



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 33 Issue 1 • January 2021

Dear Friends,

As I sit down to write this in mid-December, I've just concluded a FaceTime visit with a church member who lives in a long term care facility. The visit lifted his spirits as it did mine. Once again I reflected on the way technology has become an essential way to connect with one another during this pandemic. The words of Ecclesiastes remind us that there is "a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing" (Ecclesiastes 3: 5b), and these past ten months have been a time to refrain from embracing, to keep each other safe.

As a new year begins, we have reasons to hope that before too long we will return to a time when it's OK to embrace. I look forward to hugs with my kids and grandkids, in person visits with folks in nursing homes, and worshiping with more of you in person once again. For now, though, I want to acknowledge with gratitude the ways it's been possible for us to stay in touch, virtually, through Face Time, Zoom, and YouTube, and Facebook. I'm grateful that I was able to reflect with some of you on Zoom as we journeyed together through Advent. I'm grateful that I've been able to share scripture and sermons on our YouTube channel, for those who want to wait before they return to in person worship. I'm grateful to those with more tech skills than I for their help putting news of our church on Facebook. And I'm grateful that the Deacons and I have been able to meet on Zoom to make decisions about our church's spiritual life.

I would probably not have said this a year ago, but I have felt the presence of God's Spirit in our Zoom conversations. I have sensed the Spirit at work in us, as we looked at one another's faces and listened to one another's voices. On a personal note, when my family and I gathered on Zoom for a service of remembrance for my sister-in-law, I felt powerfully the comforting touch of God's love. As the apostle Paul says, nothing "will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8 : 39). I am convinced that God's love can reach us through electronic media.

Zoom, FaceTime, and YouTube will never be as good as being together in person. But during this challenging time, when staying apart is the best way to keep one another safe from a deadly virus, they have been a gift.

Wishing you all many blessings in the New Year.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Elva



9th Deanna Murray
 13th Adam Majaour
 13th Paul Hedlund
 15th Franis Assad
 17th Audrey Rossow
 17th Matthew Murray
 24th Jake Leveille
 27th William Crandell

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. Cancellation notice will be posted on WCVB TV Channel 5.



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

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

Kathleen (Chase) Rozenas
 102 Hayden Pond Road
 Dudley, MA 01571



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
- † Roberta, Sue Witter's sister in law.
- † Pastor Elva's son
- † Health care workers and essential workers, providing care and support for those with COVID 19.
- † Christine Hamer's brother Bill, in a long term care facility in Pennsylvania



CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

During the month of October 2020, Pastor Elva performed a Baptism of 3 young brothers.

Michael and Kelli Hicks had their three sons Michael, 6, Jordan, 3, and Ryan, 1, baptized. Kelli is the Granddaughter of church member Phyllis Kasetta.

The boys were presented with Children's Bibles by Deacon Karen Bickford on behalf of the Church Family. We wish the family, who lives all Barre, all the best as boys begin their journey of faith as followers of Jesus.



WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENT

Shayna Grenier and Jude Gauvin were married on October 17, 2020 in a ceremony conducted by Pastor Elva. We celebrate their marriage and wish them God's richest blessings.



January Sock Drive

We will once again be doing our Sock Drive to support Worcester Fellowship in their ministry with people experiencing homelessness. Please bring new white socks, mostly cotton, to church any Sunday in January. It is hard to find 100% cotton socks, but if they're mostly cotton they'll be fine. The socks will be delivered to Worcester Fellowship in early February.



Pastor Elva

Thank You

Thank you to everyone for making this year's White Gift Service a success. We provided 4 children with gifts for them to have a very merry Christmas!

Elmwood St School staff sends their thanks to us for continuing this tradition. They are so appreciative of our efforts. My Mom, Amy Peterson, and I also provided 20 crocheted children's hats for those in need.

Thank you also to everyone who provided a Gorette's gift for our seniors in need- the Senior Center is always appreciative of the cards.

Deanna Murray

A Note of Gratitude from Open Sky

Our church recently made a donation of \$100 to Open Sky, an organization serving people in need in the Worcester area. Before the coronavirus pandemic, Open Sky also provided cleaning services to our church. We received this thank you note for our donation:

“Thank you for responding to our call for support for families experiencing homelessness. Facing homelessness is always a frightening prospect. But during a global pandemic those fears are magnified. Fortunately, Open Sky’s homelessness services staff have shown that they are up to the challenge. They’ve already found housing for more than 100 families and individuals this year and made sure that hundreds of others had the support they need to stay in their homes. The success of our staff is made possible by community support from people like you. We thank you for caring.”

Work is Progressing on Our Column Repair

It's exciting to see how the restoration is done! After these photos were taken, the mahogany staves (visible in the foreground) were placed around the column. It looks great! Painting may have to wait till warmer weather.



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

Address Correction Requested

The Beacon
January



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.

January

The Beacon

Deadline for February
newsletter is
January 17. 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.



2021