



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 32 Issue 4 • April 2020

From the Pastor

Dear Friends,

As I write this, on the first day of Spring, life feels very surreal. The schools, the libraries, the theaters, and the malls are closed. College students have been sent home to continue their educations on line. One university in New York City has told students to clear everything out of their dormitory rooms so the dorms can be used for overflow hospital space.

Signs of the strange times are everywhere. This morning, when I opened my newspaper, the "Entertainment" section, usually full of ads for night clubs, plays, and movies, opened with the headline "Ten Best Shows to Binge Watch." If binge-watching is your thing, you have plenty of options.

By the time you receive this month's *Beacon*, things may be very different. We are praying that the corona virus pandemic will not be as severe as is feared, and hoping it will be over soon. But whatever the future brings, as followers of Jesus we will celebrate Easter this month. As people of faith, we will once again praise the God who brings new life out of death.

Maybe because I'm spending so much time outdoors these days, I've been thinking about gardens. Gardens play a big role in the story of our faith. God's relationship with humanity begins in a garden (Genesis 2:8). Jesus prays in a garden the night before he goes to the cross (Matthew 26:36). And, on the morning of the resurrection, Mary Magdalene encounters Jesus in a garden (John 20: 14).

In the first garden, the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve depart in tears. In the garden of Gethsemane, the disciples flee in fear. But in the garden by the empty tomb, the man Mary mistakes for the gardener tells her to go and announce that she has seen him, Jesus Christ, hale and hearty, risen from the tomb.

Emily Anderson writes, "This gardener rewrites the script... What happens in this garden redeems everything that's gone before it."* The sorrow of Adam and Eve, the shame of the disciples who abandoned their Lord, are both transformed into Easter joy.

Our Easter preparations will be different this year. Let us pray that we can still gather in our beautiful sanctuary and sing hymns of praise together. But let us also remember that wherever we are, Jesus' resurrection will raise us up, free us from fear, and turn our sorrow into joy.

Love's redeeming work is done,
Fought the fight, the battle won,
...Made like him, like him we rise,

Ours the cross, the grave, the skies! Alleluia!
(Charles Wesley)

In Christ,
Pastor Elva

The Upper Room Disciplines, 2017, p. 134

Easter Lilies

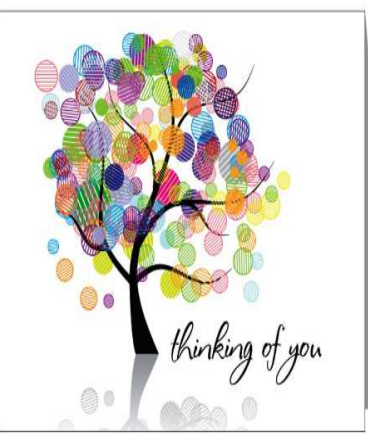
"As the Beacon goes to press, it looks as if we won't be having a service in the sanctuary on Easter. If you have paid for a lily for Easter, your payment will be refunded."



BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH

5th Karen Kosiba
 5th Donald Orrell
 6th Sandye Hermans
 8th David Sauer
 9th Julia Fortin
 11th Abigail Assad
 11th Ryan O'Donnell
 16th Dylan Enthoven
 16th Donald Enthoven
 21st Paul Fortin
 28th Donna Elie
 28th Susan Witter

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



thinking of you


Mr. Jay Stockwell
 110 Hartness Road
 Sutton, MA 01590

Chris Rudge
 8 Carlstrom Lane
 Millbury, Ma 01527

Bill 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
- † Ron Stead's sister in law
Kathie Stead
- † Audrey Rossow's friend
Michael Luchini



*In Our Thoughts
& Prayers*

Graces Garments

Please remember Graces Garments if you have any gently used clothes, coats, boots and shoes that you no longer wear. They are always in need of clothes especially with the change of seasons. Graces Garments greatly appreciates all donations.



DONATE

Cancellation of Services

Acting on the recommendation of our government officials, in a continuing effort to slow the spread of the corona virus, we will not be holding the Maundy Thursday service of Tenebrae or any services of worship, including Easter Sunday, during April.

Pray for those who are sick, for their families and all who care for them, and pray that it won't be too much longer before we can praise God together in our sanctuary again.

- Pastor Elva



2 Thessalonians 3:16 (NIV)

¹⁶ Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you.

Beware of Scammers Pretending to Be Clergy

In this information age, there's nothing new about scamming through digital communication. But in the last few months, email and text scams have targeted church members using personal information.

A couple of months ago, two of our church members received text messages, using their names, apparently from me, asking them to buy gift cards. Fortunately both members were paying attention and noticed something odd. The writer of the text signed off as "Rev. Elva," while you folks call me Pastor Elva. They contacted me and I confirmed their suspicion that the request was not from me.

But, in another case, one member of a UCC church in Connecticut received an email asking him to purchase two \$200 eBay gift cards. The email used a name different from the way the pastor signs his correspondence, but the member didn't notice this discrepancy. The email expressed an urgent need. The member purchased the gift cards and was asked to reveal the code on the cards, so the cards could be used for a "charitable" – fake – purpose. Unfortunately, it wasn't until later that the member realized something was wrong and contacted the pastor. The \$400 had been handed over to the scammer.

Experts in cyber security have a name for this scamming: they call it "spear phishing." I've been told that if I drive around with the Wi-Fi in my cell phone turned on, someone can access contacts (people whose phone numbers I have) from my phone. That's apparently what happened in the case of the requests our members received. Somebody got their phone numbers from my contact list.

So please be cautious about responding to requests for financial assistance through digital means. When in doubt, check it out. If you receive a text with a request apparently from me, don't respond to that number. Call me using the old fashioned technology of the land line. Same thing if you get an email that seems odd. If you get a link in an email that looks like it's from a well-known company, do not click on the link. Instead, go directly to the company's website. And never send personal or financial information by replying to a text or an email from an unknown source.

Ever since Laban tricked Jacob into marrying his elder daughter Leah instead of his daughter Rachel, whom Jacob loved, (Genesis 29: 15 – 25) - and even before that - people have been tricking each other. Please be vigilant about scams that may look authentic, and check them out.

Pastor Elva

Flea Market

**has been cancelled for
this spring**

SAVE THE DATE

Sue Dion will return on Saturday, May 16, at 1:00PM for an afternoon Acrylic Painting Class.

Please watch for more information in your local newspapers, Facebook and the church website.



**First Congregational Church
of Millbury, UCC**
148 West Main Street
Millbury, MA 01527

Address Correction Requested

The Beacon

**April
2020**



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 May
April 19th. 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.

