



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 31 Issue 3 • March 2019

From the Pastor

Dear Friends,

On Wednesday, March 6, the day traditionally known as Ash Wednesday, we enter the season of the church year known as Lent. The word "Lent" is derived from the Old English word *Lencten*, meaning spring, which is in turn derived from the Old High German *lenzin* or *lengizen*, which refers to the lengthening daylight of spring days. Over time, the church came to observe Lent as a time to prepare for Good Friday and Easter with reflection; a time to deepen our relationship with God, a time to grow as followers of Jesus. I offer the following prayer, by Louis Cassels, as a guide to our Lenten devotions.

A Prayer for the Beginning of Lent

At the threshold of this season of recollection and repentance, we pause, O God, to thank you:

For all the adversities of the past year

Which have crushed our prideful sense of self-sufficiency

And made us aware of our dependence on your mercy,

And on the kindness and help of others.

Because love is your synonym, Lord,

We make bold to believe you are present and involved in every loving act

By any person toward any other person at any time.

So it is fitting that we thank you

Personally

For the many loving acts performed for us by other human beings during times of need in the past year.

To our gratitude we would add

A prayer for forgiveness:

For all the things we might have done and should have done but did not do

To make ourselves open channels for your love to act in and upon a suffering world.

For kind words unsaid,

For kind deeds undone,

Good Lord, forgive us.

Strengthen us, Father in heaven, for the months ahead.

Let us not be afraid of the trials the future may bring,

Nor shrink from any of its challenges and opportunities.

Give us courage to maintain

(Continued on page 2)

At least a little bit of integrity,
To be honest at least with ourselves
In recognizing our own weakness and faults,
So that we may be a trifle more tolerant about the shortcomings of others.
Above all, Eternal Author of life, grant us,
Not by our deserving, but out of your overflowing generosity,
A sufficient sense of your reality
And the presence of your guiding and sustaining Spirit in our hearts,
That we may live through whatever the future may hold in store for us
With serenity, peace, and joy,
And with an unshakable conviction that somehow you will see to it
That everything comes out all right in the end, Amen.
May the season of Lent be rich in reflection for you, refreshing your spirit and renewing your
commitment to following Jesus.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Elva

(The poem above is taken from *A Feast for the Time of Fasting: Meditations for Lent*, by Louis Cassels. Abingdon Press, 1973, all rights reserved).

MOMENTOUS MILESTONE

It was with great pleasure that our congregation celebrated with Pastor Elva the 20 year anniversary of her ordination on February 20. We enjoyed a beautiful service and lovely music for her special day. We honored her with flowers and a cake at Fellowship for her many years of hard work and devotion.

She is a faithful leader to us and a faithful follower of Jesus. Pastor Elva's sermons are uplifting and she graciously puts a smile on our faces and joy in our hearts each week.

Congratulations to our Pastor for a momentous milestone.

With the arrival of March comes the realization that Lent, Spring and Daylight Savings Time will soon be upon us.

In a few weeks the sun will be warmer, the grass will become greener and flowers will be poking through the earth.

It is with God's everlasting love and grace that we wave goodbye to Winter and welcome the signs of Spring. Only He can show us the beauty that surrounds us. And it is up to us to watch for this beauty, and to see this beauty and especially to enjoy this beauty of nature. Praise God for He is Good.

~Anonymous



March Birthdays

1st Steven Bathgate
 4th Barbara Pearson
 7th David Perry
 10th Mary Mousseau
 12th Carolyn Ball-Hanson
 14th Warren Hanson
 15th Duane Fortin
 19th Karin Assad
 19th Bobby Beauregard
 19th Annabelle Roberts
 21st Jennifer Albert
 23rd John Pearson
 24th Susan Banach
 24th Megan Perry
 26th Kathy Adams
 26th Karen Eurenus
 26th Felicia St. George
 28th Ryan Minor
 30th Craig Dean



Inspirational Words

One song can change a moment

One idea can change a world
 One step can start a journey.
 But a prayer can change even the impossible.

There is no key to happiness
 The door is always open.

Nobody's past is too messed up for God's amazing grace.
 The smile on my face doesn't mean the world is perfect. It means I appreciate what I have and what God has blessed me with.

~Anonymous

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
 † Pastor Elva's brother Mike in California in treatment for an acoustic neuroma
 † Janice Fortin's friend, Nancy
 † Janice Fortin's friend Charlotte
 † Leah Murphy's friend Tina
 † Amy Peterson's great grandson Emmett
 † Karen Bickford's cousin Elaine



Mission Corner



Our knitting and crocheting group will meet once a month on the **third Tuesday** of the month (of course you are encouraged to work on your projects at home as well). We will meet at the church at **6:30pm**.

Sunday, March 24 "Jesus in Jeans" Sunday

"How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of hosts!" Psalm 84: 1

It's almost Spring! Time for cleaning and sprucing up! On March 24, we'll gather for a brief worship service, then roll up our sleeves and clean up around our church building. If weather permits, we may do some outside projects. Some of our projects would be: cleaning out the deacons' closet, the kitchen, the stairs to the balcony and balcony, windows and curtains in Fellowship Hall. Other projects may arise as we go!

You don't need any special training – just willing hands and a cheerful spirit. If possible, wear jeans and bring gloves and cleaning supplies. For further information, please speak to any of the Deacons or Pastor Elva.

“Growing in the Spirit” Begins with a Gathering on January 27, 2019

After worship on January 27, about twenty of us gathered in Fellowship Hall for a simple and delicious lunch of sandwiches and desserts. In groups of four or five around tables, we spoke together about how we had experienced God’s blessings and how we had learned about faith. We listened to one another’s experiences and shared our favorite hymns and Bible verses.

This gathering was the first in our “Growing in the Spirit” journey. The results of our conversations are posted on bulletin boards in Fellowship Hall. This is a work in progress. Please add blessings and faith experiences you may remember on the sheet posted by the display! Even if you weren’t present on the 27th, feel free to add your reflections and ideas.

Our next gathering will be in late March. We will again share a simple meal, but this time we will speak together more about our experiences with First Church Millbury. What has the church meant to us? How has our participation in the life of the church helped us on our faith journey?

Our hope is that these conversations, and more in the months to come, will bring us to an understanding of who we are as God’s people here at First Church, and who God is calling us to become as we move into the future.

Pastor Elva

Never regret a day in your
life.
Good days give happiness
Bad days give experience
Worst days give lessons and
Best days give memories

Come Share Sunday Services in Our Joyous Sanctuary

We are so fortunate to have our sanctuary brightly lit with new LED Dimmer Candle Bulbs.

Karen Bickford’s generous donation, in memory of her mother, made it possible for us to have our beautiful chandeliers lit in their Full Glory.



Jim Mousseau arranged to have the replacement bulbs all installed in one day!

The light of Jesus Christ has continued to shine brightly in our church for 215 years.

FILEA MARKET

April 27th
9 am to 2 pm.

Please gather your treasures and rent one of our inside tables for \$20. Call Jeri Stead to reserve a table.

Inside table set-up will be **Friday, April 26th** 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. Items for the Church Flea Market Table may be put on the stage beginning April 1st.



**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 April
newsletter is March 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.



2019