



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 26 Issue 11 • November 2015

Sowing Seeds

But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

(Ephesians 4:15-16, New Revised Standard Version)

Dear Friends,

As some of you may have already learned, at our September meeting Council approved a motion to seek the assistance of a coach in moving our congregation forward, transforming existing conflicts, and training us to communicate with one another in more effective, healthy ways. This recommendation and vote came after a few contentious "Congregational Chat" open meetings clearly revealed that a number of divisions currently exist within our congregation. The Massachusetts Conference has generously offered to pay for half the associated fees, up to \$1000. At some point, we plan to collect a special offering to help offset the remaining costs.

Some have recently asked why we didn't continue to hold Congregational Chats. This was because they were clearly *not building up the Body of Christ in love*, but tearing us down and breaking our hearts in the process. Some have wondered why we should need an outside person to help us, why we can't figure things out on our own. Yes, Council and I agree that we are all adults and intelligent ones at that, but it simply is not possible to move beyond and fully heal and transform problems with the same thinking that got us into them in the first place. An objective outside person with "no dogs in the hunt" can assess our situation without bias and guide us toward a healthier, life giving place. I have expressed to Council that, even though the open conflict seems to have subsided somewhat, my sense is that doing this type of relational work is going to be just as crucial to the ongoing health and vitality of our congregation as fund raising and stewardship. Communication and resiliency are crucial to our growth and revitalization, no matter how much money is in our coffers at any given moment.

I understand that some folks are unfamiliar with the concept of coaching in a congregational context. When we describe Church, we tend to use words like family, community, and body. But we are also a team, a team for and of Christ. Like any sports team, for us to function consistently well together, for us to be able to build ourselves up in love, we may require the support of a trained professional from time to time, a coach with experience working with congregations in situations like ours. As pastor, I do have "a dog in the hunt." I am a part of the dynamic that exists between and among us, so I need to be able to be a participant in the process too, rather than being the one leading it.

There is no shame in engaging in this sort of process together. It is actually a sign of health and deep commitment to our congregation's future. And we are not alone in this by any stretch of the imagination. There are a number of other local congregations currently engaging in similar processes. It's a hard time to be the Church. Not only that, but if you spend any time observing what's going on in our country politically and otherwise, you will notice that communications have become strained between all sorts of people. It seems to be in the air right now, at this particular moment in our country's and our world's history. When we seek to improve our own relationships at church, we can't help but influence what's going on around us in the world, in our own families and circles of friends. Truly, it's a win-win situation--bringing peace to our little corner of the world and creating a ripple effect that extends well beyond the

walls of 148 West Main Street.

The Massachusetts Conference has assigned a coach to us, the Rev. Charlotte Wright, who is an experienced pastor affiliated with the Connecticut Conference and trained in the “Walking in the Way” technique of Christian peace building. Charlotte is currently wrapping up an interim assignment in Hadley, MA, but was able to meet with Council at our most recent meeting last Sunday. Council’s feeling was that Charlotte is someone with whom our congregation could work well. However, before we are all in, we want you to get to experience her too. Toward that end, we have scheduled a congregational gathering with Charlotte for **12:15 pm on Sunday, November 22**. There will be a potluck lunch between worship and this meeting.

If you have any questions or concerns in the meantime, please don’t hesitate to reach out to a Church Officer, Council Member, or myself. In addition, Council Member Alain Beret has offered to speak to the congregation about his support of this process and the reasons for it during our November 8 worship service.

Thank you in advance for keeping your hearts and minds open to the possibility of this process and this particular coach.

Grace and Peace to each one of you,
Pastor Carol

Coming Up in Worship

November 1 All Saints Day, Anniversary, & Communion Sunday Worship at 10:00 am

Scripture Reading: Revelation 21:1-6a

We will remember and honor the saints who have passed before us, as well as celebrate those still among us by recognizing our membership anniversaries.

November 8 Stewardship Sunday at 10:00 am
Scripture Reading: Ruth 3:1-5; 4:13-17

Join us in the joyful celebration of a bountiful harvest as we receive and consecrate our 2015 pledges. Alain Beret preaching.

November 15 Veterans Day Sunday Worship at 10:00 am

Scripture Reading: 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5

Help us honor our veterans and explore a sermon topic suggested by one of our parishioners.

November 22 Thanksgiving Sunday Worship at 10:00 am

Scripture Reading: Matthew 6:25-33

Join us as we retell the Stone Soup story and collect fresh vegetables for our friends at Rhodes House’s Thanksgiving celebration.

November 24 Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service at Assumption Church at 7:00 pm

November 29 “Hanging of the Greens”/First Sunday of Advent Worship at 10:00 am

Scripture Readings: tbd

Happy New Liturgical Year! Help to prepare the sanctuary for the seasons of Advent and Christmas while learning about the significance of the various decorations. Pastor Carol on vacation.

December 6 Communion and Second Sunday in Advent Worship at 10:00 am
Scripture Reading: tbd

December 13 Christmas Pageant and White Gift Service at 10:00 am

Have you seen...?

Our missing hearing assistance devices, large print Hymnals and black wooden book stand? If so, could you please kindly return them to the sanctuary? Many thanks.

Joys, Congratulations & Thanksgiving

A big thank you to **Paul F.**, who just wrapped up a season of volunteer mowing and trimming at the church and the parsonage. It was a real labor of love, and he did a fantastic job to boot!

Many thanks also to **Richard H., Cheryl S.,** and **Amy W.** for all their help with the October 4 Animal Blessings Service: preparing animal treat bags, handing them and bulletins out, and controlling the sound system.

Congratulations to **Rev. Victoria Snow**, who has been called to Community Congregational Church in New Port Richey, Florida and already begun her ministry there.

We are grateful to **Cheryl O.** and **Bob L.** for reconnecting our congregation to Rhodes House and planning and organizing our recent dinner and pumpkin carving event there, as well as to **Amy P.** and **Stowe Farm** for donating the pumpkins, to **Fran, Cindy N.,** and **Richard H.** for participating; and to the many people who made financial contributions to support this important ministry to women in recovery.

Congratulations to **Abbey G.** on her recent baptism. Welcome to the Body of Christ!

Many thanks to the Welcome Team—**Janice, Linda P., Cheryl S., & Cindy N.**—for preaching and sharing some of their journey with us on Welcoming Sunday, September 25.

We very much appreciate **Sukie's** efforts in organizing the recent "Pink Tea" and bringing

Kimberley Maurer from the Breast Center at Milford Regional Hospital to the church to educate us about breast cancer. We are also grateful to **Jeri, Richard H., Fran, Jenn,** and **Amy W.** for their help baking, setting up, and/or cleaning up and many thanks to **Cindy C.** for creating beautiful decorations for the tables!

We offer our prayers and support to 2016 confirmation candidates **Abby A., Abbey G., Megan P., & Laura W.,** who began class in October; as well as to mentors **Jeri, Linda P., Don S., & Kathy A.;** and to **Fran,** who is co-teaching the class with **Pastor Carol.**

We share **Marilyn's** and **Bill's** joy that daughter Robin was recently able to pay them a visit and to make it to church to see us, migraine free!

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

Mrs. Charlotte Stockwell
395 West Main Street
Millbury, MA 01527

Mr. Jay Stockwell
110 Hartness Road
Sutton, MA 01590

Mr. Jack Swedburg
58 Carleton Rd.
P.O. Box 34

West Millbury, Ma. 01527

Mrs. Thelma Swedburg
St. Camillus Nursing Home
447 Hill St.
Whitinsville, Ma. 01588

My Church Family,

The first thing I feel when I walk into our church is love. Our church and all of the people in it have meant so much to me. I am blessed to have been baptized in this church and I am so grateful for the people who spent this important day with me. I love this church and every single person in it!

God bless each and every one of you!

Love,
Abigail Graveson

Prayers & Concerns

- † Jay S. and his family
- † Joan & Hunter
- † Nicholas M.
- † Joanne
- † Julie
- † Jim P.
- † Debbie
- † Gail and her family
- † Sandra and Paul
- † Ann
- † Ronnie
- † Thelma, Jack & Family
- † Ethan and Tim
- † Jeri's & Ron's cousin Everett
- † Bob L's cousin Diane
- † Cindy C. and Linda A.
- † Jake, who's serving again in Afghanistan
- † Richard H.
- † The Ellsesser Family
- † Chris and all of Robert Rudge's family, as they grieve his loss
- † Helen Gibbons' family as they mourn her passing
- † Betty Stockwell's family and close friends grieving her loss
- † The family of Deborah McNamara, who perished in a fire at Centerview Apartments last weekend
- † First Congregational Church, Sutton
- † The Rev. Victoria Snow's father Charles
- † Anna Marie, Dirk E.'s mother
- † Cassidy's friend Anthony, who has cancer
- † Kristy and her family as she begins treatment for ovarian cancer
- † 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





2nd	Charles Adams
6th	Leah Murphy
8th	Alain Beret
9th	Oliver Bartelloni
13th	Patricia Bartelloni-Covel
13th	Stephen Beauregard
14th	Marie Rochon
15th	Kianne Enthoven
15th	Donna Wahlstrom
16th	Brian Elie
17th	Hector Diaz
17th	Jody Jerszyk
18th	Donald Rudge
20th	Jean Graves
21st	Christopher Gobron
27th	Candance Scanlon
28th	James Mousseau
29th	Phyllis Kaseta
29th	Donald Scanlon
30th	Nicholas Swanson

Pledge Drive



Our annual Stewardship season is underway! Your pledges are the most critical element to the ongoing operation of our congregation, and allow us to continue funding our mission, Christian Education, music, and other programs.

Pledge cards were mailed to all members during the week of October 18th. Please bring your completed pledge card to service when we celebrate Stewardship Sunday on November 8th, or return via mail if you will be unable to attend service on

Stewardship Sunday. Please contact Chris Gobron via email (twins927@verizon.net) or phone (508-865-5987) if you did not receive your pledge card or if you have any questions about this year's campaign.

Dear Friends...

We at First Church are Thankful that the Senior Center is again hosting our Turkey Raffle on **November 20th**. Please help show our appreciation by bringing in extra canned goods during the month of November. The food bank at the Senior Center needs to be well stocked in order to assure that those in need will have a Happy Thanksgiving.

Jeri Stead



Do you like to knit or crochet?

Are you interested in learning or refreshing some rusty skills? Our group continues to meet most Monday evenings at Cindy Bradway's home, all are welcome to participate; men and women, young and old, experienced and first-timers. If interested contact Amy West or Deanna Murray for details.



25th Annual Turkey Raffle

Will be held on November 20, 2015 at 6:30 pm at the Millbury Senior Center. Grand prizes this year will include an Ogunquit, Maine weekend Getaway, HD TV, Turkey with Food Basket, and a Case of Wine. Ticket prices are as follows: \$1.25 each or 6 for \$6.00. Tickets can be obtained from church members or contacting Jim Fairbanks or Alain Beret at 508-865-0617 or Amy West at 508-839-0652. Donations of turkeys and raffle prizes are being gathered and you can sign up to donate on the sheets located at the back of the church sanctuary. Thank you and hope to see you all there.



Summary of September Council Meeting

The Church Council met September 17th. The following summary gives a brief overview of the topics that had a new discussion, gave an update, or received a decision.

Topics discussed

- Sanctuary Sound System
The monitoring of the soundboard has improved microphone sound. However, we are still receiving complaints about the minister's lapel microphone. Carol is reaching out again to Guitar Center to see if they will help us in this area. Jenn has completed research on the Loop sound System, which can be used by people with hearing aids. The council did not have time to consider in this meeting.
- Church Activities
 - ◆ 'Fall Fun Day' at the church was suggested in last month's meeting. Ideas included: a fire pit for socializing and s'mores, pumpkin painting for kids and adults, snacks. We are still looking for someone to lead such an effort.
 - ◆ Amy West is hosting a Tastefully Simple fundraiser on Saturday at 10am.
 - ◆ Chain of Lights planning is continuing. The event is on Dec. 6th at 11am. We are selling tables to craft people and will have some food items and bake table. Ron volunteered to be in the kitchen with his food handler license.
 - ◆ Turkey Raffle planning is continuing. The event will be on Nov 20th at 6:30pm (1/2 hour earlier than in past years).

Updates

- Pastor Carol
 - ◆ Carol reported that she would be attending the Widening the Welcome conference in CT. This conference discusses how churches can become more and more accessible and welcoming to persons with disabilities, including mental health challenges.
 - ◆ Carol asked Council whether she should organize another Death and Dying workshop series in the near future. There has been an invitation to repeat it at the clubhouse at Brierly Pond. The Council enthusiastically supported the plan.
 - ◆ Carol reported that there has been a request for a bible study at the Rhodes House. The Council also supported this activity if it works out.

Decisions /Updates

- ◆ Conflict Transformation Proposal
Kelly Gallagher, Associate Minister of the Central Association, answered the questions brought up in last month's meeting. *Are we financially committing to all 8 sessions now?* Although Kelly believes the Congregation should be committed to completing the series, the congregation will only pay for the sessions we complete. *Can we have a church that has been through the program or a coach visit our church to share their experience?* Kelly can arrange this as long as we cover the travel costs.

The following motion passed with 8 in favor and 1 against. **“First Congregational will move forward with a commitment to complete this conflict transformational program with the Mass Conference's assistance at no greater than a \$1,000 cost. We will move forward at this time without waiting for the special collection from the congregation.”**

Pastor Carol and Ron will work on communicating further details to the greater congregation.

(Continued on page 6)

- Building & Grounds/Filtration/Pest Control Updates

Building & Grounds

- ◆ Thank you to Leah, Jim & Amy for painting the Sunday school stage and room floors. Jim will be painting the front door threshold of the church.
- ◆ Bluebird Guttering Company did not return our calls. Jim found another company that quoted \$240 to clean the parsonage gutters. The Council unanimously approved this cost as long as there is still funding left in the B&G budget.
- ◆ The Pastor's office desk still needs to be removed. Ron will contact the Boy Scouts to see if they are willing to take it. We still have wood from the Parsonage attic in the front yard. A person who burns wood has already taken everything he wants. Jim M suggested that we simply ask our trash company to take the rest.
- ◆ Other income opportunities were discussed. The Council did not think that there was cell tower demand in the area right now. No action taken. For solar panels, Ron has spoken to one company and they stated that as a nonprofit we would not be eligible for the rebates they give to homeowners. Ron will attend the Energy Fair at the high school and see if there are any opportunities in this area.
- ◆ Rental agreement was not discussed.
- ◆ It was noted that there any many lights out in the Sanctuary chandeliers. Jim will look into our ability to change them.
- ◆ Paul Gibree examined the front door of the parsonage and made recommendations for restoration. Fran will forward his recommendations to Jim.

Filtration

- ◆ Jim M obtained references from the Eletroflux filtration company. Only one reference responded to Jim, but gave a positive report. Jim is doing further research into lower cost options. Looking at used/older units was suggested, bearing in mind that older units might produce ozone which would make them unviable.

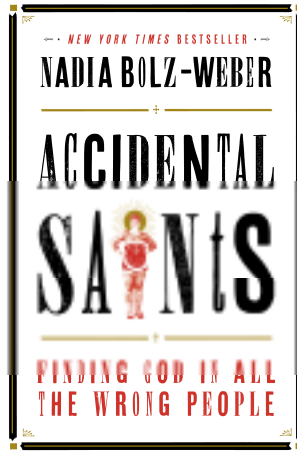
Pest control

- ◆ Another pest control company gave their proposed estimate of \$1,200. This is \$250 more than our current providers have agreed to if we place an advertisement for them in our newsletter. This item will be reviewed with next year's budget preparations. Ron has offered to help remove any large critters from the parsonage.

- Finance

- ◆ The council unanimously approved to change our workers comp policy to Hartford Insurance through the Fitts Agency. The new policy doubles our coverage for the same cost as the previous policy.
- ◆ Chris and Deb are still having problems getting signing privileges on the Blackrock account. Chris had reported that he has one more avenue to exhaust. The Council discussed the risk we are in with only Joan and Bill having signing privileges. The Council agreed that we support closing the account and opening a Fidelity account. However, we would need to discuss if membership approval is needed for such a change.
- ◆ Stewardship Campaign is tentatively scheduled to begin 10/4.
- ◆ Verizon contract has expired and we believe our discounts have expired. Linda P volunteered to call both Verizon and Charter to see if bundling our two locations with Charter would result in any savings.

New Wednesday Evening Book Discussion Group!
November 18, December 2, 9, & 16 at Millbury Public Library
6:15-7:45 pm



INSTANT NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER!

**What if that person you've been trying to avoid is your best shot at grace today?
 And what if that's the point?**

In *Accidental Saints*, Nadia Bolz-Weber invites readers into a surprising encounter with what she calls "a religious but not-so-spiritual life." Tattooed, angry and profane, this former standup comic turned pastor stubbornly, sometimes hilariously, resists the God she feels called to serve. But God keeps showing up in the least likely of people—a church-loving agnostic, a drag queen, a felonious Bishop and a gun-toting member of the NRA.

As she lives and worships alongside these "ac-cidental saints," Nadia is swept into firsthand encounters with grace—a gift that feels to her less like being wrapped in a warm blanket and more like being hit with a blunt instrument. But by this grace, people are transformed in ways they couldn't have been on their own.

In a time when many have rightly become dis-illusioned with Christianity, *Accidental Saints* demonstrates what happens when ordinary people share bread and wine, struggle with scripture together, and tell each other the truth about their real lives. This unforgettable account of their faltering steps toward wholeness will ring true for believer and skeptic alike.

Told in Nadia's trademark confessional style, *Accidental Saints* is the stunning next work from one of today's most important religious voices.

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

Available in **Hardcover** from Amazon for \$12.65 or in bookstores for \$23.00.

Also available as an **E-Book** for \$11.99.

"Compulsively readable... [Bolz-Weber's] love for God and for humankind shines through on every page."

-Publishers Weekly

"[Bolz-Weber] is one of the most important Christian voices around -- not because she has come up with some catchy, easy new way to do faith, but because when she talks about the destructive power of sin, as well as redemption and grace, she knows of what she speaks."

- Huffington Post

Association, Conference and Other Events

Annual Turkey Supper

**United Parish of Upton, 1 Church Street
Saturday, November 7th, 5:30PM**

Mark your calendars for this annual tradition! Plans are under way for a delicious turkey dinner with all the fixings! Contact Sandra at 508-529-3192 for tickets. \$10/adults & \$5/children under 10.

Bread of Life

**Edward's Church, 39 Edwards Street, Framingham
Saturday, November 14th, 8:30AM - 3:00PM**

The Mission Institute in collaboration with the Massachusetts Conference of the UCC offers Bread of Life. Building Community through Faith Based Food Programs. \$70.00 per person, \$140.00 for groups of 2-5 from the same program. Includes lunch and program fees.

Questions? Need a discounted rate? Email Liz at lmagill@eds.edu. Register at theMissionInstitute.org.

Refugee Resettlement: A Conversation and Q & A with R.I.A.C.

**United Congregational Church, 6 Institute Road, Worcester
Sunday, December 6th, 11:45AM - 1:00PM
(Light Lunch Offered)**

Please join us as we welcome Miriam Gas, Executive Director of R.I.A.C. (the Refugee and Immigrant Assistance Center) with offices in Boston, Lynn, and Worcester. Miriam brings passion, energy, and persistent enthusiasm to this most important work of resettlement. Come hear what is happening, how we can receive and support folds as they look to settle here with their families. For more information 508-752-3785, staff@ucc-worcester.org, or ucc-worcester.org.

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, constructions 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.festerling.org.

Haiti Mission Trip

April 2016

Mr. Art Sharkey and Mr. Mike Lawler of the Congregational Church of Westborough, will be returning to Haiti for their 3rd Mission Trip on April 16, 2016 thru April 23rd. They will be working with Heartline Ministries (website: <http://heartlineministries.org>). The estimated cost is \$1,800.00. 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

**First Congregational Church
of Millbury, UCC**

148 West Main Street
Millbury, MA 01527

Address Correction Requested

The Beacon

**November
2015**



Worship and Church School: 10:00 a.m.
Rev. Carol Reynolds, Pastor
Church Phone: 508-865-9737
Email: Millbury1stChurch@verizon.net
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).



2015

The Church Calendar can be viewed at millburyfirstchurch.org. To add an event, please email either Millbury1stchurch@verizon.net 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 December issue is **November 15**. 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.

