



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

*An Open and Affirming Congregation*

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**“Nones and Switchers”**

A person who answers the question: “What is your religion, if any?” with “none” belongs to the fastest growing group on the religious landscape of our country. In fact, this group has grown by 138 percent since 1990 and now comprises about 15 percent of American adults.

Who are the “nones”? They are mostly male and under the age of 50. Surprisingly, eight out of ten within this group say that they were raised with some kind of religion as a child. Among those who were raised in a Protestant tradition, a disassociation with church-life is less likely to occur if they were active in a Sunday School program as children.

People become unaffiliated for many different reasons. It might be that they marry someone who belongs to a different religion. It might be that exposure to many different traditions in our society makes the answer “none” as good as “any of the above”.

That brings us to another dominant group within religious America: “Switchers”. Switchers are those who were raised in one religious tradition but then affiliate with another. “Switchers” make up close to half (44 percent) of religiously active adults today. A good example of this would be the fact that former Roman Catholics now make up 10 percent of the adult population in our country and about half of this group becomes unaffiliated while the other half becomes Protestant.

In our church, you will find both Switchers and former Nones represented. In fact, as a former Roman Catholic myself, I would be counted among the Switchers. What is important to note, however, is that Nones are not necessarily hostile to the idea of attending church. Many say that they have just not found the right fit. Similarly, among those who are disenfranchised from their church-of-origin most not necessarily want to become unaffiliated. In other words, within both Nones and Switchers are those who may well be interested in First Congregational Church.

As we seek to reach out to the wider Melrose community and beyond, a critical part of this effort belongs to each one of us. Do you know someone who is a None? Or someone who may be feeling unfed by their present church experience and may be a Switcher? If

**Sunday, April 18, 2010**  
*Renewing the Covenant*

**8:30 AM – Bells Rehearsal**

**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 – Meeting of the CE Director Search  
Committee**

*For Sunday, April 11: THE FLOWERS on the Communion Table were given in loving memory of Barbara Rogers by her sister, Judith Bemis Poindexter.*

*THE FLOWERS were given in loving memory of George and Mary Hughes by the Hughes family.*

**DURING THE WEEK**

**Wednesday, April 21**

7:15 PM – Bells 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

you do, let them know about our church! It may be the start of a whole new encounter with God for them.

How do you do this? It isn’t always easy and the right moment may need to present itself, but the best strategy is to speak of your own experience of our church and why it is important to you. Your task shouldn’t be to convert someone but rather to invite someone. As we get farther into the spring, we will be having a “Invite a Friend to Church Sunday” on Pentecost Sunday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>. My hope is that this will help facilitate this kind of dialog and let new people experience our church for the first time.

Church growth happens through identifying target populations, yes, but more importantly it occurs through the ministry of its members. Sharing the story of our church within the wider community is both an important and rewarding part of membership at First Congregational Church.

See you in church,

*Rev. Dominic*



Marilyn McComas, Anne Wing,  
George Burrell, Bud Pendleton,  
Barbara Jones, Rayma Sargent  
(Anne Wing's sister).



Don't forget to bring your spare change to church on Sundays for the Youth Mission Trip Coin Jar!



### RIM Spring Flower Sale

This is your chance to beautify your yard while supporting our Refugee Immigration Ministry clients! Your purchase of a hot pink hanging impatiens plant will go toward our Ugandan client's \$150/month food stipend! If you buy a flat of marigolds, you will be contributing toward our Rwandan client's monthly \$500 rent payment. A six-pack of petunias will help to pay for a client's cell phone minutes which cost us \$15/month. This is our big fund-raiser of the year and we are really in need of money, so if you are not really in need of flowers, consider buying gifts or making a donation. Orders will be taken through Sunday May 2 in the narthex after church. The flowers will be delivered on Sunday May 9, Mother's Day.

### Come to the Concert!

Wednesday May 5 is the day of Refugee Immigration Ministry's annual International Concert at Old South Church in Boston. See the poster on the RIM bulletin board for details; there will be a variety of music from different cultural backgrounds in an impressive historical setting. The proceeds from this concert support the RIM office staff. The money pays for the salaries of the director and the case worker and the volunteer coordinator, all of whom are invaluable to us as a cluster. The daily expenses of running a non-profit organization...paper, printing, phone bills, client emergencies, etc....are high and we hope many of you will attend this event. You will be helping RIM but you will also have a fine evening of music!



### Do You Have...

- ❖ Size 11 women's sneakers? Our client from Uganda needs them
- ❖ A computer printer? Our client from Eritrea would like to print what he writes.
- ❖ Paper and personal products? Put them in the box on Sunday...food stamps do not cover them and they are always needed.
- ❖ Women's petit size clothes for our Eritrean lady, Dawdi, who has few clothes to wear...
- ❖ Men's pants for Filipino, our Eritrean client.



# ***Visions of Vitality***

**Test, Testimony, Take Away**

**At the Spring Meeting of the  
Metropolitan Boston Association**

**Sunday, April 25**

**2:00 – 5:00 p.m.**

**The Congregational Church of West Medford, UCC**

**400 High Street, West Medford, MA**

## **Agenda**

**2:00 – Registration**

**2:15 – Business Meeting**

**3:30 – Visions of Vitality**

**4:45 – Communion to send us on our way**