



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 9 • September 2019

From the Pastor

Dear Friends,

Even if we're no longer in school, September can usher us away from summertime relaxation to more structured activities and, sometimes, a more disciplined approach to life. One September, when I was a freshman in high school, my parents wanted to instill more discipline in my study of the piano. I had taken piano lessons since the age of six. My previous teachers had acknowledged my talent, but they did not have the experience to help me reach beyond the basics. My parents wanted to find a new piano teacher who would help me bring my piano skills to the next level of competence.

So I began to study piano with a professional musician who made time in his busy schedule for a few promising students. But I did not throw myself whole-heartedly into reaching new heights of piano performance. As a fourteen-year-old, I enjoyed hanging out with my friends and shopping. I had begun to be interested in boys and never wanted to miss a party. Practicing the piano was not at the top of my list of things to do in my free time. This had an effect on my playing, and it wasn't long before my teacher began to notice. During my lesson one day, we were sitting on the piano bench while I struggled through a piece. Suddenly he exclaimed, "If you don't practice, practice, practice, you will never know what it means to be a musician!"

What my piano teacher said was true. His statement applies to our spiritual lives as well. We will never discover how to live a meaningful spiritual life unless we practice and practice – until it goes from our thinking to the very core of our being.

A wise person once said, "It's better to act your way into a new way of thinking, than to think your way into a new way of acting." Acting our way into a new way of thinking involves practice, lots of practice. How many people who call themselves Christian today actually practice being Christian? By "being Christian," I don't mean going to church every Sunday - although it is important to worship on a regular basis – but I don't mean memorizing the Bible, or having a rigid certitude about Christian teachings.

Being a Christian means, quite simply, living by the practices Jesus taught. How many of us actually do that? How many of us practice compassion, practice trust, practice forgiveness, practice non-judgment, practice generosity, practice thankfulness, and practice joy? Living according to those ways, being shaped by those practices, is what being a Christian is about. We may not follow the practices of Christian faith perfectly. We may miss a couple of them and we might not be able to do all of them all the time. But what matters is our willingness to practice, practice, practice!

As we move into September, may we renew our commitment to practicing the ways that Jesus taught. Over time, by God's grace, may they be instilled in us: may they become not only ways of thinking, but ways of being.

Yours in Christ,

This letter was inspired by an article by Fred Plumer, executive director of The Center for Progressive Christianity in the United States.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Elva



1st Alicen Murray
 5th Amanda Bradway
 5th Ronald Rudge
 7th Deb Minor
 11th Joseph Kosiba
 11th Jay O'Connor
 11th Jay Stockwell
 13th Cheryl Ordway
 14th Jerilyn Stead
 16th Morgan Leveille
 17th Thomas Rudge
 19th Kristin Wall
 20th Maura O'Connor
 20th Georgia O'Connor
 23rd Kay Lachance
 26th Roland Lachnce
 27th Kirk Enthoven
 27th Riley Gobron
 27th Meredith Gobron
 27th Lani Riley
 27th Kristy Richards
 30th Ann Jenkel
 30th David Wall

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

Mrs. Charlotte Stockwell
Auburn Life Care
Auburn, Ma 01501

Mr. Jay Stockwell
110 Hartness Road
Sutton, MA 01590

Chris Rudge
8 Carlstrom Lane
Millbury, Ma 01527

Bill and Marilyn Crandell
Care One at Millbury
312 Millbury Ave
Millbury, Ma 01527



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
- † Karen Bickford's cousin Elaine
- † Family of Phyllis Fairbanks on Phyllis's death on July 3rd.
- † Janice Fortin's friend Charlotte, recovering well from brain surgery.
- † Amy Peterson and her family as they welcome Aria Maddison Laveille, born Monday, August 5.
- † Ron Stead's sister in law Kathie Stead

Opening and Affirming Process Continues

Our Congregation Continues the Process of Becoming an Open and Affirming Church. Open and Affirming churches welcome into their full life and ministry persons of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. Part of the process is creating a covenant which we will vote on. The covenant is below.

O & A COVENANT FOR FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF MILLBURY

We, the members of First Congregational Church of Millbury, openly affirm that all people are created in the image of God. Without exception, we welcome, celebrate, and include people of all ages, races, cultures, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, family configurations, physical, cognitive, or emotional abilities, education, spiritual and religious traditions, and those with no religious background.

All are welcome to participate fully in the life, leadership, ministry, and mission of this church, as we seek to grow together with open minds. We strive to demonstrate in all ways that "no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here."

Furthermore, we commit ourselves and our deepening faith to being an Open and Affirming congregation, and to working for the day when all people will know God's unconditional love.

Mission Corner

The Knitting and Crocheting Mission Group will be meeting on the **1st and 3rd MONDAY** of each month.

We have plenty of yarn, knitting and crochet needles available for anyone interested in learning to make hats, mittens or scarfs. Some people enjoy learning how to use a knitting loom.

Everyone is welcome to join us, bring along your own craft project if you like or join us just for some Summertime Socializing.

We meet in the Classroom or Kitchen at 6:30 pm.



Girl Scouts Receive Grant Money

Our church Girl Scout Troop 64669 was officially awarded their Grant. We enjoy watching their gardens grow on the front lawn of the church, and Shanna Gilberg and her troop will now be able to expand their project using the Grant Award. All produce goes to the Millbury Senior Center Food Bank.



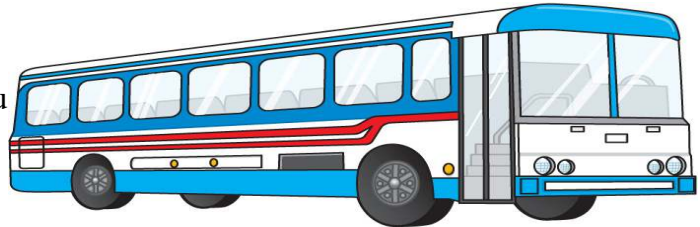
Hello ,

Congratulations on your grant. We are proud to support your work to make the world a more peaceful, just and compassionate place for all. We are excited to let you know that we just posted your grant announcement!

We promote your project to celebrate your work, to bring more attention and support to your efforts, and to help others in your community learn about our grant opportunities. You can review the post on the front page of our site, or by directly following this link:
<https://thepollinationproject.org/grants-awarded/shanna-gilberg-troop-leader-troop-64669-community-giving-garden/>

BUS TOUR DAY TRIPS

Trinity Lutheran Church of Worcester has extended an invitation to members and friends of Millbury First Congregational Church to join their Trinity Travel Club. All tours depart from Trinity Lutheran Church, Harvard Street side. A list of the trips has been posted in Fellowship Hall along with flyers for upcoming trips. Contact information for the tour guides will be on the flyers and you may speak with Janice Fortin for more information.



Fall Flea Market September 21st

Our church will be holding the Fall Flea Market on **Saturday, September 21st from 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. 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 also be a Church Flea Market Table and Bakery Table.

While gathering items for Flea Market Table, please keep in mind that we are unable to accept any T.V.'s, electronics, or clothes, and please set aside your favorite recipes for September's Bakery Table.



Summary of Church Council Meetings June 9, 2019 and August 11, 2019

On **June 9th, 2019** eight members of the council were present for the meeting, which took place after the church service. Several members of the congregation were also present.

Treasurer's report indicated that \$200.00 was used from the Deacon's Fund to help an individual in need.

Buildings and Grounds: It was noticed that the front door of the church was unlocked during the week a few times recently. The deacons lock the door at the end of each service. Pastor Elva and others who may have business in the building during the week will double check the front doors to be sure they remain locked. The Brownie Troop that meets at the church was awarded a grant for the vegetable garden they have planted on the church lawn. They would like to use it for a 3rd planting bed, and compost bin. A motion to accept these uses was made and passed. The troop leader's husband is a painter who has given a quote to paint the front of the church which needs painting. Jim Mousseau, chairman of Buildings and Grounds will also check with the company who painted it before.

Music: Joyce Carpenter-Henderson, reported there will be a piano recital of her students in the church on June 30, at 4:30 pm.

Open and Affirming Discussion: The remainder of the meeting was devoted to an open discussion of our decision to become an open and affirming church. It was 14 years ago that we voted to allow same sex marriage in our church and we believed at that time we were open and affirming. We recently realized there are a few more steps to the process. Pastor Elva explained that O&A has a specific meaning in UCC. She explained that as part of the process we would create a covenant – and a vote would be required to accept it. It would then be sent to UCC. A decal, the same size as the handicap decal, would be placed on the sign if accepted. Several members offered views during the discussion. It was decided the deacons would begin preparing a draft of the covenant and Pastor Elva indicated she would be available over the summer to speak individually with anyone who had further questions.

It was decided there would be no July Council meeting and the date for the next meeting was set as August 11, 2019.

On **August 11th**, five council members and several members of the congregation met after church in Fellowship Hall.

Treasurer: Joan Greenwood read the June and July financial reports which were accepted.

Pastor: Pastor Elva reminded everyone the next meeting in the process of becoming Open and Affirming will be held after church on August 18th.

Pastor Elva and Clerk, Karen Bickford had met earlier in the summer to update the membership list. The purpose of updating the membership list is to determine an accurate member mailing list, and number of active members for determining a quorum at a Congregational meeting. The last membership list was approved October 15, 2017. Updates to this list have been; adding 5 new members, reactivating 5 previously inactive members, removing 6 members who have transferred to other churches, and 2 members who have passed away. Also, 37 members were changed to inactive status. A motion to accept the list with corrections made during the meeting, was made and passed. There are 70 active members on the list.

Another area that Pastor Elva suggested for review was publishing summaries of the council meetings in The Beacon again. It was decided full minutes will be posted in Fellowship Hall, and a summary will be published in the Beacon. She also suggested that we need to update our Safe Church Policy, and review our bylaws to see if they need to be updated for our situation.

Pastor Elva conducted two memorial services in our sanctuary this summer. She noted that events of this nature emphasize the services our church has to offer the community. The plans for the Fireman's Service will be discussed at the next Deacon's meeting.

Jeri Stead announced we have received two thank you letters for donations made by the church.

Building and Grounds: Jim Mousseau reported that he would like to contact the Worcester County Sheriff to request having the inmates paint the front room downstairs the way they did Fellowship Hall earlier this year. He also proposed, and it was agreed that we will put off painting the front of the church until next year. We will use the same company for plowing, shoveling, sanding and salting that we used last year.

Music: Joyce Carpenter-Henderson will contact the violinist who played at a service last year to play again this year, probably on Palm Sunday. She will contact Hannah Mejaour to play at Christmas.

Other Business: Jeri Stead announced the Flea Market is 9/21/19 and donations can be brought in and placed on the stage.

The date for the next meeting was set as September 8, 2019.

Respectfully Submitted,
Karen Bickford, Clerk

28th Annual Turkey Raffle

Our Church will be holding the 28th Annual Turkey Raffle on **Friday, November 22nd at 6:30 pm**. It will take place at the Millbury Senior Center, 1 River Street in Millbury.

The Top 4 Prizes will include:

- ⇒ Grand Prize-2 Night Escape Vacation at the Grand Hotel in Ogunquit, Maine
- ⇒ 2nd Prize-50" Samsung HD TV
- ⇒ 3rd Prize-Case of Assorted Wines
- ⇒ 4th Prize- Thanksgiving Food Basket with Turkey

In addition, numerous items on display will be raffled off during the evening. Refreshments will be sold during the event, including hot dogs and other delicious surprises. Please come early and enjoy the fun on November 22nd.

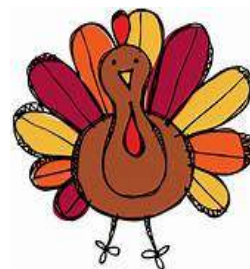
For Raffle tickets and information please contact:

Linda Polissack at 508 598 7968 or Email polissackdogranch@gmail.com or call Janice Fortin at 508 826 6381 or Email jrfortin@charter.net. Raffle tickets will be on sale at Gorette's on October 12th and November 16th.

Help on November 22nd at the Senior Center:

Raffle items need to be brought to Senior Center at 3 pm. We then need to set up tables, chairs, and organize raffle items. Later we need help with cleanup. Please contact Deanna Murray if you can help.

If you see Judy O'Connor around town, please thank her for her generous invitation to have our Turkey Raffle at the Senior Center.



**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 October
newsletter is September
15th. 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.

