



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 32 Issue 2/3 - February and March 2020

From the Pastor

Dear Friends,

Until a few years ago, I had never heard the expression “fake news.” Now I seem to hear it all the time. We are living in a time when facts often seem less powerful in shaping opinions than attractive falsehoods. The *Oxford English Dictionary* recently chose the word *post-truth* to be word of the year, saying that *post truth* denotes circumstances in which “objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief” *

In public and private life, people have always manipulated the truth to serve their own purposes. There's nothing new about propaganda and other efforts to distort the facts. But in our time people can post just about anything, true or false, on line, where it can be spread across the world in seconds. And the Internet is very good at creating enclaves of like-minded people who are not open to opposing views. As the editors of *The Christian Century* put it, the Internet has a great capacity “to cocoon people in communities of misinformation.”

For those who live in democratic societies, the possibility of a post-truth world is an urgent call to be more committed than ever to truthfulness. But, to quote *The Christian Century* again, “if anything has become clear recently, it's that telling the truth is more than a matter of thinking hard or having access to reliable information. It is also a matter of being a certain kind of person. The virtue of truth telling is intertwined with the exercise of other moral virtues.

“In particular, truth telling involves having the humility to be corrected and the humility to join in a shared public world of argument and debate. It also involves an openness to the world and to other people and a respect for their worth and perspectives....There has to be a shared reality beyond self interest for the concept of telling the truth to gain traction; otherwise speech is mere self-assertion.”

Churches are places of shared reality. Churches are shaped by a core narrative: that God created the world and called it good. Churches affirm that God intends creation to flourish. Churches affirm that we humans are creatures of God - flawed to be sure - but precious in God's sight. Our conviction that all are children of God gives us a basis for humility and an openness to other points of view. Churches can also be safe spaces for hearing one another, arguing, and sometimes changing minds. Churches are communities of truth telling.

In a time when it seems harder than ever to discern the truth about what is happening, may we continue to be a community where truth can be told, heard, and understood. May we be humble, open to other views, and grounded in our faith.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Elva

*Quotes are from *The Christian Century*, January 4, 2017, p.7.



February

8th Phyllis Fairbanks
 9th Deanna Murray
 13th Adam Mejaour
 13th Paul Hedlund
 15th Francis Assad
 17th Audrey Rossow
 17th Matthew Murray
 24th Jake Leveille
 27th William Crandell

March

4th Barbara Pearson
 10th Mary Mousseau
 12th Carolyn Ball-Hanson
 14th Warren Hanson
 15th Duane Fortin
 19th Karen Assad
 19th Bobby Beauregard
 24th Susan Banach

Graces Garments

Winter is still here so please remember Graces Garments if you have any gently used winter clothes, coats, boots that you no longer wear. They are always in need of clothes especially with the change of seasons. Graces Garments greatly appreciates all donations.



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 Crandell
 Care One at Millbury
 312 Millbury Ave
 Millbury, Ma 01527

SNOW CANCELLATION From Pastor Elva

If a Sunday worship service has to be cancelled because of inclement weather, notice will be put on the answering machine message you hear when you call the church.

Cancellation notice will be posted on WCVB TV Channel 5.

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
 † Janice Fortin
 † Rev. Carol Reynolds, on the death of her mother earlier this month

Knitting/Crocheting

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

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.

Thank You

Dear Ones,

I'm writing with gratitude and love for each of you. I was humbled to receive a card from Joan with a generous check enclosed, and so grateful for your care and kindness. I was also happy to see that Shirley Anderson also received a check. You are an amazing congregation and I am so blessed to have walked with you a ways as you do your best to live a life that follows the way of Jesus. It's not an easy thing, but I have seen you live in faith, walk with each other in all things, give not only your time but your heart to all things, and most especially I have seen you struggle with heartache and to finally come to a loving resolve.

Henry James wrote, "Three things in human life are important. The first is to be kind. The second is to be kind. And the third is to be kind. You have been kind in all that you do. Thank you for thinking of me, and for the kindness of your generosity. I keep you in my prayers.....

God bless....Vicki

A Reflection on the Church Season of Lent

This year, on Ash Wednesday, February 26, we began the season of Lent. For some, Ash Wednesday offers a reminder, a smudge on the forehead, saying that we are dust and to dust we shall return. Lent ends on Maundy Thursday, when we remember that Jesus was tried and sentenced to death. At both the beginning and the end of Lent, we confront a cross.

Lent may begin and end with a cross, but it has a springtime purpose. In fact, the word “Lent” comes from an old English word for spring. Lent can be a time for us to do some spiritual spring cleaning. We can examine our lives, and discard what does not serve God’s loving purposes. For each of us this will be different, but we can identify what must die in us, to make room for new life. As Jesus was buried in the tomb, we can bury the things that get in the way of our relationship with him. In his poem, “A Purification,” Wendell Berry describes this spiritual spring cleaning with a wonderful image from the world of gardening:

At start of spring I open a trench in the ground.

I put into it the winter’s accumulation of paper,

pages I do not want to read again,

useless words, fragments, efforts...

To the sky, to the wind, then,

and to the faithful trees, I confess my sins:

that I have not been happy enough,

considering my good luck;

have listened to too much noise;

have been inattentive to wonders;

have lusted after praise.

And then upon the gathered refuse

...I close the trench,

folding shut against the dark,

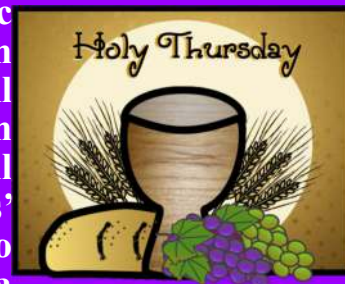
the deathless earth.

Beneath that seal the old escapes into the new.

Whether your spring cleaning involves digging in the garden, or a more spiritual sort of digging, may Lent be an opportunity for spiritual housekeeping. May God guide you as you decide what to keep and what to bury, that new life may emerge.

**Maundy Thursday Service
of Tenebrae,
April 9, 7:30 PM,
First Church Millbury**

Once again this year, we will join with our friends from Millbury Federated Church for this dramatic service. Readers from both churches will read passages from the gospels that tell the story of Jesus’ passion, leading up to his crucifixion. It is a somber and tremendously moving worship experience that will make your celebration of Easter much more meaningful.



Millbury High School Jazz Band Concert

Sunday, May 3, 2020 at 4 p.m.

Millbury First Congregational Church
148 West Main Street
Millbury, MA 01527

Music: Duke Ellington, John Coltrane, Juan Tizol,
Glen Miller and more!

Guest musician: Brant Paradise ~ pianist

Followed by a Reception in Fellowship Hall



Sock Drive

Thank you... to all who so generously donated socks to our January Sock Drive, to benefit the Worcester Fellowship. Two of our Deacons delivered them February 9th after worship and the folks at the Fellowship were very appreciative.



January Paint Afternoon

We had our best turnout ever at the January Paint Afternoon! Forty-five painters attended.

As usual Sue Dion's class was filled with loads of painting tips and laughter. Acrylic painting is only one medium Sue teaches.

She is also a custom framer, for those of you who would like a special frame for your masterpiece. Visit her website suedionart.com for more information.

It was great to see so many families, friends and community members enjoying time together.

I would also like to thank the Kitchen Committee, those who provided refreshments, help with publicity, set up and cleanup the day of the event.

God Bless
Janice Fortin



**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH FUNDRAISER
SATURDAY, MARCH 7TH
1:00 PM**

Register by March 6 - noon:

www.eventbrite.com/e/bumble-bee--and-lady-bug-cupcake-decorating-tickets-94476809681



**Cupcake
Decorating**

**Sat, March 7, 2020
1:00pm-2:30pm**

**First Congregational Church
148 West Main St.
Millbury, MA 01527
*complimentary refreshments**

**TICKETS MUST BE
PURCHASED BY
12:00PM ON MARCH
6TH**

**FUN FOR
ALL AGES**

**Tickets
\$35**

Reserve your spot today by visiting :

www.eventbrite.com/e/bumble-bee--and-lady-bug-cupcake-decorating-tickets-94476809681

**FLEA
MARKET**

Our Church is sponsoring the Annual Flea Market on **Saturday April 25, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.** Anyone wishing to reserve table space, please call Jeri Stead (508-865-5371) or Sue Witter at (508-832-4234). The \$20 inside area consists of a large supper table, plus a card table. An outside reservation is \$10 and those chancing the weather need to provide their own table.

“The Kitchen” will be serving coffee and muffins, and at lunch time, Ron’s hot dogs will be served. There will also be a Bakery Table, and a Church Flea Market Table . You can begin putting items on the stage after April 1.

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

Address Correction Requested

The Beacon

**February / March
2020**



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](mailto: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 April is
March 15th. 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.



2020