



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 12 • December 2021

Dear Friends,

One song we hear a lot this time of year is “The Twelve Days of Christmas.” Although people often think the twelve days of Christmas are the days leading up to the holiday, they are actually the days of Christmastide: the twelve days beginning December 25th and ending on January 6, Epiphany. On Epiphany we celebrate the coming of the Wise Men, or Magi, and the revelation of Christ as the light of the world.

There are different theories about the origins of “The Twelve Days of Christmas” carol. The words certainly provoke questions, like who are those six geese a-laying and ten lords a-leaping? And what about those five golden rings? And why the need for those symbols anyway? It seems that no one has come up with a completely historically accurate analysis, but this fall I found an article in a church newsletter* that help me make sense of it.

In England, from 1558 until 1829, there was a lot of religious turmoil among the Catholics, the Protestants, and the more rigorous Puritans. People in England were not allowed to celebrate the religious aspects of Christmas openly. That was partly because the holiday was associated with drinking and carousing. Also, the Puritans knew that the date of December 25, close to the Winter Solstice, was associated with pagan celebrations. They wanted to eliminate any connection between Christian worship and pagan rites.

So this carol emerged as a secret way to educate Christians about the basics of the faith. It could be sung in public without fear of persecution. Each element has a double meaning: the surface meaning, and the hidden meaning known only to members of the church. Each element is a kind of code word for believers.

1. The partridge in a pear tree is Jesus Christ. The pear tree is a possible reference to the cross.
2. The two turtledoves are the Old and New Testaments.
3. The three French hens stand for faith, hope, and love (I Corinthians 13: 13).
4. The four calling birds are the four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John).
5. The five golden rings are the first five books of the Hebrew Scriptures, sometimes called the Torah: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.
6. The six geese a-laying stand for the six days of creation (Genesis 1).
7. The seven swans a-swimming represent the seven gifts of the Spirit (I Corinthians 12: 8 – 10).
8. The eight maids a-milking are the eight beatitudes (Matthew 5: 3 – 10).
9. The nine ladies dancing are the nine fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22).
10. The ten lords a-leaping are the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20).
11. The eleven pipers piping are the eleven faithful disciples (Mark 3: 16 – 18).
12. The twelve drummers drumming symbolize the twelve points of belief in the Apostles Creed. You'll find the Apostles' Creed in another spot in this newsletter.

So that's one version of the meaning hidden in this favorite Christmas carol. I hope it adds to your appreciation of the Christmas season. I know that it adds to my gratitude that we don't have to hide our joy at the birth of Jesus by singing carols with hidden meanings. We can sing loud and clear,

Joy to the world! The Lord is come.
Let earth receive her King,
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heaven and nature sing!

Isaac Watts

Wishing you God's blessings at Christmas,

Pastor Elva

*"Pilgrim's Progress," Pilgrim Congregational Church UCC, Duxbury, MA



BIRTHDAYS

- 3rd Kathy (Chase) Rozenas
- 9th Dirk Enthoven
- 20th Amy Peterson
- 24th Karen O'Donnell

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.

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

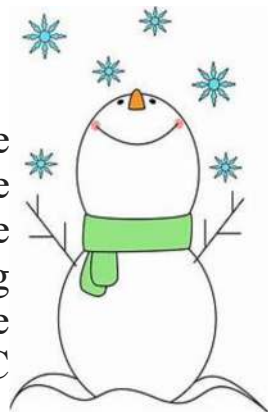


Prayers & Concerns

- † 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.
- † We celebrate with Don and Jean Orrell their new baby great-grandson, Tristan Cledanord Benjamin Pierre, adopted by Jessica and Schlegel Pierre in August, and pray God's blessing on this new family.

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 and will be posted on Channel 5 (ABC WCVB-TV).





White Gift Service on December 12th

This Advent, as we celebrate the coming of God's love into the world, our Church will be providing gifts for children at Elmwood St. School who are in need. We will also be providing Goretto gift cards to the Millbury Senior Center for those in need that visit the center. The children's wishes will be listed on tags and there will be tags for Goretto gift cards hanging on the Christmas Tree at the back of the sanctuary. Please choose a tag for a gift you would like to provide, wrap in white tissue paper, and write the child's number on gift. Attach the tag and bring to it to the White Gift service. Deanna will deliver all gifts to Elmwood St School. There will be a basket for the Goretto gift cards and Jeri will deliver those to the senior center. Thank you in advance for your continued support and generosity of the white gift service.

Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
Was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
And is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
The holy catholic church,
The communion of saints,
The forgiveness of sins,
The resurrection of the body,
And the life everlasting, Amen.

We Are Thankful

Our Turkey Raffle was a **Great Success** and we are **thankful** for that. So many wonderful people pitched in to help us out. When you visit the Senior Center please thank the Director for inviting us back . The Center is a perfect location for our event and the people of Millbury feel so welcome there.

We are fortunate to have wonderful news outlets to spread the details of our event, especially the Millbury Sutton Chronicle. They repeated our advertisement week after week throughout the town.

We are grateful to our church members, friends, and businesses for providing a wonderful array of raffle items that were organized in an inviting way. It was so kind of Goretto's Market to allow our ticket sellers to set up tables to sell tickets during the weeks prior to the Raffle. We thank those who helped us set up and clean up after the event.

We are especially thankful to those who attended the Turkey Raffle and are so grateful to the Girl Scouts in Troup 64669 who were our Runners again this year. They were full of energy and helped Leah Murphy, our great MC, move things along. Deanna & Michael Murray, along with the help of Justin Murphy ran the Snack Bar and kept us fed and hydrated throughout the evening.

Everyone who worked or contributed in any way helped us raise funds for the needs of our church, as well as to allow us to continue our mission work. The total proceeds from the event were \$ 5826! Thank you one and all!

Merry Christmas



*Jesus is The
Reason for The Season*

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

Address Correction Requested

The Beacon

December



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 January
newsletter is December
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.



DECEMBER 2021