



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 30 Issue 12 • December 2018

From the Pastor

Dear Friends,

A psychologist once spent years on a research project where he asked 3,000 Americans the question, "What do you have to live for?" He was shocked to discover that 94% of the respondents were simply enduring the present while they waited for the future.

The world in which we live drives us relentlessly into the future. We often miss out on the joy of the present moment because we are constantly pushed into the future: toward the newest model and the latest upgrade. This is especially true during the weeks leading up to Christmas.

Christians know the four weeks before Christmas as the church season of Advent. Advent can offer something different from our culture's relentless push into the future. Sadly, the opportunity for Advent reflection is often lost in our pursuit of the perfect Christmas. Advent becomes merely a time of restless waiting for the "main event" of December 25.

In one of his popular songs, Tom Petty lamented, "The waiting is the hardest part." Surely children find it difficult to wait this time of year as they look forward to Christmas. The cries of our consumer culture, continuously counting the number of shopping days, urging us to buy more and more, can make it hard for young and old alike to slow down and savor the season. But Advent can be a precious time of preparation for the coming of Emmanuel: God with us. Advent can be a time for deep prayer, a time to prepare our hearts for the coming of the Christ child.

Advent is rich in possibilities for spiritual growth if we take a few moments each day to focus afresh on the wonder of Jesus' coming. When I was a child, opening the little doors of the Advent calendar helped me slow down and enjoy the anticipation of Christmas. The nativity story, as it unfolded in the calendar's images of shepherds, angels, wise men, and stars, filled me with wonder at the birth of Jesus.

Some families light candles in an Advent wreath each evening as part of a family prayer time. Another family I know has a very "hands on" tradition. Each day of Advent, they add a piece of straw to the manger in their nativity scene, to prepare a soft place for baby Jesus to rest when he is born.

These Advent activities invite us to take a moment simply to savor the approach of the Christ child: to deepen our faith and open our hearts more fully to the miracle of Christmas: that God chose to become flesh and dwell among us.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Elva





1st John O'Donnell
 3rd Delaney Bernier
 4th Nathan Minor
 6th Latitia Swanson
 9th Dirk Enthoven
 10th Bernice Pokraka
 20th Amy Peterson
 24th Karen O'Donnell
 31st Michelle Rudge

Prayers & Concerns

† Our Community
 † Our Country
 † Our World
 † All Military Men and Women
 † All First Responders
 † Those effected by the fires in California
 † Our Church and our Ministry in Millbury and beyond
 † Pastor Elva's brother Mike in California in treatment for an acoustic neuroma
 † Janice Fortin's friend, Nancy

Thank You

We would like to thank Justin Murphy for all his help in the kitchen during the Turkey Raffle. He was a big help to us!

Deanna & Michael

Thank You

Our 27th Annual Turkey Raffle was a huge success this year. We are so grateful for all the time, work and energy put forth by so many of our members and friends. Leah Murphy answered the call to be our MC this year for first time. She did an awesome job not only as MC but working with our newest volunteers, the Girl Scouts of Troop # 64669 and their leaders who meet at our church weekly. The girls were our Runners this year. They were full of energy and helped Leah keep things moving along. Deanna & Michael Murray along with help from Justin Murphy ran the Snack Bar again this year and kept us fed and hydrated throughout the evening. So many other people pitched in with the committee by selling tickets, advertising the event, calling on vendors, donating gifts, baking for the Snack Bar, organizing the gifts, setting up and cleaning up. We also want to thank everyone who attended and contributed by purchasing tickets especially all the businesses who supported us through their donations of items and gift certificates for our gift tables. Everyone who worked or contributed in any way helped us raise money for the needs of our Church, as well as allow us to continue our mission work. The total proceeds from the Event were \$5,055.00! None of this would have been possible without the generosity of Judy O'Connor and the Council on Aging who allowed us to use the Senior Center as the venue for our Turkey Raffle.

God Bless one and all,
 The Turkey Raffle Committee



Mission Corner

Just a reminder that our knitting/crocheting/loom group is in full swing as winter is upon us. We are always looking for new people to join our group. We are working on baby hats and blankets for Visitation House in Worcester and winter hats for Elmwood St. School children in need. Both Visitation House and Elmwood St. School are worthy causes and the items we make are greatly appreciated. Please join us on **Tuesday evenings** at our church **6:30pm**. We have supplies for your use. Please let me know if you are interested. Deanna Murray 508-865-6069 or murrayapplegang@aol.com.



MERRY CHRISTMAS

Young Pianists and Young Organists Classical Concert Thank You Note

“Children must receive music instruction as naturally as food, with as much pleasure as they derive from a ball game, and this must happen from the beginning of their lives.”

Leonard Bernstein



“It is the artists of the world, the feelers and the thinkers who will ultimately save us; who can articulate, educate, defy, insist, sing and shout the big dreams. Leonard Bernstein

The charismatic American composer Leonard Bernstein (hailed from Lawrence, MA) originated the Young People’s Concerts on CBS (1958-1972) with the New York Philharmonic.

Leonard Bernstein introduced an entire generation to the joys of classical music including myself and perhaps, many of you as well.

Here at First Congregational Church, UCC, Millbury, on Sunday afternoon November 18, 2018 we were awestruck by the performance level of our Third Young People’s Classical Concert participants.

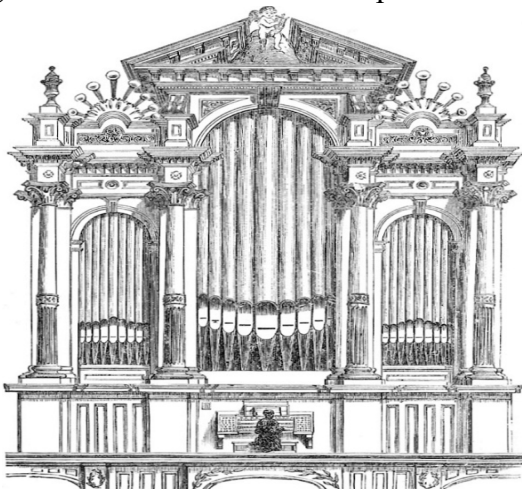
This concert featured the remarkable piano students of Olga Rogach, and one compelling organ student of William Ness. Thank you to these highly respected teachers and premier educators.

For the church members, friend and families who attended the Young Pianists & Organist Concert it was an afternoon of exquisite beauty and sheer delight. Thank you to your attentive listening to the intricacies of classical music and the chiseled craftsmanship of dedicated music students.

Hailey Meng, Isabelle Zhao, Arina Khotimsky and Clarice Wu gracefully performed a variety of musical genres including Baroque, (Bach) Romantic, (Brahms) Broadway, (Gershwin) Spirituals, (Raney) and Impressionistic Tone Painting, (Debussy).

All pianists/organist and teacher were honored at the post concert reception and were given a canister of homemade cookies in appreciation of their preparation and commitment to musical performance.

Thank you to the following members and friends of our church family for your efforts regarding publicity, moving the piano, setting up and closing up the reception, engaging in conversation with our guest musicians and their compassionate families.



Jeri and Ron Stead
Roberts Sims
Heather and Stephen Beauregard
Marie Rochon

Sue Fleming
Susan Marshall
Janice Fortin
Lydia Bove

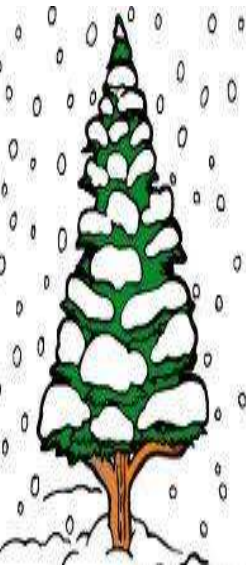
“Music, of all the arts, stands in a special region, unlit by any star but its own, and utterly without meaning. . .except its own.” Leonard Bernstein

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.

We are also working on putting the cancellation notice on WCVB TV Channel 5 and will let everyone know as soon as that is set up.



Poinsettias Order Form

Please place your order along with your payment in the Christmas Basket at the rear of the sanctuary, or mail to Deanna Murray, 14 Stowe Road, Millbury, Ma. 01527. (note that it is for poinsettia flowers)



Orders are needed by DECEMBER 16th.

Please place my order for _____ Poinsettia plant(s), at \$12.50 each, to be delivered to the First Congregational Church of Millbury and displayed at our Christmas Sunday Service on December 23rd and our Christmas Eve Service on December 24th. Please take the poinsettias you ordered after the Christmas Eve Service.

In celebration of: _____

In memory of: _____



Given by: _____

Amount Enclosed \$ _____

**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 January
newsletter is December
16th. 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.



**December
2018**