



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 2 • February 2016

Sowing Seeds

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

(2 Corinthians 5:16-21, New Revised Standard Version)

Dear Friends,

Once again this year, our Lenten offering will be missional, going to the ecumenical One Great Hour of Sharing special offering, in which the United Church of Christ partners each year with other Christian denominations each. The offering will be collected on **March 13** and goes to support people in need all over the world. Given the volume, the level of urgency, and the biblical precedent, this year there is a special emphasis on refugees.

In a world where communities are being displaced by the catastrophes of war, famine, and natural disasters, the Church is called to reclaim the spiritual discipline of solidarity. In the words of the theologian Roberto Goizueta, Christians are summoned to adopt and live out a “theology of accompaniment.” As natural, economic, and political forces upend communities, the Church is called to stand in solidarity with those who seek to move beyond the trauma of displacement toward a promise of healing and peace.

The Old Testament story of Ruth is about this solidarity. Naomi and Ruth were much like today’s refugees: They never chose to move from country to country. It was imposed upon them by forces beyond their control. They lived in a society where a woman’s livelihood was entirely dependent on her male relationships (father, husband, son). Yet, when that system failed them, Ruth chose solidarity with Naomi and accompanied her to pursue a livelihood for both of them.

This option for accompaniment is a biblical principle that saturates the pages of scripture: From God who is present with Hagar in the desert and calls her to remain close to her son Ishmael (Genesis 21), to the Parable of the Sheep and Goats, where the criterion for judgment is that of compassionate accompaniment (Matthew 25), to Paul’s exhortation that Christians should “rejoice with those who rejoice [and] weep with those who weep” (Romans 12:15). This promise to walk together is mutual and reciprocal, and both sides experience power that emerges from the spiritual discipline of solidarity.

Ruth’s promise to Naomi defines what solidarity authentically entails and stands as a challenge for Christians today to walk with refugees as they build new homes in strange lands.

Through the One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) offering, we as the body of Christ have the power and the opportunity to help those living in despair as refugees. If refugees had the choice to return home, many wouldn’t have a place to return to because their homes have most likely been destroyed—either burned, severely damaged, or are still unsafe places to live.

As you consider your gift to this year’s OGHS offering, please think for a moment about what it would be like to not have a place to call home. Let us make Ruth’s promise our own, living out the call of solidarity with all people, especially those displaced by disaster, war, and famine.

Thank you so much for your generosity and concern.

Grace & Peace,

Pastor Carol

Coming Up in Worship

February 7	<p>Transfiguration & Communion Sunday Worship at 10:00 am Potluck & Congregational Gathering with Rev. Charlotte Wright at 11:15 am Scripture Readings: Exodus 34:29-35 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2</p>
February 14	<p>Valentine's Sunday Worship at 10:00 am Scripture Readings: Romans 10:8b-13, Luke 4:1-13</p>
February 21	<p>Second Sunday in Lent Worship Service at 10:00 am Scripture Reading: Psalm 27</p>
February 28	<p>Third Sunday in Lent Worship Service at 10:00 am, Scripture Readings: Isaiah 55:1-9, Psalm 63:1-8</p>
March 6	<p>Fourth Sunday in Lent Worship & Celebration of UCC Women's Week Scripture Readings: tbd In honor of UCC Women's Week, we will be hosting the Just Peace Players, who will perform their current play for us, "Women of the Greatest Generation." The play is made up of the stories of women who came of age during the Great Depression and World War II, stories the troupe personally has been collecting and recording. Because the play is 45-50 minutes long, we will postpone our monthly communion celebration and collection of the Deacons Fund offering until March 13. A free will offering to support the Just Peace Players' ministry will be collected in its stead.</p>



Mark Your Calendar!

2016

**Annual Membership Meeting
 Will be held after worship on
 Sunday February 21st.**

Have you seen...?

We also 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.



Inclement Weather Cancellation Policy 2016

Winter has at last arrived and with it the potential for inclement weather affecting our Sunday worship service. In the event that worship needs to be cancelled or delayed, here is what you need to know:

The decision to cancel or postpone our Sunday service will be made prior to 7 am on Sunday morning. There are 3-4 ways we will notify you of a cancellation or postponement:

1. Facebook posting
2. An email to our church distribution list
3. A message on the church office answering machine-508-865-9737

A phone call for those who don't have access to email or the Internet. If you are unsure if you are on this list please contact Amy Peterson-508-865-2743

Joys, Congratulations & Thanksgiving

Happy Birthday to **Phyllis F.**, who turns 90 this month! We rejoice with her and her family, as well as with **Jeffrey G.** on his recent 21st birthday and **Alexis W.** on her recent 16th birthday and the securing of her learner's permit!

Congratulations to **Marc Lachance**, who recently earned his first teaching position as ½ time phys ed teacher at Boylston Elementary School! Marc is also in his 2nd year as head coach for Westfield State's Men's Club Ice Hockey team and is taking his 7th Master's level education course at Michigan State with an emphasis on coaching and online learning.

We are extremely grateful to **Rev. Dennis Knight, Brenda Salvi, and Pakachoag Church** for joining us for a jubilant worship service on Christmas Eve, as well as to **Dennis** for filling in for Pastor Carol as worship leader at or annual Christmas carol sing service on 12/27. Thanks also to our **confirmands** for serving as scripture readers and Christ candle readers/lighters on Christmas Eve!

A big thank you to **everyone who helped welcome our Millbury/Sutton sisters and brothers in Christ for the Christian Unity service** we hosted on January 20. It was a fun and a joyous celebration of our rich diversity, as well as our oneness as Christians. Many of you expressed a desire to continue the celebration in our sister churches' sanctuaries. Pastor Carol will pursue this idea with the local clergy at their next monthly lunch meeting.

Many thanks to **Heather, Steve, & Bobby**, who single-handedly took down and put away all of our Christmas lights and wreathes for the year.

We're so thankful to **Jim and Alain**, who donated funds to cover the balance of our fees for coaching with Rev. Charlotte Wright because they thought it was such an important thing for our church to do and did not want the money to be a concern. Between their generous gift and the **Massachusetts Conference's** matching scholarship, we are paid in full!

We are also extremely grateful to our **music director Joyce**, who has made a \$5000 donation to our piano fund, bringing us one big step closer to replacing our very tired antique Steinway.

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."



5th	Julie Frankian
8th	Phyllis Fairbanks
9th	Deanna Murray
13th	Paul Hedlund
13th	Adam Mejaour
13th	Brittany Pearson
13th	Jason Wall
15th	Francis Assad
15th	Wendy Scanlon
17th	Sarah Demers
17th	Matthew Murray
19th	Albert Graves
24th	Jake Leveille
24th	Sukie Roberts
25th	Marilyn Eurenus
27th	William Crandell

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
- † Cindy C. and Linda A.
- † Jake, who's serving again in Afghanistan
- † The Ellsesser Family
- † Anna Marie, Dirk E.'s mother
- † Cassidy's friend Anthony, who has cancer
- † Kristy and her family
- † Elisa and Mason
- † Margaret G.
- † Joann S.
- † Cheryl's cousin Alana
- † Linda P's niece Tamara
- † Sandra
- † Nancy A., who has had surgery for breast cancer
- † Sukie's father Gurdip Singh Bansai
- † Family and friends of Eloise Ducharme, including Roland, Kay, and Phyllis F.
- † Marilyn E., who has been diagnosed with cancer, and her family, including daughter Kathy A.
- † Our Confirmands: Abbey, Abby, Megan, & Laura
- † Our Church and Local Community
- † Our Returning Veterans
- † The Women of Rhodes House
- † AA Members who meet weekly in our hall
- † Worcester Fellowship Pastors & People
- † The homeless in Worcester and beyond



COACHING HOMEWORK DUE FEBRUARY 7!

This is a reminder to folks who were at the 1/17 coaching session with Rev. Charlotte Wright and a heads up to those who were not present, but would like to be involved in this process through which we endeavor to become **a more purpose driven church**.

As Charlotte stated during that session, Jesus gave us two primary sets of guidelines through which we should filter our goals, mission, and vision as a church:

- 1) The Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-40)
 - a. Love God
 - b. Love our neighbors
- 2) The Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20)
 - a. Go and make disciples
 - b. Baptize them
 - c. Teach them

We can equate the above 5 actions to 5 aspects of our life together as church:

- 1a. Love God = Worship
- 1b. Love our neighbors = Service
- 2a. Go and make disciples = Outreach
- 2b. Baptize them = Fellowship
- 2c. Teach them = Education

We might think of them as 5 legs on a stool, which must each be equal in length for the stool to stand upright, without leaning or tipping over.

Charlotte had us count off into 5 groups to explore each of these 5 topics and what they could look like in a revitalized First Church. We are to report back the results of our discussions in our next meeting with Charlotte, just after worship on 2/7. The idea is that our statements and ideas might form the basis of a new and more detailed church mission statement, a statement with more measurable goals by which we can track our progress.

If you weren't at last Sunday's meeting and would like to be part of a discussion group, please let me know, and I will connect you. Preferably we will each be on a team covering a topic different from our usual church involvement, so that we will all have the opportunity to "think outside the box."

Thanks so much to all who are actively engaging this important process and welcome to those who would like to become better acquainted with it, as well as involved in shaping our future together. We'd like to hear from as many voices as possible!

Blessings,
Carol



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	*Casual Dining
Seating Two: 6:30-7:30 pm	*Open Seating
	*No Reservations

Summary of December 17 Council Meeting

Income Opportunities

- Details of the July 11th Publick House fundraising event to which we have been assigned were presented. Publicity and ticket sales still need to be organized. Our companion charity that day is YOU Inc. We will split \$4 per dinner sold by both organizations.
- Pizzeria Uno fundraising information was presented. We can receive 15% to 20% of dinners sold on a particular night. Amy West will choose a night in March and send the application to Pizzeria Uno.
- Pastor Carol suggested Rev. Dennis Knight help us with an Antique Roadshow type event. He is an antique assessor. The Council discussed if that could be connected to the Spring Flea Market, as it would bring more traffic to the flea market. The assessments could be done upstairs and include historical tours of the church. Potential date for this event is April after Easter
- Ron reported that solar panels aren't an opportunity for us because we are a nonprofit and don't get the installation deals. It is also believed that the church would have been responsible for clearing snow, repairs, etc., which also could have been problematic.
- Council approved the revised rental fee structure with the Wedding Coordinator note omitted. We will review that piece when we actually have a volunteer for the position.

Pastor Update

- Pastor Carol thanked the following people:
 - Ron for coordinating the removal of the desk.
 - Cindy Bradway for removing the remaining wood from the parsonage.
 - Everyone working on the pageant. And Joyce for finding the script and Pakachoag for paying for the rights to the script.
- Pastor Carol noted that positive feedback had been received from members of both churches regarding our joint activities with Pakachoag Church.

Building & Grounds

- **Air Filtration System** – Kathy has been approved for personal credit to buy the system. The total cost is \$4,400 with a monthly payment of \$183.33 for 2 years. There is no interest on the loan. The Council voted unanimously to buy the system with this financing plan. Pastor Carol will let Kelly Gallagher know that we are moving forward with this purchase, as she had indicated that some other local churches may also be interested, which could qualify us for an even higher volume discount. Jim/Kathy will reconfirm the volume pricing and timing.
- **Parsonage Heating** - The parsonage heat is working well since the unit was replaced this month. The plumber is following up on the warranty reimbursement of our repair expense of \$3,676. The plumber suggests that we replace the tubing in the basement and first floor because the tubing originally installed is too narrow to sufficiently heat the house. The estimated cost of this repair is \$1,500 to 2,000. The Council noted that we should add that to the 2016 budget to be corrected in the warmer weather.
- The Council discussed our ability to hold the plumber who originally installed the system responsible and will take steps to attempt do so.
- **Budget Items** - The Council agreed to also include the following in the 2016 Budget:

(Continued on page 6)

1. Pest Control Service Plan - \$950 for both properties, which includes discount for putting an ad for the company in our newsletter.
 2. Increase shoveling fee from \$35 to \$50 per storm.
 3. Chris Gobron will also include language related to the authority of the Council to approve capital and expense spending during the year, including a dollar limit.
- **Shoveling** – Jim has posted a request for someone to shovel on the Millbury Facebook pages. We will wait to see if that brings in anyone. If not, we will discuss other options.
 - **Kitchen Phone repair** – Janice Fortin reported that the outside wires of the kitchen phone have been cut. Pastor Carol will include this issue in the steps to be taken to switch the church over from Verizon to Charter and will report back with a timeline.

Annual Meeting Prep Council 2016

- Council agreed that the annual meeting will be Feb 21st.
- Fran will contact Marie to arrange the due dates for reports from the teams.
- All Council participants at the December meeting, with the exception of Fran and Jenn will be returning for 2016. We need to follow up with Chris, Deb, and Sukie to confirm if they are returning. If the 3 above are returning the Council will meet the minimum of 10 members, but would have room up to 15 total, if any other people would like to join. This will be announced at Sunday Services. The Clerk/Secretary position is open for 2016. Pastor Carol suggested Cheryl Storer for the Auditor position. Council supported the suggestion, and Cheryl will begin reading up on the proposed auditing process.

Stewardship update/2016 Budget Process/Blackrock update

- Chris reported that he is still in the process of following up on pledges for 2016 so he does not have the full picture yet. Pledges received are about the same as last year for those donors. Some significant donors passed away in 2015, so we anticipate overall pledges to decrease in 2016.
- Pledge weekly/monthly envelopes for 2016 will be available to members on January 3rd.
- Chris reported that he had one document for an officer to sign that hopefully will get us access to the Blackrock account in order to move the funds to Fidelity.
- The Council reviewed a timeline for creating the 2016 budget for the annual meeting:
 1. Deb to provide details of expenses to anyone who hasn't yet received asap.
 2. Detailed team budgets item would then be due back to Deb by Jan 10th.
 3. Deb will present a proposed budget to the Council at next meeting on January 24th.
 4. Deb will provide final budget to Marie by January 31st for inclusion in the annual report.
 5. Annual report is available to members on Feb 7th. Must be made available 2 weeks before annual meeting per church bylaws.

Annual meeting is on Feb 21st.

Brierly Pond Clubhouse
Horne Way
Millbury

Sponsored by the Brierly I
Condominium Association
& the Millbury/Sutton
Ecumenical Clergy Group

LENTEN DEATH & DYING WORKSHOP 2016

Wednesdays, 2/17, 2/24, 3/2, 3/9 & 3/16

from 6:30-8:00 pm



Each year Lent reminds us that our lives are both fragile and brief. What better time for us to explore the reality of our own (and our family members') mortality and begin to prepare ourselves for the eventuality of our dying? Over 5 sessions we'll discuss hospice, advanced directives, preparing a will, pre-planning with a funeral home, as well as for the funeral service and the writing of an obituary. We'll conclude with a Celebration of Life Party.

Highlights

- Led by professionals, including a hospice chaplain, funeral directors, an elder law attorney, two pastors, and a registered nurse.
- Includes the opportunity to design your own funeral/memorial service.
- Free of charge and open to the public.
- Participants of all ages are encouraged to attend.

ALL OUR WELCOME!
Bring a friend or a family member!

To Register
Please contact Pastor Carol Reynolds by phone or email

508-581-4153 or
pastor.millbury1stchurch@verizon.net

Association, Conference and Other Events

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.

Super Saturday - March 2016

March 12, 2016 8:00 AM to 3:30 PM

Killingly High School, 226 Putnam Pike, Killingly, CT 06241

The CT Conference United Church of Christ in collaboration with the MA and RI Conferences is pleased to host the 12th Super Saturday event. Its theme is Leading in Times of Challenge and Change, and the keynote speaker will be The Reverend Traci Blackmon, a community leader, civil rights activist, local church pastor, recipient of the Antoinette Brown Award 2015 and acting executive of UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries.

Super Saturday is a day-long event for lay and clergy to share best practices that transform ministries. The day begins with worship and a keynote address and features over 35 workshops on topics like deepening discipleship, moving effectively into the community, managing finances, good governance, engaging creativity for mission, preaching that reaches all ages, racial justice and environmental justice, empowering youth, and more. For more information: <http://ctucc.org/supersaturday/>.

Medical Mission Trip to La Romana, Dominican Republic

March 4-13, 2016

First Church in Sterling invites you to be part of this ecumenical mission. We will travel to the impoverished sugar cane villages, serving both the Haitian & Dominican poor. A diverse group of participants offer medical clinics & outreach and construction work at schools, the Good Samaritan Hospital, and/or water filter program among other possibilities. Medical providers, construction workers (skilled & unskilled) and youth (16+ years old) are welcome. Interested? The **2016 Orientation Guide Highlighted Updated 031315** and **2016-APPLICATION-medical-and-trip-release** can both be downloaded from the church website at www.fcsterling.org.

Haiti Mission Trip

April 2016

Mr. Art Sharkey and Mr. Mike Lawler of the Congregational Church of Westborough, will return to Haiti for their 3rd Mission Trip April 16-23, working with Heartline Ministries (website: <http://heartlineministries.org>). The estimated cost is \$1,800. The schedule will include working at the different Heartline properties that house their Maternity Center, Men's Discipleship Program, Women's Training and Education Programs. Other assigned work may include projects at local orphanages and food distribution groups. Daily schedule based on the project needs of our host organization leaders. Need to finalize our roster of participants and make our reservations by year-end 2015. Contacts: Art Sharkey - asharkey@charter.net; 508 826-1084, Mike Lawler - mlawler@anchorengineering.com; 508 922-8532

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-f12b2828fcb>

**First Congregational Church
of Millbury, UCC**

148 West Main Street
Millbury, MA 01527

Address Correction Requested

The Beacon

**February
2016**



Worship and Church School: 10:00 a.m.
Rev. Carol Reynolds, Pastor
Church Phone: 508-865-9737
Email: Millbury1stChurch@gmail.com
Web: www.MillburyFirstChurch.org



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 either Millbury1stchurch@gmail.com or jalbert9@msn.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 March issue is February 21st. 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.