



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 27 Issue 4• April 2016

Sowing Seeds...

The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen...” (Luke 24:5, NRSV)

*So, friends, every day do something
that won't compute. Love the Lord.
Love the world. Work for nothing.
Take all that you have and be poor.
Love someone who does not deserve it.
Denounce the government and embrace
the flag. Hope to live in that free
republic for which it stands.
Give your approval to all you cannot
understand. Praise ignorance, for what man
has not encountered he has not destroyed.*

*Ask the questions that have no answers.
Invest in the millennium. Plant sequoias.
Say that your main crop is the forest
that you did not plant,
that you will not live to harvest.
Say that the leaves are harvested
when they have rotted into the mold.
Call that profit. Prophecy such returns.*

*Put your faith in the two inches of humus
that will build under the trees
every thousand years.
Listen to carrion – put your ear
close, and hear the faint chattering
of the songs that are to come.
Expect the end of the world. Laugh.
Laughter is immeasurable. Be joyful
though you have considered all the facts.*

...Practice resurrection.

(Excerpts from “Manifesto: The Mad Farmer Liberation Front” from *The Country of Marriage*, copyright
© 1973 by Wendell Berry, published by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.)

(Continued on page 2)

Dear Friends,

Jesus has risen! Risen indeed! Alleluia!

So now what? We've praised God for this, the ultimate miracle of our faith. We've sung and shouted our jubilant alleluias, colored eggs, and shared love, laughter, and Easter ham or lamb around the dinner table. Are we now just "back to our regularly scheduled program?"

Not exactly. According to farmer-poet Wendell Berry, Christianity is not a "one and done" faith, but one that calls us to follow Jesus' lead and *practice* resurrection throughout our lives. How does one practice rising from the dead while still alive? Berry's poem offers us some clues. Based on its words and images, *the art of surprise* seems to be a big part of it; that is, not necessarily doing what the world expects of us or considers to be successful per se. Jesus was poor, humble, countercultural, after all. Not only that, but he loved and cared for precisely the people his society rejected and tried to coerce him into rejecting. *Becoming comfortable with contradiction and paradox* also seems to be part of what Berry is pointing to: placing allegiance to God above earthly leaders and governments, even as we fully embrace the ideals for which our democracy stands; having faith in that which we cannot see or comprehend—in mystery and the mysterious; asking questions for which there may be no real answers so long as we are here on this earth. Speaking of which, another aspect of resurrection practice I believe Berry is recommending to us is *investing in eternity*: sowing seeds whose benefit we won't live long enough to fully reap, accepting life's messes and mortalities because our faith tells us that God will ultimately redeem them for good, and wastefully spreading the joy of this good news, even and especially as we approach life's end.

These are tall, deep orders, I know, and goals that could take more than a lifetime to complete. But, as Christians, we believe in redemption and eternal life. We've got the time! And, besides, it is well within our power to break down the overwhelming into manageable pieces. How? By rising each morning and asking ourselves, "How am I going to practice resurrection today?" and setting our sights on the little things, like smiling at someone who seems to be having a bad day. Or on bigger, but no less concrete things, like forgiving someone who has wronged us, or being kind to someone who rubs us the wrong way. Or on finding and lifting up the one good thing that happened on a bad day, in a troubled life, in a chaotic world. This we can do. And, over time, each of those seemingly little gestures will add up to something substantial. And give us that many more ways to share the good news of God's unconditional love and presence with those around us. Which is, in fact, the ultimate purpose of being the church.

In these 50 days we now travel between Easter and Pentecost, let us challenge one another and ourselves to commit to practicing resurrection on a daily basis. Imagine where this could take us and our community! With fertilizer such as this, imagine how rich a soil of faith we could cultivate and leave behind for the benefit of the spiritual descendants we will never know! Imagine all that we could accomplish simply by practicing resurrection...

Grace, Peace, and Eastertide Blessings to each one of you,

Pastor Carol

I like to think of nature as an unlimited broadcasting station, through which God speaks to us every hour, if we only tune in.

~George Washington Carver
The Newsletter Newsletter June 2001

Coming Up in Worship

- April 3** **Worship Service at 10:00 am**
Guest Preacher: Jeri Stead
Scripture Readings: tbd
 Join us for a historical sermon by Jeri, introducing us to our spiritual ancestors- the friendly, faithful people of West Millbury.
- April 10** **Communion Sunday Worship, 10:00 am**
Potluck at 11:15 am, Theological Conversation at 12:30 pm
Scripture Reading: John 21:1-19
- April 17** **4th of Sunday of Easter Worship at 10:00 am**
Scripture Reading: Acts 9:36-43
- April 24** **5th Sunday of Easter Worship at 10:00 am**
Scripture Reading:
 Revelation 21:1-6, John 13:31-35
- May 1** **Children's Sunday Worship Service at 10:00 am**
Scripture Reading: tbd
 Join us for a joyful celebration of our Sunday school kids and teachers!

From

*“A Servant’s Hands”
 by Marian J. Go Sam*

“...Oh Lord, please fill our empty hearts with love enough to share,

And fill our empty hands with good deeds to show others that we care.

*Help us to help our neighbor,
 and to truly understand.*

*That we cannot love with an empty heart,
 or give with an empty hand.”*

Have you seen...?

We are missing hearing assistance devices, large print hymnals and black wooden book stand? If so, could you please kindly return them to the sanctuary?



Thank you.

Deacons Fund

On Communion Sunday at First Church, the first Sunday of the month, the Deacons take a special offering for the Deacons Fund, which is a fund to provide assistance to members in need. Envelopes marked DEACONS FUND are in the pews. Donations may also be made using the envelope any other Sunday. You may wish to make a donation to the Fund as a "Good Samaritan," and designate your contribution for a specific member whom you know to be experiencing a difficulty. That gift will go to the person you name as an anonymous gift. Thank you.

Happy Birthday

5th Karen Kosiba
 5th Donald Orrell
 6th Sandye Hermans
 8th David Sauer
 9th Julia Fortin
 11th Abigail Assad
 11th Ryan O'Donnell
 16th Dylan Enthoven
 16th Donald Enthoven
 21st Sara Jenkel
 21st Paul Fortin
 23rd Lynn Thrulow
 24th Donald Pokraka
 28th Donna Elie
 28th Susan Witter
 30th Charlotte Stockwell



Joys, Congratulations & Thanksgiving

What a joy it has been to hear **our beautiful new piano** in worship these last few weeks. Many have noted the improvement in sound quality, etc. We are grateful for the many years of faithful service the old Steinway provided, but ever more grateful to all who made the purchase of this newer Boston model possible for our congregation, and particularly to **Joyce C-H**. THANK YOU!!

Happy Birthday to **Susan B**, who just reached a significant new decade, to **Megan**, who recently turned 13 and to her brother **David**, who has turned 10 and to **Annabelle**, who just turned 2!

Congratulations to **Karrie** on 3 years cancer free! Alleluia!

Congratulations to **Dave Rudge**, who was recently named Millbury's first ever Deputy Fire Chief?

We rejoice with **Kristy and her family** that she is home from the hospital and cancer free.

Congratulations to **Matthew**, who recently made it into Worcester Magazine!

Thank you to the **Just Peace Players** for celebrating UCC Women's Week with us by sharing their play "Women of the Greatest Generation," based upon their interviews with a diversity of women from that era. It was a fascinating and inspiring production, illuminating the lives of

ordinary people living through extraordinary times.

Thanks also to **the congregation** for your generosity. Our special offering raised \$180 to support the Just Peace Players' ministry.

Many thanks to **Liz Crawford** for sharing her story with us as a part of our Mission Sunday on March 13. It was such a pleasure to have her, Fr. Warren Hicks, and others from Worcester Fellowship join us in worship and fellowship!

Thanks also to **Mission Team members Don, Deanna, Amy W., Linda P., Bob, and Cheryl**, who planned the service with Pastor Carol and shared their ministries of outreach as part of fellowship on the 13th and the 20th.

And thank you to **the congregation (and Sunday school kids!)** for your generosity once again. Together we collected exactly \$304.04 for the annual One Great Hour of Sharing special offering.

Thanks to **Don and Bob** for unearthing and hanging the congregation's colorful felt banners in the sanctuary in time for Mission Sunday. They lend color and a festive air to our sacred space, and no doubt brought back fond memories for a number of folks.

Thanks to **all who contributed coats** to the Palm Sunday children's procession and Grace's Garments clothing ministry, as well to Deanna for delivering them to Millbury Baptist Church.



Prayers & Concerns

- † Jay S. and his family
- † Joan & Hunter
- † Ronnie
- † Thelma, Jack & Family
- † Ethan and Tim
- † Jeri's & Ron's cousin Everett
- † Ron's brother Peter
- † Anna Marie, Dirk E.'s mother
- † Cassidy's friend Anthony, who has cancer
- † Elisa and Mason
- † Margaret G.
- † Joann S.
- † Cheryl's cousin Alana
- † Bob's mother
- † Linda P's niece Tamara
- † Sandra
- † Sukie's father Gurdip Singh Bansai
- † Marilyn E. and her family, including daughter Kathy A.
- † Marie's daughter Hannah
- † Mary's sister Susan
- † 3rd grader Emma Grace, who has leukemia
- † Brian F.
- † Our Confirmands: Abbey, Abby, Megan, & Laura
- † Our Sunday School Superintendent, Teachers, and Students
- † Our Church Leadership
- † All Members and Friends of our Congregation and the Local Community
- † Our Returning Veterans
- † The Women of Rhodes House
- † AA Members who meet weekly in our hall
- † All who struggle with mental illness, addiction, or incarceration
- † Worcester Fellowship Pastors & People
- † The homeless in Worcester and beyond



What Does It Mean to be a Christian in New England?



A joint event sponsored by
the First Congregational Church of Millbury
and
the Federated Church of Sturbridge and Fiskdale

Sunday, April 10, 2016 12:30 – 2:30 pm
First Congregational Church of Millbury 148 West Main Street

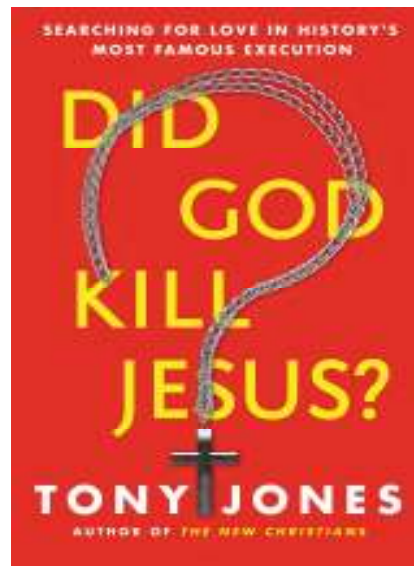
The Rev. Dr. William Imes will offer us a historical perspective,
followed by discussion about what it means for us today.

A potluck luncheon begins at 11:15 am

Rev. Dr. Bill Imes brings a rich understanding, as he not only has 36 years in pastoral ministry, but also served for 7 years as President of the Bangor Theological Seminary in Maine. His warm and engaging manner as speaker and facilitator are sure to be enjoyed by all.

A graduate of UNC-Chapel Hill, Yale Divinity School, and Eden Theological Seminary, Bill served two parishes in Iowa for 16 years and the First Parish Church, UCC of Brunswick, ME for 16 years. From 2001-2008 he was the President of Bangor Theological Seminary. Following retirement to Easthampton, MA, he has served as interim or sabbatical pastor for churches in Dalton, Northampton, South Hadley, Amherst, and Chicopee. Bill brings a deep interest in the life of parish churches to our topic today. His perspective has been shaped by his experiences as a pastor, a student, and a teacher of pastors and lay leaders. He has spoken or preached in over 200 congregations around the country, in Germany and Holland. He looks forward to being with us on April 10.

New Wednesday Evening Book Discussion Group for Spring!
April 13, 20, 27 & May 4, 11, 18, 25 at Millbury Public Library
6:15-7:45 pm



The popular Patheos blogger wants to restore the cross as primarily a symbol of God’s overwhelming love for us and to rescue Christians from the shame and guilt of seeing our situation as “sinners in the hands of an angry God.”

Many Christians believe that God demanded his only Son die a cruel, gruesome death to appease His wrath, since humanity is so irredeemably sinful and therefore repugnant to God. Tony Jones, a popular Christian blogger, author, and scholar, argues that this understanding is actually a medieval invention and not what the Bible really teaches. He looks beyond medieval convictions and liberates how we see Jesus’ death on the cross from this restrictive paradigm. Christians today must transcend the shame and guilt that have shaped conceptions of the human soul and made us fearful of God, and replace them with love, grace, and joyfulness; which better express what the cross is really about.

How we understand the cross reflects directly upon the kind of God we worship. By letting go of a wrathful God who cannot stand to be in our presence unless he pretends to see Jesus in our place, we discover the biblical God who reaches out to love and embrace us while “we were yet sinners.” Jones offers a positive, loving, inclusive interpretation of the faith that is both challenging and inspiring. Essential reading for modern Christians.

Sign up on the church’s Facebook page or use the sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall.

Available in **Hardcover**: Amazon, \$16.00-\$22.73; special order from bookstores, \$26.99
 Also available as an **E-Book** for \$9.99.

“Christians struggle to fully comprehend the significance of Christ’s death. Tony Jones has written an honest and important book to help readers make sense of the cross and its implications for our lives today. This is a book every Christian should read.”--**Adam Hamilton**, author of *Making Sense of the Bible*

“Engaging and accessible, written with the right mix of humility and conviction, *Did God Kill Jesus?* invites readers to wrestle with key questions about Christianity. I learned something new on every page and will be thinking about this one for a long, long time.”--**Rachel Held Evans**, author of *A Year of Biblical Womanhood and Searching for Sunday*

Rhodes House Dinner 5 pm



If you would like to be part of this important ministry please contact Cheryl Ordway to help support women in recovery at Rhodes House by contributing part of a meal (or money to go toward a meal) and/or by providing a ministry of presence--sharing dinner, board games, and/or movies with the women on **April 22** or at one of our other upcoming monthly visits.

The Backpack Program

**"when local kids go hungry,
we have their backs"**

Elmwood St. School had recently started the Backpack Program. The Backpack Program provides children in need who usually go hungry over the weekend/school vacation week with enough food until they get back to school. I have been in contact with Kelly a guidance counselor at Elmwood and discussed how our church could help. She told me the program is up and running but could definitely use any donations we could provide. They are in need of snack items such as granola bars and fruit snacks, lunch items, such as mac & cheese, soup or anything non-perishable. If anyone would like to donate to this important cause please see me. Thank you for your support. ~ Deanna Murray



Our church will be holding the Annual Flea Market on Saturday, April 30th from 9 am to 2 pm.

Please gather your treasures and rent one of our inside tables for \$20. Call Jeri Stead (508-865-5371) or Sue Witter (508-832-4234) to reserve a table. You can prepare your inside table on Friday night from 6pm to 8 pm. If you want to chance the weather, the outside reservation is \$10 and you will need to provide a table.

Refreshments will be on sale for you to enjoy. We will have a variety of muffins available and Ron's delicious hot dogs will be on the grill. There will be a church flea market table, a bakery table, and we will have an exciting addition to our event this year.

Rev. Dennis Knight, who specializes in offering assessments of silver antiques, will greet our visitor's upstairs in the Sanctuary to identify and estimate the value of their silver. There will be no charge for his services, but a "free will donation" for the church would be greatly appreciated.

We appreciate donations of item for the Church Flea Market Table, but we are unable to accept TV's, computers, or clothing.

Join Us For A Barbeque



For our first ever fund raiser at the Publick House on July 11! Stay tuned! Tickets and publicity materials to come as the day approaches.

Classic Barbeque: All under the tent!
Pulled Pork, Baked Beans.

Cash Donation to benefit our church.
Adults \$14 / Children \$5 (4-12 yrs.)

ALL YOU CAN EAT BUFFET!

Held in Paige Hall
or under the tent where noted.

Seating One: 4:30-6:15 pm
Seating Two: 6:30-7:30 pm

*Open Seating *Casual Dinner
*No Reservations

Summary of February Meeting

Income Opportunities

- * Amy has dropped off the Uno's fund raiser application and is meeting with someone to finalize the date. The Council agreed April 10 was a good date, although this date is now under review due to a prior congregational commitment.
- * Jeri has set the flea market date as April 30. Pastor Dennis is going to provide appraisals for silver and is recruiting someone else to do general antique appraisals.
- * Fran has communicated Council's approval of renting Fellowship Hall to Carol Dearborn for additional yoga classes, but has not heard back from Carol about her decision.
- * Jim M reported that he has reached out to the cell phone tower contact who said he would drive by the building and get back to Jim. Jim is still waiting for a response. Jim also contacted the B&G person from Shrewsbury Congregational.

Hearing Assistance Loop

- * Fran provided the written materials that Jenn had researched about this system. Jim F agreed to review the material and discuss it with the Council in a future meeting.

Safe Church

- * The Council discussed the progress toward Safe Church over the last 10 years. They agreed to continue this conversation and decide whether to move forward in 2016.

Pastor Update

- * Pastor Carol reported that the first session of this year's Death and Dying seminar at Brierly Pond had 18 participants and more participants are expected next week.
- * Carol asked if Council members would be ready to review the first 2 chapters of *Creating a Healthier Church: Family Systems Theory, Leadership and Congregational Life* in March. Council will read the book together with chapters assigned to individuals to present each month after Pastor Carol presents the first 2 chapters. The Council agreed.
- * Pastor Carol also noted that she believed it was the right time to begin discussing the Pastoral Relations Committee again. Rev Charlotte has suggested that perhaps we would want to engage some of the parents of young children on that committee since it would only meet quarterly. One of the parents present expressed skepticism as to whether many of the young parents would be willing to serve in this capacity.
- * Pastor Carol will be taking vacation 3/28 to 4/5. Jeri will be preaching that Sunday with a church historical presentation.

Building & Grounds

- * **Air Filtration System** – Kathy has paid off the loan for the air filtration system. Payments for the \$4,400 loan over 24 months will now go directly to her. Cheryl will create a document for Kathy regarding the church's obligation to pay that debt back to her.
- * **Parsonage Heating** - Carol reported that the plumber and Triangle Tube sales rep have not returned her calls regarding the warranty payment of our repair bill. Jim is going to try to follow up with the plumber, Greg Gauthier. Fran will resend information for Alain via Jim F. concerning contacting the installing plumber Chris Comeau to seek restitution.
- * **Elevator & Gas Inspections** - Jim M. reported is managing the Elevator Inspection and Gas meter inspection. Jenn will provide information regarding the elevator inspector.

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- * **Rental Management** - Pastor Carol, Jim M, and Jenn scheduled a meeting to hand off building rental responsibilities to Jim M.

Financial/Stewardship update/Blackrock update

- * Chris reported no change in Stewardship totals provided in the Annual Report.
- * Cheryl has access to all of the financial systems and banking websites and will document a reimbursement policy to clarify expectations for members. She will work with Carol to ensure the TV cable bill reimbursements have been received and recorded for 2015.
- * Blackrock transfer update – Chris now has access to the account. He noted that the fees are reasonable and there is not a pressing reason to move it to Fidelity at this time. The Council noted that the newly formed Investment Team should meet a couple of times in 2016 to discuss the overall investment strategy and accounts. Chris suggested that, based on the church’s current financial position, we may want to consider pulling out of the stock market altogether.

Annual Meeting

- * Summer Worship times – Carol is planning to take the pulse from the membership as to whether we should continue to change our summer worship time to 9:30am.
- * Piano fundraising – We will vote to formally approve the purchase of the piano Joyce has found for \$10,000. Council agreed that Carol should send an email out prior to the meeting describing the new piano and asking for the final \$1,200 needed to purchase it.

Congregational Coaching sessions

- * Pastor Carol reported that Rev Charlotte Wright would like to have her next coaching session with Council members. The Council discussed and agreed to review the topic of Leadership Development and to begin a Behavioral Covenant with her. The date of Saturday, March 19 at 10 am was decided for this session.

British Choir to Perform at Pakachoag Church in Auburn

On **Saturday, April 2, at 7:00 p.m.**, the Wadham College Chapel Choir of the University of Oxford, kicks off its spring tour of the United States at Pakachoag Church in Auburn with a program of sacred music by composers such as Gibbons, Ives, Greene, and Stanford, as well as arrangements of American spirituals and traditional English folk songs. The choir is led by Katharine Pardee, who began her career in sacred music at Chestnut St. Congregational Church in Worcester.



The concert is free and open to the public and is underwritten by the Lillian Eldred Knowles Fund of Pakachoag Church for the Support of Sacred Music. For more information or to reserve priority seating, visit www.pakachoag.org or call 508-755-8718 .

Association, Conference and Other Events

RAINBOW DANCE

Saturday, April 2nd, 6PM

Trinity Church, 23 Main Street, Northborough

This is a free event with music (DJ) & refreshments. Please RSVP to Trinity Church by March 28: trinitychurch4@verizon.net.

Jam for Bread and water and shelter and hope...

Sunday, April 3, 2-4PM

Open Spirit, Edwards Hall, 39 Edwards Street, Framingham

An afternoon of Jazz to benefit Syrian Refugees. Proceeds shared between these refugee-aid organizations rooted in three faith traditions: NuDay Syria, HIAS, and Ascentria Care Alliance.

Worcester Fellowship

A warming shelter has been setup at All Saints Episcopal Church, Pleasant St., Worcester on **Thursdays from 1:00PM-5:00PM**. We are looking for volunteers to provide hot food (2 gallons of soup, chili, or similar item). Sandwich fixings are also needed: 2 loaves of bread, 1 lb of each: turkey, ham, bologna, and American cheese. These items can be dropped off at the church by 12:30PM on Thursdays. Please contact us at fr.warren@gmail.com for more information.

The Maine Conference, United Church of Christ cordially invites you to join us on a returning Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

April 16 - April 23, 2016

The Pilgrimage will acquaint participants with the geographical and cultural settings of the New Testament and relate historical studies to contemporary dynamics in Israel, Palestine, and Jordan. The pilgrimage will include morning and evening discussion groups on the historical and contemporary themes and visits with indigenous people. This trip is designed to introduce participants to the state of the art of biblical studies in the Holy Land. Please use this link to learn more:

<http://files.ctctcdn.com/44d9d514001/689a9af2-743f-4c8f-b5c7-f12b2828fcba.pdf>

Recurring Church Events: Third Floor Coffee House - Open Mic

**Trinity Church Northborough, 23 Main Street
One Friday a month, 7:00PM - 9:00PM**

Check out our website calendar for Friday night coffee houses,. Come up to the third floor to share your talents with other open mic performers! All performers are welcome.

**First Congregational Church
of Millbury, UCC**

148 West Main Street
Millbury, MA 01527

Address Correction Requested

The Beacon

**April
2016**



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



OFFICE HOURS, ETC.

Rev. Carol Reynolds is available by phone at the parsonage at [\(508\) 581-4153](tel:5085814153) or by email at pastor.millbury1stchurch@verizon.net.

Office hours are by appointment.

Carol's normal work week is Wednesday through Sunday. In cases of emergency on her days off (Monday and Tuesday), please call her cell phone at [\(508\)-282-9511](tel:5082829511).



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 the May issue is April 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.

**April
2016**