail") is



Sunday, March 14, 2010
One Great Hour of Sharing
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

DURING THE WEEK

Saturday, March 13

Turn your clocks ahead tonight!

Wednesday, March 17

7:15 PM – Bell Choir Rehearsal, 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 – 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

too far fetched for many policy makers. And yet we will remain in a place of gridlock until the value of repentance is recognized.

During this season of Lent, may we embrace the value repentance on both a personal and a collective level. The undercurrent of Christ's ministry was that suffering brings new life. This is the central message of the Good Friday to Easter Sunday journey and a core component of Lent.

Life is not a series of slaloms where success is going around all of the crosses of life. Lent invites us to discover, to our great surprise, that the crosses do, in fact, lead to new life.

See you in church,

Rev. Dominic





Betty Crane, Mildred Vranas (mother of Sue Cinella), Marilyn McComas, Kate Watson, Anne Wing, George Burrell, Bud Pendleton, Barbara Jones.



DEACON AND TRUSTEE NEWS

There are several important things percolating at recent meetings of the Deacons and Trustees that everyone should be aware of. First, with the successful conclusion of our recent search process for a new Music Director, we are now forming a Search Committee for a new Christian Education Director. Anyone is welcome to join this committee which is forming now. This staff position will have oversight of our Sunday School program and Youth Ministry. We would love to have you a part of the process! Our first meeting will be after church on Sunday, March 28th.

Also, we are in need of fresh leadership for this year's summer Vacation Bible School. Our hope is to form an ad hoc committee to organize this important event. If you have children in our Sunday School, if you have helped out with VBS in the past, or if you have some time to help out with planning the form and scope of this year's program, "welcome aboard!" We welcome your input. The contact people for this are Kris Carbonneau or Sherri Towle.

Lastly, the Deacons and Trustees have been about the work of visioning for our future. As we craft a strategic approach to that future we would like to be more intentional about marketing our ministries to the wider community. Consequently, a Church Marketing Action Team is now forming. If you have a background in this area or some ideas you would like to try you are welcome to be a part of this effort. The contact person for this is Maura Packham.

If you would like to participate--and we hope you will!--in any of these ministries and aren't sure how to plug in, just call the church office or let Rev. Dominic know.

Farewell Jennie Way

Our church has lost its oldest member. Jenny Way celebrated her 100th birthday last September and passed way early last Friday morning. Born in 1909, Jenny saw many changes in our world and she also spent many years of dedicated service at Hillcrest Congregational Church and our church. In keeping with Jenny's wishes, the family will not be having a funeral service. Her legacy will, however, live on in the many ministries we undertake at First Congregational Church.



GOSPEL ORIGINS—A LENTEN JOURNEY



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

SAVE THE DATE! - Saturday, April 10th



Pancake Supper
- April 10 -

Family Pancake Supper sponsored by the Youth Mission Trip Team. Come enjoy fresh, homemade pancakes with delicious toppings! Youth will provide musical entertainment!

With this event also comes our **2nd Annual Service Auction**. Come bid on exciting items such as trained babysitter, tutors, homemade meals and more! Contact Martha Jancaitis for more information or to donate an item.



Don't forget to bring your spare change to church on Sundays for our Coin Jar!



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

An offering envelope is enclosed for this offering.



Still Needed for Iraqi Families

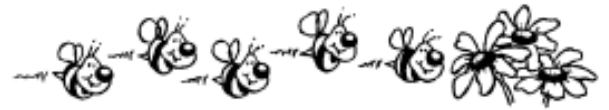
2 car seats, for a one- and five-year old (this is for the Eritreans and this is an urgent need since they need to get rides to appointments)

- Coat hangers
- 1 kitchen table
- 4 kitchen chairs
- Light bulbs
- Mixing bowls
- Tupperware
- 3 small bureaus
- 2 waste baskets
- 2 can openers
- Kitchen utensils (serving spoons, ladles, sharp knives, etc.)
- 1 teapot
- Pots and pans...frying pan
- Trays
- 2 alarm clocks

Please bring any of these things to church Sunday or call Nancy Toney at (781) 665-6588 and I will pick them up. Thanks so much for all your help!



A special thank you to Rob McVoy who volunteered his time and that of his tree service company to dispose of the large spruce tree that fell at the church during our last wind storm. His work is much appreciated!



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.

We have one new person and are looking for two more 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!

DIRT CUPS

Make this easy snack for your family or your friends at Sunday school. As you eat it, celebrate the miracles God brings in the spring.

What you need:

- 2 cups milk
- 1 (4-serving size) box of chocolate instant pudding
- 1 (8 oz.) tub of frozen whipped topping, thawed
- 1 (16 oz.) package Oreo cookies, crushed
- 8 (9 oz.) plastic cups
- gummy worms and frogs
- plastic flowers (optional)

What you do:

1. Mix milk and pudding in a large bowl. Beat with a whisk until well blended. Let stand 5 minutes.
2. Add whipped topping and half of the crushed Oreos.
3. Place 1 tablespoon crushed Oreos in each cup. Fill cups $\frac{3}{4}$ full with pudding.
4. Top with remaining crushed Oreos.
5. Chill at least 1 hour or until ready to serve.
6. Decorate with gummy worms and/or frogs.
7. Place the stem end of the plastic flower into the center of the pudding dessert.

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



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