

THE SPIRE



APRIL 2020



Church of Christ, Congregational, UCC
142 Exchange St., Millis, MA 02054
www.millisucc.org (508) 376-5034

An Open and Affirming Congregation

Church of Christ Vision Statement:
Worship God, serve our neighbors, share God's love.

FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Friends,

I don't even know what to write in this newsletter article. In another time, I would be writing to you about my love for the church and the plans in motion regarding my departure as your pastor. In another time, I would be talking about all of the amazing things we've accomplished and experienced together at the Church of Christ, Congregational. In another time, I would be promoting the Easter services and all of the fun we'll have at the church.

But this isn't another time - this is April 2020 and this is real and this is hard.

Covid-19 has changed us. It has changed how we communicate. It has changed how we worship together. It has changed all of the plans we made. There are things that it *hasn't* changed. We are still the Church of Christ, Congregational UCC in Millis. We are still a community that cares and supports one another. We are still held in God's eternal love.

I am profoundly thankful for the support of the leadership of the church, the deacons and all of the committee members. This is a wonderful and committed group who cares deeply about the church and its people. As you read this issue of the Spire, you will see how the leaders are setting things in motion for the arrival of an interim pastor when I leave next month. Since we are all unclear about when the stay-at-home order will be lifted, we need to be flexible and fluid with the dates and activities planned around my leaving. Rest assured, you are in good and capable hands with Gail Luck, Wendy Schneider and Sue Conte.

As we read this from our various locations - remember that church has NEVER been the building. Church is the gathered people of God. We, who follow the path of Jesus Christ, are the church. As the song says;

*I am the church, you are the church.
We are the church together.
All who follow Jesus, all around the world.
Yes, we're the church together.*

With you on the journey,
Rev. Jen

You Are Not Alone!

If you need anything, contact the church:

Phone: (508) 376-5034

Email: millisucc@msn.com

We are updating our information frequently on our website & social media:

Website: www.millisucc.org

Facebook: [@MillisUCCChurch](https://www.facebook.com/MillisUCCChurch)

Twitter: [@millisucc](https://twitter.com/millisucc)

Join Us on Facebook for Livestreaming Services:

You don't need a Facebook account to participate. Just click this link:
<https://www.facebook.com/MillisUCCChurch/>

Virtual Worship Services
on Sunday Mornings at 10:00am

Church Check-Ins
on Tuesday and Thursdays at 7:00pm

PALM SUNDAY & COMMUNION

Sunday, April 5 at 10:00am
[Click here](#) for a copy of the liturgy.

MAUNDY THURSDAY – April 9

EASTER SUNDAY – April 12

Details of these virtual services are being finalized. Visit www.millisucc.org for updates.

A Message from the Moderator

What a difference a month makes! Within a span of a few weeks, our church received the resignation of our long standing and much loved pastor, and the suspension of church activities due to COVID-19. I wanted to write to you all to let you know your church leadership is actively working both situations and has things under control given the unusual situation we all are in.

As it relates to the resignation of Rev Jen, I know all of us are sad to see her go. She has done so much for our church over her twelve years here as pastor, and has helped strengthen the community and family spirit our church has. While it would be nice to be selfish and to keep her to ourselves, Rev Jen has a gift that needs to be shared with other churches, and God has called her to help the Congregational Church of Littleton, MA. The deacons have been working with the Southern New England UCC leadership (SNEUCC) to help us find an interim minister that will help us along the journey of finding our new pastor. This is a process that may take 12-18 months, as it is very important we find the right pastor that will fit our church and our mission. You will see more about that in the Deacon's update in this issue of the Spire. One of things we have been planning, but has not been resolved, is our goodbye to Rev Jen. Due to COVID-19, we are not exactly sure of when it will be, but I promise you we will have one.

Now with the craziness that is COVID-19. While it may seem scary, the limitations the state and the government have put on us is really the correct thing to do, and we took the recommendations of the SNEUCC leadership and have suspended all activities until May 4th. Given the daily briefings we have been getting, it is likely this suspension will be expanded. The church council is meeting weekly during this time to make sure the church continues to function. We have encountered challenges with the loss of weekly offerings, and with our investments taking a hit. We would like to ask all our members to send in their offering either via mail or online banking during this time if you aren't already doing it. Rev Jen has been doing Facebook live streaming of sermons on Sunday, and check ins on Tuesday and Thursday nights. She has also been making sure people are being contacted. We are planning some creative ways to celebrate Holy Week and Easter services since we cannot be together in person.

One final note. As a member of this church for all of my life, the one constant I have seen with our church is the people and the love we have for one another. We can power through this because we stand as one. This also means that we look out for each other. Given the circumstances of companies shutting down or slowing down, if you are in a need for assistance, do not hesitate to reach out to Rev Jen. The Deacon's fund is separate from our budget, and we use this for this type of need. Please don't be afraid to ask.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to reach out to either Rev Jen, the Deacons, or myself. Take care and stay healthy and safe until we see each other again!

Gail Luck, Moderator

Deacons Update on Interim Pastor Search

The Deacons met on March 15 via video conferencing with Wendy Vander Hart, Associate Conference Minister for the SNEUCC. The purpose of the meeting was to walk us through the process for both Interim Pastor and Settled Pastor search. It was decided for this search the team would be the Deacons, Moderator and a representative from the Christian Education (CE) committee.

The first step is to complete an Interim Church Profile. This has been completed by the Deacons and sent to the SNEUCC. Next the conference will send profiles of Interim Pastors they feel would be a good fit and the search team will review and interview the candidates. This process generally takes 2-4 months.

Once the Interim Pastor is in place the work for a settled pastor begins. The Interim pastor will assist the church to develop a new Church Profile and in organizing the search. The Associate Conference Minister will provide guidance throughout the process. The time frame for a new pastor to arrive is generally 12-18 months.

Following the Interim Pastor selection, we will be seeking volunteers to be on both the development of the church profile and also the search/transition team. Obviously due to our small congregation there will most likely be overlap on these committees.

If you think you would like to serve on either committee or want more information feel free to leave a message at the church office for either one of the Co Lead Deacons - Wendy Schneider or Sue Conte.

Visitors' Group Update

The Visitors' Group will not be meeting until further notice. We hope that everyone is safe and doing well. Please let us know if there is any way that we can help you. Leave a message on the church phone: (508) 376-5034 or email: millisucc@msn.com and we will get back to you.

*"I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go...
I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."
~Genesis 28: 15 NIV*

"Uncertainties can be frightening, but these reassuring words show that God will be with you wherever you go or in whatever situations you find yourself. You are never alone. He will always see you through."
~Norman Vincent Peale



The Visitors:

Judie Ackerman, Ellie Costa, Ginny Demery, Pam Johansson,
Linda Jones, Judy Kosinski, Shirley Rowley, Pat Spearing, Kathy Stevens, Rev. Jen.



Furnishing hope with every stride.

The Church of Christ has helped support the New Life Furniture Bank for a number of years, through both volunteer and financial donations.

The church is a sponsor for this year's 5K Trail Run, which will be a "virtual" event this year, between May 2 and May 9.

- Are you curious how a virtual 5K works?
- Do you want to register as a participant?
- Are you interested in donating?
- Do you want to learn more about NewLife Furniture Bank?

For more info, visit:

<https://www.newlifefb.org/virtual5k>

RUMMAGE SALE

CANCELED

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Rummage Sale that the Church of Christ had scheduled for April 25 has been canceled.

Please DO NOT leave any clothing or other items outside the church.

(Due to early press deadlines, a notice ran in the local Millis-Medway news, but the sale is definitely canceled.)

LOCAL RESOURCES FOR MILLIS RESIDENTS

Millis Ecumenical Food Pantry
www.millisfoodpantry.com

The Millis Fund
www.millisfund.com

YOUTH & CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

Youth Group (ages 7-12)

The Youth Group is meeting via Zoom. All youth in grades 7 through 12 are welcome to participate. To learn more, email one of the youth leaders: Marguerite at: tiariri@gmail.com, or Doug: at dcb.joel@verizon.net



Children's Bulletins & Activity Pages

(click on each title to open it)

[Rejoice in the Lord Always Bulletins](#)
[Jesus Keeps You Strong Bulletins](#)
[God, Our Dwelling Place Bulletins](#)
[God Cares for Us Bulletins](#)
[Additional Kids Bible Puzzles](#)

These free resources were made available to us by ChurchArt and the Children's Worship Bulletin Team.