



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 34 Issue 4 • April 2022

Dear Friends,

“Thine is the glory; risen, conquering Son! Endless is the victory thou o’er death hast won!”

A favorite Easter hymn begins with these words. It is set to Handel’s beautiful music and it celebrates God’s triumph over death in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. I love to sing this hymn every Easter as I thank God for Jesus’ resurrection.

What does the resurrection mean to you? What do you believe about that first Easter? Do you believe it happened, just as the gospels describe it? Was Jesus raised, bodily, from the grave?

When I was a little girl, I believed the Easter story just as it’s written: that Jesus rose from the dead. A miracle, pure and simple. But as I got older, I began to wrestle with questions. Did the resurrection happen literally, as the gospels describe?

Any scientifically minded person would say that was impossible. Jesus’ reappearance after death could be explained, of course, if he had been in a coma and was revived. Some have suggested that possibility. Others have suggested that his disciples stole his body and made the whole thing up.

Christian people have wrestled with questions about the resurrection for hundreds of years. I was no exception. But in all my wrestling and questioning, I kept coming back to a fact: the existence of the church. I couldn’t get around the fact that Jesus’ followers were so inspired by what they saw after the resurrection that they persisted in their faith. They faced tremendous obstacles: persecution and death, but they were on fire with what they had seen: the risen Christ. They inspired thousands of others. The church grew and spread the good news of God’s victory over death all over the world.

When you take a closer look at the story, the idea that Jesus was never really dead doesn’t make much sense. Roman soldiers knew how to put people to death. They knew when someone was dead and when they weren’t. And think about Jesus’ followers. They were willing to give their lives to share the news of his resurrection. Would they be willing to die for a false claim?

Of course the early church believed that he did die. But the fact that dead people do not usually rise after death was not an obstacle to early Christian belief; it was part of that belief. The disciples and those who followed them were just as astounded and scared as you or I would be.

The post-resurrection appearances of Jesus were not appearances of a revived person, or a resuscitated corpse. They were appearances of a person alive in a whole new way. Jesus’ post-resurrection appearances were something never before encountered: a whole new way of living. The Jesus who appeared to the disciples after the resurrection was not a ghost or a walking corpse, but a whole new kind of person: Jesus: miraculously, marvelously new.

We know from the gospels that the disciples also had their doubts at the beginning. John tells us of Thomas’ doubts (John 20: 24 – 29). But Jesus spoke to their doubts and allayed their fears. They became convinced that in him God had triumphed over death and opened the way to new and everlasting life.

Why would the disciples assert something had happened that none of them had expected, which went against everything they knew about how the world worked? Why did they almost immediately start worshiping him? Why were they willing to die for him? In other words, how do we explain the existence of the church, unless Jesus was really resurrected? I don’t know how you do, but I can’t.

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This is not a scientifically reasoned argument. It is an argument from history, which has different standards of proof. I invite you to consider it, if the miracle of Easter has ever been a puzzle to you. I invite you to enter into the wonder and astonishment that the disciples felt when the women brought them the news of the empty tomb that morning. (Luke 24: 8 & 9). I invite you to celebrate Easter with all the joy that took hold of them when they encountered someone they never in their wildest dreams expected to see: the risen Christ.

Easter blessings to you all,
Pastor Elva

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**

**Beverly Stockwell
8 Colonial Drive Apt C
Millbury, MA 01527**

**Mrs. Kay Lachance
32 Davis Rd.
Millbury, MA 01527**

**Eva Aubin
113 A.F Putnam Rd.
Charlton, MA 01507**

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
- † 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.

Happy Birthday



- 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

**Service of Tenebrae,
Maundy Thursday, April 14, 7:30 PM.**

With our friends from Millbury Federated, we will gather at First Church to remember Jesus' sacrifice of love. We will hear the story of Jesus' passion, extinguishing candles to mark each stage of his journey to the cross. We will also remember him in a service of Holy Communion. This somber, dramatic service will deepen your enjoyment of Easter. Please join us. The service begins at 7:30

Thank You Note

On February 14, church member Kathleen Chase Rozenas was called home to God. We will miss Kathleen and keep her family in our prayers as they mourn this loss. As the Deacons do with other church folks who can no longer come out to services, they sent her cards at the holidays. Shortly before she died, Kathleen sent the following note to the church:

Dear Parishioners of the First Congregational Church of Millbury,

A very big thank you for all the wonderful inspiring cards you sent all year. Many people signed their names which made it so special. I thank you so much again for being so kind, and with God's love.

Truly,
Kathleen Rozenas

THANK YOU

The members of the Millbury First Congregational Church honored Joan Greenwood for her many years of service as our church treasurer. She also was in charge of numerous fund raisers including church suppers, the Annual Turkey Raffle, Church Fairs, and the Redecoration of the Church Parsonage. Jeri Stead presented her with a framed copy of a cartoon by Al Banx that was printed in the Telegram and Gazette. It depicts Joan installing wall paper in the parsonage upside down so that Pineapples looked like Octopuses! We are all so fortunate to have such a devoted member and friend to all of us at First Church.



FLEA MARKET

Our church will be holding A Spring Flea Market on **Saturday, April 23rd from 9 am to 2 pm.**

Please gather your treasures and rent one of our inside tables for \$25. Call Jeri Stead (508~865~5371) to reserve a table. You can prepare your inside table on Friday night from 6 pm to 8 pm. If you want to chance the weather, the outside reservation is \$15 and you will need to provide a table.

Refreshments will be on sale for you to enjoy. We will have a variety of wrapped snacks 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. If you have any questions about donating items, please contact Jim Mousseau. (508~865~8871). Donations for the Church Flea Market Table can be placed on the stage beginning April 1st.

Please set aside your favorite recipes. Janice Fortin and Linda Polissack will be giving you a call to ask for donations to the April Bakery Table.

Thank you so much for all your help.

YOGA CLASS



Starting on **Monday, April 4th, 6:30pm – 7:30pm**

Drop-in fee of \$8.00, \$5.00 for Seniors **No Registration Required**

Class is structured to make you feel revitalized in body and mind accessible to ALL Levels of fitness.

WHERE: First Congregational Church, 148 West Main St, Millbury, MA

Class will run every Monday, April 4th to May 23rd, 2022

Taught by Carol Dearborn Certified 200hr Yoga Instructor, Group Exercise and Pilates Instructor

For more information 508-756-5478

***** WONDERFUL WAY TO START YOUR WEEK- BREATH, STRETCH, AND RELAX*****



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

Address Correction Requested

The Beacon

April



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.

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Deadline for May newsletter
is April 17th. 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.

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