



The Beacon

First Congregational Church of Millbury, United Church of Christ

Our Mission: To welcome and inspire ALL through faith, love,
and fellowship according to Christ's example.

Volume 31 Issue 11 • November 2019

From the Pastor

Dear Friends,

On Sunday, October 13, at a special congregational meeting, members of our church voted to accept the covenant that will make us an Open and Affirming Church. The vote was unanimous. I won't quote the entire covenant here, but the essence of it is that we now welcome persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities into full participation in the life of our church. The covenant will be sent to the office of the United Church of Christ that ministers in the LGBTQ* community, so that our church can be listed on a registry of Open and Affirming churches from all over the country. We hope that folks who are seeking, whatever their sexual orientation, will find us and make a spiritual home with us.

At Millbury First Church, the ONA vote was the culmination of a long journey. Because the congregation had voted some years ago to hold same sex weddings in the sanctuary, many of us assumed that we were already Open and Affirming. However, a few steps remained to be taken. This past year, we studied and shared our ideas and prayed and held meetings. We spoke together and challenged one another with difficult questions. We crafted a covenant - a covenant that was uniquely ours - that expressed our commitment to being ONA. And we voted to accept it.

Now a rainbow sticker has been placed on our church sign, and a rainbow symbol has been added to our website, to spread the news right here in Millbury and in the on-line world. At our Annual Meeting, the covenant will be added to our by-laws.

This journey has been very rewarding for me. My experience has been similar to that of a member of Christ Church UCC in Brockton who wrote:

“The ONA process has helped us to speak and listen. It has deepened our conversations on many topics. Perhaps most importantly, it has helped us know we can talk about subjects where we don't all agree as if we were members of the same church: with respect, care, and love.”

Looking to the days ahead, I know that we will face many challenges. The world is changing fast. How do we make God's sacred purposes known in a society that is growing more and more secular? How do we share the self-sacrificing love of Jesus in a world that seems driven by the self-serving quest for material success?

As we face the challenges ahead, we can draw strength from our past. We have never shied away from challenges. We have met past challenges with creativity and energy. Our church responded creatively years ago, when Millbury was changing from an agricultural village to an industrial center. The church saw a need for ministry in a new place. So members literally moved the church building to be closer to the booming mills, so they could serve the workers there!

We may not literally move our building anytime soon, but we may “move the church” in a more symbolic sense. We may move our ministry by increasing our outreach to people in need here in Millbury. We may more actively support efforts to feed the hungry and give shelter to those experiencing homelessness. Now, as our Open and Affirming Covenant makes clear, we will offer spiritual shelter to those who have been

excluded from other places of worship.

May God be with us as we move into the future, serving God's gracious purposes and relying on God's grace.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Elva

*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning

Following are summaries of the church council meeting and congregational meeting that took place on Sunday October 13, 2019 following worship. The full minutes of the meetings are posted in Fellowship Hall.

SUMMARY OF CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING OCTOBER 13, 2019

A quorum of 7 council members were present

REPORTS

Treasurer: Report for September 2019 – accepted and filed. The CD at Millbury Savings Bank from the sale of the parsonage is \$150,000. We will not be charged for 2 weeks of cleaning services when Open Sky did not come due to other activities at the church.

Building and Grounds: Received quote for snowplowing, shoveling and salting from 102 Property Maintenance. Same company who plowed last year. Cost has increased, but is still recommended by B&G chair, Jim Mousseau, who will work with the company to be sure they are not plowing multiple times for each storm.

Clerk: Minutes of 9/8/19 council meeting accepted

Christian Formation and Deacons: No Reports

Music: There is a jazz concert scheduled for May 17, 2020 at the church. Suggested we invite youth groups from area churches to attend and assist with the concert. Youth may be able to earn community service hours for helping. Music Director Joyce Carpenter-Henderson will take her vacation time this year as cash rather than time off.

Pastor: Pastor Elva is working on a written Safe Church Policy – draft should be ready to present to council at November meeting. Brief discussion of some of the topics to be covered. We are about half way through our designated term with Pastor Elva. She will be asking membership to find ways to reach out and serve the community in the coming year.

SUMMARY OF CONGREGATIONAL MEETING OCTOBER 13, 2019

A quorum of 21 active members of First Congregational Church of Millbury were present

Meeting was called to order at 11:35 AM following the Church Council meeting

The purpose of the meeting was to vote on the acceptance of the Open and Affirming Covenant that was presented at the Church Council meeting on Sept. 8, 2019.

MOTION: by Leah Murphy and seconded by Audrey Rossow

I move that our congregation vote to become an Open and Affirming church by accepting the “Open and Affirming Covenant”

(Continued on page 3)

The covenant was read by moderator, Ron Stead.

We, the members of First Congregational Church of Millbury, openly affirm that all people are created in the image of God. Without exception, we welcome, celebrate, and include people of all ages, races, cultures, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, family configurations, physical, cognitive, or emotional abilities, education, spiritual and religious traditions, and those with no religious background.

All are welcome to participate fully in the life, leadership, ministry and mission of this church, as we seek to grow together with open minds. We strive to demonstrate in all ways that “no matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.”

Furthermore, we commit ourselves and our deepening faith to being an Open and Affirming congregation, and to working for the day when all people will know God’s unconditional love.

Discussion followed and focused around whether, if passed, the covenant would be included in the church bylaws. Changing the bylaws would require a separate meeting as the announcement for this meeting did not include the intention to change the bylaws. Other topics included the addition of a rainbow decal on the sign in front of the church, which would be a rainbow approximately the size of an index card, and similar to the handicap decal already on the sign. Also discussed was the addition of the Open and Affirming status on our web site, and other social media.

Following discussion, paper ballots were used for voting. The ballot read:

“I vote to accept the covenant to become open and affirming ___ yes ___ no

Ballots were counted by Alan Marble and Audrey Rossow.

The final outcome of the vote is: Yes 21 / No 0 The motion passed unanimously

Meeting adjourned at 11:50 AM

Open and Affirming Covenant First Congregational Church of Millbury

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October 13, 2019

**Life is a mirror: If you frown at it, it frowns back;
if you smile, it returns the greeting.**

~William Thackeray



- 6th Leah Murphy
- 7th Joyce Carpenter
Henderson
- 13th Patricia Bartelloni-Covel
- 13th Stephen Beauregard
- 14th Marie Rochon
- 14th Kent Stowe
- 15th Dianne Enthoven
- 28th James Mousseau
- 29th Phyllis Kaseta

Remember our shut-ins with a note or a card.....

Mrs. Charlotte Stockwell
Auburn Life Care
Auburn, Ma 01501

Mr. Jay Stockwell
110 Hartness Road
Sutton, MA 01590

Chris Rudge
8 Carlstrom Lane
Millbury, Ma 01527

Bill and Marilyn Crandell
Care One at Millbury
312 Millbury Ave
Millbury, Ma 01527



The basic secret of the Christian religion is not effort or will power, important as they are.
The secret is faith.

~Norman Vincent Pele

Prayers & Concerns

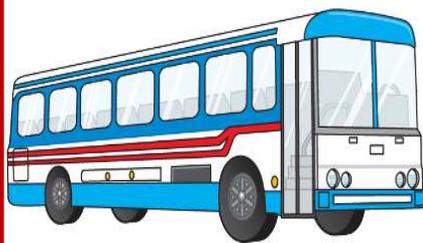
- † Our Community
- † Our Country
- † Our World
- † All Military Men and Women
- † All First Responders
- † Our Church and our Ministry in Millbury and beyond
- † Ron Stead's sister in law Kathie Stead

Mission Corner

The Knitting and Crocheting Mission Group will be meeting on the **1st and 3rd MONDAY** of each month.

We have plenty of yarn, knitting and crochet needles available for anyone interested in learning to make hats, mittens or scarfs. Some people enjoy learning how to use a knitting loom.

BUS TOUR DAY TRIPS



Trinity Lutheran Church of Worcester has extended an invitation to members and friends of Millbury First Congregational Church to join their Trinity Travel Club. All tours depart from Trinity Lutheran Church, Harvard Street side. A list of the trips has been posted in Fellowship Hall along with flyers for upcoming trips.

Contact information for the tour guides will be on the flyers and you may speak with Janice Fortin for more information.

Everyone is welcome to join us, bring along your own craft project if you like or join us just for some socializing.

We meet in the Classroom or Kitchen at 6:30 pm.

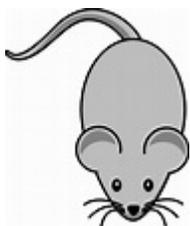


WILDLIFE CONTROL

Wayne Witkowski

Skunks, Squirrels, Raccoons, Bats, Mice, Snakes, Birds, etc. All Insects

www.WildlifeControlMA.com (508) 892-1967



The Harvest Altar will be back again this year on Sunday November 24th!

Please share your abundance of Thanksgiving squashes, potatoes, pumpkins, onions, apples etc. for the altar display. Bring your donations that morning or if you can't make the service call Heather Beauregard at 774-287-5540 and she will pick it up for you. The food will be donated to a local food bank after the service. Thank you for your support and for sharing your abundance with those who don't have it.



THANKSGIVING SERVICE



**November 26th 7 pm
Holy Spirit
Episcopal Church
3 Pleasant St., Sutton**

The Clergy of the Millbury Sutton Cluster extends an invitation to all people of the Community to come together for a time of thanksgiving, a time to be thankful for God's goodness, mercy and grace. Please come and join our brothers and sisters in Christ, as we lift thanks to our God for blessings big and small.

28th Annual Turkey Raffle

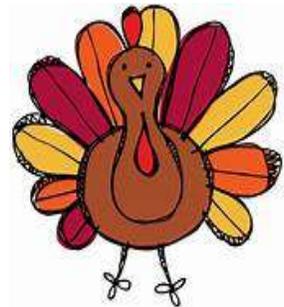
Our Church will be holding the 28th Annual Turkey Raffle on **Friday, November 22nd at 6:30 pm**. It will take place at the Millbury Senior Center, 1 River Street in Millbury.

The Top 4 Prizes will include:

- ⇒ Grand Prize-2 Night Escape Vacation at the Grand Hotel in Ogunquit, Maine
- ⇒ 2nd Prize-50" Samsung HD TV
- ⇒ 3rd Prize-Case of Assorted Wines
- ⇒ 4th Prize- Thanksgiving Food Basket with Turkey

In addition, numerous items on display will be raffled off during the evening.

All raffle items need to be brought to the church by Nov. 10th so that we can print the complete list of items for the night of the Raffle.



Refreshments will be sold during the event, including hot dogs and other delicious surprises. Please come early and enjoy the fun on November 22nd.

For Raffle tickets and information please contact:

Linda Polissack at 508 598 7968 or Email polissackdogranch@gmail.com or call Janice Fortin at 508 826 6381 or Email jrfortin@charter.net. Raffle tickets will be on sale at Goretti's on October 12th and November 16th.

Help on November 22nd at the Senior Center:

Raffle items need to be brought to Senior Center at 3 pm. We then need to set up tables, chairs, and organize raffle items. Later we need help with cleanup. Please contact Deanna Murray if you can help.

If you see Judy O'Connor around town, please thank her for her generous invitation to have our Turkey Raffle at the Senior Center.

**First Congregational Church
of Millbury, UCC**
148 West Main Street
Millbury, MA 01527

Address Correction Requested



Worship and Church School: 10:00 a.m.
Church Phone: 508-865-9737
Email: Millbury1stChurch@gmail.com
Web: <http://millburyfirstchurch.com>



**Resolve to
make a
difference
in someone's life!**



To add an event, please
email
Millbury1stchurch@gmail.com

Remember to check us out
on Facebook. See all the
photos. It's a great way to
introduce your friends to our
Friendly Church on the Hill.

The Beacon

Deadline for December
newsletter is November
17th. The BEACON is
distributed by email or first
class mail. It can also be
downloaded from the church
website. Copies are available at
the back of the sanctuary.



2019