



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

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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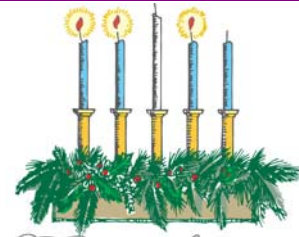
Our New Music Director!

Over the past several months, our Music Director Search Committee has been diligently at work. As we have searched for a new Music Director, we have discussed the character of our music ministry, looked at how this ministry might evolve, advertised for our position, auditioned candidates and took our time to carefully deliberate. The result has been a thorough process that has reached a wonderful conclusion!

On Sunday, January 3rd we will welcome our new Music Director, Kathy Troiano. Kathy is currently the Music Director and Organist at Central Congregational Church United Church of Christ in Chelmsford where she directs a large choir as well as oversees the rest of their music program. While Kathy lives in North Andover, she also has a Melrose connection—having been the Interim Music Consultant at Incarnation Roman Catholic Church here in town. In addition, Kathy is the Principal Contractor for Music Registry as well as being an independent Music Contractor. She has a broad and varied musical background, something that attracted the committee's attention, from having played with the North Shore Philharmonic Orchestra (also serving on their Board) to directing various musical theater productions. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Music from UMass Boston as well as having done Graduate Study in Sacred Music at Gordon-Conwell Theological School. Kathy is also currently a member and Assistant to the President of the American Federation of Musicians Local 300 for the Merrimack Valley.

Along with this background, Kathy brings a willingness to evaluate and innovate our music program. Aware that what we are doing at First Congregational in the area of music is already quite successful; the Search Committee was also committed to building up this ministry with special attention to those who are not currently involved in the program. Consequently, the Committee will remain intact as a support group for Kathy as she transitions into this new staff position and assist in the development of a vision for our program which we can shape together as a congregation.

A special thanks to those on the Search Committee who devoted their time and energy to this important search process: Brian Packham, Beth Hampson, Sallie Klemm, and Jim Oosterman. Thanks also to Lisa Oosterman and Nancy Toney for their assistance to the Committee.



Third Sunday
OF ADVENT

Sunday, December 13, 2009

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

7:00 PM – Blue Christmas Service

THE FLOWERS on the left are given in loving memory of Douglas Robinson by Connie Robinson, son Andrew, and daughter Susan and her family.

THE FLOWERS last Sunday were in loving memory of David Richard Wing given by his mother, Anne Wing.

DURING THE WEEK

Saturday, December 12

8 AM to noon – Church Cleanup Day

Wednesday, December 16

7:15 PM – Bells Rehearsal, sanctuary

Thursday, December 17

7:00 PM – Senior Choir Rehearsal, Music Room

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

This is an exciting time for our church! Music is, of course, fundamental to our worship of God. I am confident that as we welcome Kathy Troiano to the staff of our church, our music ministry will continue to flourish, enhance our liturgical life, and deepen the faith of those who worship with us.

See you in church,

Rev. Dominic



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



Church Clean-up Day
Saturday, December 12
8:00 AM to noon
 Come and help to get the church grounds cleaned up before the snow flies!



I want to share with you a brief synopsis of our current year's finances, and a status update for our 2010 Pledge Campaign.

Current Year Finances

With 11 months passed we are *still* behind on pledges by \$7,683.58 (approximately 5%). However, despite passing the 2009 Budget with an anticipated deficit of \$22,100, through November we have a budget deficit of just \$9,109.61. Considering the pledges outstanding, we have a great chance to close the budget "in the black" if we can catch them up.

2010 Pledge Campaign

As of December 3, we have already received 73 pledges totaling \$150,152. In comparison, for 2009 we had 85 pledges totaling \$152,806 – so we are well on our way to a strong 2010.

Other highlights include:

- 10 new or returning pledges have been received. (A new or returning pledge is one who did not pledge in 2009 but may have in the past, or may be new to pledging to our Church.)
- 27 pledges increased, with a median increase over 12%. This is greater than one out of every three pledges increasing from 2009 to 2010.
- 22 pledging units from 2009 have not yet responded (as of December 3), representing \$22,388 in the 2009 Budget. We anticipate many of these to come in over the next few weeks pushing us over the top for 2010!

Rob Durant, Co-Trustee of Finance



Blue Christmas Service

For many, Christmas is a difficult time of year due to a loss in one's life. The death of a loved one, the loss of a job or one's health, the end of a relationship—these challenges and many others can make the holidays a trying time as we seek to cope with the constant refrain of holiday cheer.

By means of a brief service of prayer, scripture, song and candlelight, we will seek to honor and heal the pain many may be feeling this time of year. Please join us for this time of devotion and fellowship as we anticipate the arrival of Christ's healing in our lives this Advent season.

First Congregational Church
121 West Foster Street, Melrose
Sunday, December 13 - 7:00 p.m.



The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund
Offering Sunday, December 20

The Christmas Fund Offering for the Veterans of the Cross, is an important way of sharing our joy at God's renewing and life-giving grace. The offering, which is administered by the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance of the Pension Boards on behalf of the UCC, is an expression of joy and gratitude to, and for, those who serve the church.

Gifts to the Christmas Fund help provide pension and health premium supplementation to low-income retirees, emergency assistance to the families of clergy and lay employees and Christmas Gift Checks to hundreds of annuitants.

We will be taking this collection in church on Sunday, December 20. Envelopes will be available in the bulletins that Sunday. If you would like to mail a donation to the church, mark it for "The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross."



CITY MISSION HOLIDAY DRIVE

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.



**“FREE WILL OFFERING”
COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS
LUNCHEON BUFFET**

First Baptist Church Melrose

561 Main St, Melrose

Sunday, December 13th at 1:00 PM

General Seating limited to 200 people

Menu:

Chef Cerretani's Choice

For more information contact their church office at 781-665-4470.



Looking for the perfect gift? Something unique? Something that will make a real impression? How about a draft animal! The second grade class invites you to come to the Alternative Holiday Fair in the Narthex after church on December 13th and 20th. You will find gifts that will be memorable to receive and life changing to those who will benefit from your generosity. Consider this:

- for the price of an iPod you could provide a struggling family in Asia with a draft animal to help make them self-reliant.
- for the cost of a video game your support could provide blankets to a family of five displaced by a disaster.
- for the price of a pound of gourmet coffee you could provide seeds and tools to an impoverished farm family trying to feed themselves.

And these are just some of the options available through Church World Service! This holiday season give a gift that matters. See you at the fair!



1. Youth Group Yankee Swap - Dec. 20th, immediately after worship. Bring a \$5 swap, wrapped, and a food item for a local food pantry. Also, please bring a snack or drink to share. We're looking for 2 adults to chaperone!

2. January 3rd, 2010 - Mandatory Mission Trip Meeting for youth and parent/guardian. Immediately after worship. Agenda items - update on fundraising and trip logistics!

Any questions, please contact Martha Jancaitis - 781-979-9292 or mjancaitis@hotmail.com

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*.



**TEMPLE BETH SHALOM OF MELROSE
WELCOMES YOU TO THE
22nd ANNUAL CHRISTMAS DAY DINNER
Please join us for a festive holiday party
First Baptist Church, Main St., Melrose
Thursday, December 25, 2009
Doors Open at 12:00 PM
Dinner Served at 1:00 PM**

RSVP: Council on Aging, Melrose 781-665-4304
Transportation Provided Upon Request
Please specify if you require special
accommodations

Sponsored by Temple Beth Shalom, in cooperation
with the First Baptist Church, Melrose Council on
Aging and the Melrose Business Community

No Admission Charge

Celebrate Community