



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 9 • September 2021

Dear Friends,

When it comes to asking people to help with church projects, I often say, "Labor for the Lord. The pay isn't much, but the benefits are out of this world."

The benefits of serving God and the church are great, but much of the Christian life is difficult. Jesus calls us to love everyone, including our enemies. Loving our enemies is hard, but that's what it means to follow Jesus. Spiritual Director Mark Yaconelli writes, "The Christian path is a commitment to practicing the art of love, learning the dimensions and character of love – its boundless depth, its endless horizon. On the Christian path we are learning to let go of our expectations – expectations of ourselves, of God, of others. We are learning to be...open, helpless, uncertain, so we might be available to God's hidden, humble work."

Yaconelli once accepted a volunteer job designing a worship service that would attract students from the college located just across the street from his church. He took on the position with great hopes. Over the next few months, Yaconelli bought hundreds of candles, collected baskets of river stones, designed and printed song sheets. He recruited and trained a trio of local musicians, and found three elderly church members to prepare a simple meal to serve the students after the service. He put ads in the college newspaper, met with the college chaplain and student groups, emphasizing that the service would provide free dinner and comfort for stressed-out students.

The night before the service, Yaconelli couldn't sleep. As the time for the service approached, he set out fresh flowers, lit candles, and prayed for God's help. He remembers standing at the open door of the church. "I saw a group of 15 students walk across the street from the university. I smiled with warmth and gratitude as they stepped onto the sidewalk in front of the church. They looked at me, a young woman waved, and then they turned and walked to the nearby grocery store." At five past the designated time for the service to begin, the only people in the sanctuary were the three musicians and the women who fixed the evening meal. Not a single student attended.

Yaconelli led the weekly college prayer service for nine months. Not a single college student ever attended. He continued to visit the campus, post flyers, and meet student groups, but not one student ever crossed the street. After nine months he resigned his position, feeling like a failure.

One month after that, one of the musicians from the service, the pianist, asked to meet with him. She shared her story with him: a story of heartbreaking abuse, betrayal, and sorrow. She told him, "I don't know anything about religion. I don't know anything about God, but I heard you were quitting the prayer service and I wanted to thank you for what you've done because it's the only thing I've looked forward to each week. I want to become a Christian, even though I don't know what that means." The young woman now leads the music for the Sunday morning service.

As we go about our ministry, it is good to remember that the Christian path means letting go of our own expectations: of ourselves, of God, of others. It's good to remember that God may be working in small ways we're not aware of. When we follow Jesus, we open ourselves to the mysterious purposes of love. Those purposes are often humble and even hidden from us. We may not see the fruits of our labors in our lifetime. But we move into the future in hope and trust that God's Holy Spirit is quietly guiding us toward the endless horizon of love.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Elva

(Taken from Mark Yaconelli, "Failure to Launch," Christian Century, August 3, 2016, pp. 26 – 29)



September

1 st	Alicen Murray
5 th	Amanda Bradway
11 th	Joseph Kosinski
11 th	Jay Stockwell
14 th	Jerilyn Stead
16 th	Morgan Leveille
20 th	Maura O'Connor
20 th	Georgia O'Connor
23 rd	Kay Lachance
27 th	Dirk Enthoven
27 th	Kristy Richards

Deacons Fund

On Communion Sunday at First Church, the first Sunday of the month, the Deacons take a special offering for the Deacons Fund, which is a fund to provide assistance to members in need. Envelopes marked DEACONS FUND are in your bulletin. Donations may also be made using the envelope any other Sunday.

Thank you for your generosity.

**Holy Spirit, think through me
till your ideas are my ideas.**

~Amy Carmichael
The Newsletter Newsletter 6/2001

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

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

Beverly Stockwell
8 Colonial Drive Apt C
Millbury, MA 01527

Mrs. Kay Lachance
32 Davis Rd.
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
- † All who are suffering from COVID 19 and their families
- † 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
- † Elizabeth Armstrong, Pastor Elva's sister in law, in treatment for multiple myeloma.

Rhodes to Recovery Requests Donations of Bedding and Toiletries

Just a few doors down from the church is Rhodes to Recovery, a residential treatment program for women in recovery. Here is how they describe their mission:

"Rhodes to Recovery is a 4 to 6 month program for women struggling with substance use. We offer our participants a safe haven while they regain their footing and access necessary resources. We help them develop healthy coping skills, and attain employment and housing."

Rhodes to Recovery is reaching out to local churches with a request for donations of:

- ⇒ Pillows (new)
- ⇒ Bedding (used is OK)
- ⇒ Bathmats and towels (used is OK)
- ⇒ Shower Caddies
- ⇒ Laundry Baskets
- ⇒ Women's Sanitary Products
- ⇒ Laundry soap
- ⇒ Women's personal care products

During the next couple of months, you are asked to bring donations of these items to church and place in the designated container. For further information, please speak to Pastor Elva.

Fall Flea Market September 11th

Our Church is sponsoring the Annual Flea Market on Saturday September 11, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Anyone wishing to reserve table space, please call Jeri Stead (508-865-5371). The \$25 inside area consists of a large supper table, plus a card table. An outside 10 foot plot reservation is \$20 and you will need to provide your own table.



“The Kitchen” will be serving coffee and muffins, and at lunch time, Ron’s hot dogs will be served. There will also be a “Bakery Table”, (please gather your favorite recipes) and a “Church Flea Market Table”. You can begin putting items on the stage after August 29th.

Annual Turkey Raffle

Our Church will be holding the Annual Turkey Raffle on **Friday, November 19th 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-Escape Vacation, location of your choice. Gift Value: \$500.
- ⇒ 2nd Prize-” 50 inch Toshiba Smart 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.

Please ask the stores and restaurants that you visit to please donate a gift certificate to be raffled off at our Turkey Raffle.

There will be a signup sheet for raffle donations and Turkey donations on the back table at church. Thank you for helping to make this a successful event.

Refreshments will be sold during the evening, including hot dogs and other delicious surprises. Please come early and enjoy the fun on November 19th.

For Raffle tickets and information please contact:

Linda Polissack at 508-598-7968 for books of Raffle Tickets to sell. Raffle tickets will be on sale at Goretta’s on October 26th, October 30th, and Nov. 2nd.



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

Address Correction Requested

The Beacon

September



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 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.



2021