

**Church of Christ, Congregational, UCC**

142 Exchange St., Millis, MA 02054

[www.millisucc.org](http://www.millisucc.org) • (508) 376-5034 • [millisucc@msn.com](mailto:millisucc@msn.com)



**An Open and Affirming Congregation**

Church of Christ Vision Statement:

*Worship God, Serve our neighbors, Share God's love.*

## *From the Interim Pastor*

We here at Millis Church of Christ are participating in a hopeful process. A process seeking peace, celebrating love and moving toward joy. Advent is a season of waiting and preparing for yet another year of God's grace and mercy.

We know that Jesus was already born; we don't need to anticipate that. But we can anticipate the light and truth of God breaking forth in our world today.

We can invite the Holy Spirit to grant us new birth in Jesus' name. We can keep our eyes and ears on alert, looking and listening for the grace of God moving among us. We can apologize, forgive, reach out, and welcome in. For God so loves us that God became human to teach us how to live with each other. God knows our experience first-hand.

We can, like Mary and Joseph, take risks, knowing that no matter what happens God loves us and welcomes each of us the way a parent loves and welcomes a newborn child. May God grant you grace throughout the Advent and Christmas seasons.

With joy,  
Jennifer



## *Advent & Christmas Worship*

How do we worship? – let us count the ways. As we move through Advent and into Christmas, I am cognizant that there are a variety of needs among us. I know for some, seeing each other during zoom worship is an important part of your week.

For others seeing the faces looking back at you is unnerving and uncomfortable. Some need more music, some need less. Some need more movement. Some need more meditation.

We do our best. It is my hope that we will provide a wide variety of worship and activities that at least one or two things will meet your spiritual needs. Do not feel like you should attend/watch everything; pick and choose. But if you want to, absolutely join right in. The Holiday Season from Thanksgiving through New Year can be overwhelming without a pandemic. Let us offer grace to ourselves and others as we give God our devotion and praise.

***See the following pages for details on all of the church's Advent and Christmas activities.***



**Final Week to Shop the *Jolly Holly Online Marketplace***  
**You can make Bids and Purchases through December 4 at Noon**

***Finish up your holiday shopping from the comfort of your home!***

Click on the links below to start shopping:

**Silent Auction • Vendor Information**

**Facebook: Millis UCC • Twitter: @millisucc • Instagram: @millisucc**

## *Sunday Worship*

Invite friends to join us for Sunday morning worship at 10am on Zoom. It's so easy for them to join, just share the link below and/or our website address, [www.millisucc.org](http://www.millisucc.org), where they can get the link on their own. It's never been easier to invite someone to join you for worship.

**To join by Zoom, click on this link:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87562091923?pwd=MVpJT21NelpRck9wM1UyaUtBalZsZz09>

**If using phone, dial:** 1-646-558-8656 US (NY)

**Meeting ID:** 875 6209 1923 **Password:** 02054

These are the scripture passages you will hear each Sunday. Consider taking a moment to read through them before arriving at worship.

### **Advent 1 – November 29:**

Isaiah 64:1-9; Mark 13:24-37; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

### **Advent 2 (Communion) – December 6:**

Isaiah 40:1-11; Mark 1:1-8; 2 Peter 3:8-15a

### **Advent 3 – December 13:**

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; John 1:6-8, 19-28;  
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

### **Advent 4 (Baptism) – December 20:**

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Luke 1:26-55; Romans 16:25-27

### **Christmas 1 – December 27:**

Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Luke 2:22-40; Galatians 4:4-7

## *Advent Wreath*

Each Sunday, during worship, we will light candles on the Advent Wreath. Consider joining in by having your own Advent Wreath at home. There are so many ways you can make one. [Check out this link](#) for ideas and directions.

If you have an idea that isn't shared here, please post it to our private Millis UCC Facebook group. [\(3\) Church of Christ Congregational in Millis MA Discussion Group | Facebook](#)

## *Christmas Eve Service*

A candlelight Christmas Eve service will occur via zoom at 7 PM on Thursday, December 24. The Deacons have candles available for you to pick up on Wednesday, December 23 from 4:30-6:30pm in the church parking lot. If you need to have your candles delivered, please let the church office know and someone will make a contactless drop-off for you. See "A Message from the Deacons" on page 3 for more information.

If possible, plan to have your computing device in a location where you can shut off your electric lights as we all light our candles during the singing of Silent Night.

## *Photos Needed for Christmas Eve*

Help make our Christmas Eve service special by sharing some pictures.

**Manger/creche/nativity:** Please take a photo of your manger/creche/nativity scene. If you do not have one, think about creating one with dolls or figurines that you have around the house. Or dress up members of your family and pose in a depiction of the Christmas story.

**Christmas Tree:** Once your Christmas Tree is up and decorated, take a picture and email it to Reverend Geary. These will be used as part of the Christmas Eve Service.



Here is a picture of Jennifer & Bud's tree from 2019. All trees are welcomed.

**Candlelight:** Do you have any photos of the sanctuary during the candle lighting from years past? If yes, let Rev. Geary know as she might be able to use them.

**Please email these photos to Reverend Geary at: [pastoruccmillis@gmail.com](mailto:pastoruccmillis@gmail.com) by December 20<sup>th</sup> so they can be included in the Christmas Eve Service.**

## *A Message from the Deacons*

December begins with Advent, the last few days for bidding and buying at the Jolly Holly Online Marketplace and a time to be creative in our church and family celebrations.

### *Reverse Advent Calendar*



The Deacons invite you to join in what we hope will become a new December tradition. It is a Reverse Advent Calendar for food collection to benefit the Millis Ecumenical Food Pantry, which is housed in our church. The idea is for each day of Advent you put a food item into a bag and by Christmas you have a bag of groceries to donate. The link below has a calendar with daily items, however, feel free to substitute items. Don't worry if you forget a day; all donations are appreciated.

**Drop-off of your food donations will be on Wednesday, December 23<sup>rd</sup> from 4:30-6:30pm, in the church parking lot.** The Deacons will collect your bag of food items while you stay warm in your car.

<https://passionatepennypincher.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/reverseadventcalendar.pdf>

### *Silent Night by Candlelight*



We will also have a twist on our time-treasured tradition of singing "Silent Night" by candlelight during our Christmas Eve service. This year, we invite you to light a candle at home as we sing together during the Zoom Christmas Eve service. **We will have candles available for you and your family to pick up on Wednesday, December 23<sup>rd</sup> from 4:30-6:30pm, in the church parking lot.**

We have been making adjustments to our daily lives and family activities since March. December is here with a new year around the corner and life continues to challenge us both personally and in our church community. Yet we continue to rise to the challenge. We have found ways to support each other, gather for services, volunteer, continue with traditions and have been blessed with an energetic, compassionate and caring Interim Pastor to assist us in our time of church transition.

Perhaps if we look at this time with an open heart, we will realize that this challenge in life shall pass. There will be a time in the future when we will gather with a greater appreciation of spending time together, sharing laughter, hugs, song, stories and of course food.

In the darkest of times we all have more strength than we realize. We should be kind to ourselves. Look for the little things in life that make us happy, know that there is a light at the end of the tunnel and rejoice in the spirit of Christmas and all that it brings. Let Jesus' teachings continue to guide you in your daily life and prayers.

Merry Christmas to you and your families near and far.

Your Deacons:

Doug Briggs, Sue Conte, Joan Nichols, Paul Rice and Wendy Schneider

Feeling blue this Christmas?  
YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN.

## Blue Christmas Service

Monday, December 21  
8pm on Zoom

Cries of 'Merry Christmas!' and non-stop caroling contrast with the feelings of many people for whom the holidays are difficult. If you are questioning your faith, have undergone a difficult loss, transition, or life change, this can be a very isolated and dreary time. We recognize that a lot of Christmas celebrations do not meet everyone's needs. The church cares about you and invites you to a special time of music and worship. An on-line Blue Christmas service of wholeness and healing will be held on Monday, December 21 at 8 pm. You are invited to come and "sit" with one another in a liturgy that speaks of the love of God for all people. For your comfort, feel no need to have your video on when you participate.

### To Join the Zoom Meeting

From a computing device:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88606046290?pwd=WGRUaXFFm40a2hyU2pQZHI4azl0Zz09>

Meeting ID: 886 0604 6290

Passcode: 02054

One tap mobile:

+16465588656,,88606046290# US (New York)

+13017158592,,88606046290# US (Washington D.C)

If using a phone, dial by your location:

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington D.C)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

Meeting ID: 886 0604 6290

Passcode: 02054

Find your local number:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kdV2UpQVME>

## Poinsettia Order Form

We will decorate the sanctuary with poinsettias to enhance the pre-recorded worship videos. If you would like to order a poinsettia in honor or memory of someone, please complete this form. Dedications will be listed in the Christmas Eve bulletin.

**Poinsettia Orders must be received by: December 18**

**There are two ways to order:**

1) **Click here** to complete your order using a google form. Then, mail in your payment.

**OR**

2) **Complete the form below** and mail it in with your check.

✂-----

I would like to purchase (enter quantity) \_\_\_\_\_  
**live poinsettia(s) and I will pick it (them) up**  
at church on Dec. 23 between 4:30 and 6:30pm.

I would like to purchase (enter quantity) \_\_\_\_\_  
**live poinsettia(s) and donate it (them) to be**  
**shared** with a local resident to brighten their day.

I would like to purchase (enter quantity) \_\_\_\_\_  
**virtual poinsettia(s)**, (the donor's name will be  
listed but no plant will be bought) **with the**  
**money going to Holiday Helpers gift cards.**

Donor Name \_\_\_\_\_

Please dedicate my poinsettia(s) in Honor/ Memory  
(please specify) of

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Total Number of Poinsettias \_\_\_\_\_

x \$ 13.00 cost per plant

Total Amount Due = \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make check out to: Church of Christ**  
**(and add "Flowers" to the memo line)**  
**and mail it with your order form to:**

Church of Christ  
142 Exchange St.  
Millis, MA 02054



## Youth Group Update

Youth Group continues to be productive! On October 30, we collected over 15 bags of food from the neighborhood behind the Church! The donations were dropped off at the Millis Food Pantry.

On November 6, we gathered to decorate and fill 10 boxes with items to get our college-aged alumni through their last few weeks of the fall semester. I've heard from several alumni who were surprised and thrilled with the care packages!

With colder weather and the holidays arriving we are working on keeping some of our traditions alive, and finding ways the youth can serve the Church and the wider community, while keeping everyone safe. Weather permitting, we will be outside as much as possible. When inside, meetings will be shorter. Masks and social distancing will always be in effect.

If you have questions, contact Doug Briggs at [dbriggs498@gmail.com](mailto:dbriggs498@gmail.com). [Note to gmail users: Be sure to check your Spam folder and Social and Promotions tabs as sometimes our emails get placed there!]

### **What's happening: Clothing Collection for CityReach**

**Date: Saturday, December 5**

**Time 9 am- 2 pm**

**Description:** We will be collecting and sorting clothing donations in the parking lot of the church. I will deliver the donations to the CityReach program in Boston. You can come for an hour or stay for the day! Community service hours are available!

**What do you need to do?:** Please RSVP to Doug the times you are planning to help out, so I can make sure we have even coverage during the day.

### **What's happening: Zoom Conference for 20 Somethings**

**Date: Saturday, December 13**

**Time: 7 pm**

**Description:** If you have older siblings in your family, encourage them to join Reverend Geary and Doug to check-in with alumni and chat about whatever is on their minds. Invite information to follow.

**What do you need to do?:** Encourage your 20 something to attend.

### **What's happening: Yankee Swap**

**Date: Friday, December 18**

**Time: 6 pm- 7:30 pm**

**Description:** It's the famous Youth Group Yankee Swap (2020 style)! It has been our tradition to gather with a gently used or inexpensive wrapped gift to share! All active members and alumni are encouraged to attend. The more, the merrier!

**What do you need to do?:** Get creative with a unique gift, and have dinner before arriving.



*The Youth Group is open to youth grades 7-12. If you are interested in joining or finding out more about the group, contact Doug at [dbriggs498@gmail.com](mailto:dbriggs498@gmail.com).*



## Winter Clothing Collection for CityReach

**Saturday, December 5  
9am-2pm  
Church Parking Lot**

### **DO NOT DROP OFF AT ANY OTHER TIME**

On Saturday, December 5 from 9am-2pm ONLY, there will be a designated area in the church parking lot where the Youth Group will be collecting clothing items to be taken into Boston to help the homeless during the winter weather ahead.

#### Items needed (clean, gently-used):

- coats
- sweaters/sweatshirts
- pants
- hats/gloves
- blankets/sleeping bags
- socks (socks should be brand new)

#### How to pack:

- Please pack in plastic garbage bags only.

## HOLIDAY HELPER PROGRAM

Due to Covid, this year the food pantry won't be able to hold its traditional Holiday Helper program with gift tags. Instead, they will be distributing gift cards to help families in Millis.



If you would like to donate a gift card or cards, here is the information you'll need:

### **Deadline to donate: December 11**

- For gift card purchases greater than \$25, please purchase multiple cards in smaller denominations. [Example: If you wanted to donate a total of \$50 worth of gift cards, you could purchase (2) separate \$25 gift cards.]
- Please purchase from one of the following merchants: CVS, Market Basket, Marshalls, Roche Brothers, Target, or Walmart.
- Drop off your gift card(s) to the food pantry on any Saturday between 10am-Noon, or mail it to: Elizabeth Derwin, Millis Food Pantry, 142 Exchange St., Millis, MA 02054.
- If you have questions, call the food pantry at (508) 376-5034.

## A Message from the Visitors' Group

The Visitors' group will not be meeting in December. We hope and pray that everyone is doing well during this difficult time. Please call the church if you have any questions or concerns at 508-376-5034.

We hope that each of you have a blessed Christmas.

*The Lord said, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid: do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."* ~Joshua 1:9 NIV

Blessings and peace from the Visitors!

Judie Ackerman, Ellie Costa, Ginny Demery, Pam Johansson, Linda Jones,  
Judy Kosinski, Shirley Rowley, Pat Spearing, Kathy Stevens, and Reverend Geary





The transition team has started the important process that will bring a new pastor to lead our congregation. The work involves gathering as much information from the church's past and present history along with guidance from the Southern New England Conference. In order to make this process be representative, we need your help.

The first step will be a survey that will be sent out on December 9, and we ask you to complete and return it by December 18. The survey responses will be most helpful in shaping our next step. The second step will take place in January and will involve meeting in small groups to further gather your assistance in selecting our next pastor.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact: Becki Abalutzk, Art Payne, Jan Krohn, or Rev. Jennifer Geary

## *Missions Committee Update*

The Missions Committee always welcomes input on ways we can spread our mission support. Please contact one of the Mission Committee members - Jan Krohn, Art Payne, Wendy Schneider, or Mary Smith – if you have any questions or suggestions. For reference, the giving guidelines used by the Millis UCC Missions Committee are included below.

### **Millis UCC Mission Guidelines**

1. Areas of mission giving are determined by present needs of the local church, community (state /national), and the world. Our goal is to minister support to all needs be it financial, volunteering, and/or spiritual.
2. We (mission committee members, church members and any church participants) can submit mission requests.
  - a. Once a request is submitted to the committee all aspects of person, organization, or need is explored.
  - b. Information can be obtained from:
    - i. Requester or mission member
    - ii. Reviewing organization from their web site
    - iii. Explore charity organization via Check charity legitimacy (i.e. Charity Navigator, Guide Star, etc.)
    - iv. If need is volunteers, we determine time frame of participation and what activities are involved.
    - v. If area of concern and need more guidance we discuss with Pastor and/or Leadership committee.
3. After all information is complete the members of the committee vote on approval.
4. Activities and/or donations are communicated via mission moments in church services, Spire and annual report.

## Socializing with the M&M's Mondays on Zoom!

The M & M's Monday Morning Needlework Group is now gathering virtually on Zoom! Join the Zoom meeting on Monday mornings, anytime after 10am.

### By computer, click this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2987904285?pwd=VENBMmRob2krQW83RFJhNGJkQjJkUdz09>

If using a phone, dial: 1-646-558-8656.

Meeting ID: 298 790 4285

Password: 866156



All are welcome – even if you're not working on a needlework project, join in for the socializing!



## Please Return Your 2021 Pledge

We are very grateful for your generous support for the Church of Christ, Congregational. Thank you to all those who have returned their pledge cards. If you want to make a pledge to the church but have not yet returned your pledge card, please return it as soon as possible. The Prudential Committee is drafting the 2021 budget and the information will be very helpful in planning for next year.

If you did not receive a pledge card, please contact the church at (508) 376-5034 or send an email to: [millisucc@msn.com](mailto:millisucc@msn.com).

## Rev. Geary's Monday Office Hours on Zoom

Rev. Geary will be available to church members on-line via Zoom, from 10am-Noon on Mondays.

To connect via Zoom from your computer, click this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81936525328>

If using a phone, dial: 1-646-558-8656.

Meeting ID: 819 3652 5328

You can call, text or email Rev. Geary at other times but might need to leave a message.

Phone: (774) 993-9407

Email: [pastoruccmillis@gmail.com](mailto:pastoruccmillis@gmail.com).

## Church Check-Ins Live on Facebook Wednesdays at 7pm

*During Advent, the check-in will include a brief Advent Wreath liturgy.*

Join us for our weekly check-in where you'll hear the latest news and announcements from the church.

You don't need a Facebook account to access the Church Check-In. Just click the link below to get to our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/MillisUCCChurch/>

## On-line Bible Study

Each Wednesday at 11:00am, a group gathers on Zoom to listen to and discuss the Psalm of the week. Each gathering is a stand-alone event.

### Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87641484473?pwd=aGM2c2I2aGExMU1lSONHVHRycjVldz09>

If using phone, dial: 1-646-558-8656 US (NY)

Meeting ID: 876 4148 4473

Password: 02054

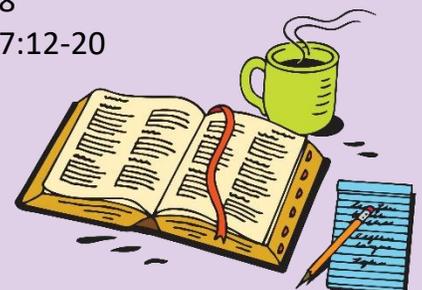
12/2 Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13

12/9 Psalm 126

12/16 Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26 or Luke 1:46b-55

12/23 Psalm 148

12/30 Psalm 147:12-20



## Let's Talk About White Privilege

As promised, we will run a 5-week program in January to discuss white privilege. If you are interested, please let Rev. Geary know the days and times you can consistently meet for 5 weeks. Once she has heard from several people, the day and time will be set. It is important to attend all sessions. Once the program begins, no new participants will be admitted.

Rev. Geary's contact info:  
 pastoruccmillis@gmail.com  
 (774) 993-9407

This is a safe space for open discussion.  
 All are welcome.

## Zoom Training

Thursday, December 3 - 11am & 7pm

On Thursday, December 3 there will be two opportunities to learn how to more fully use the functions of Zoom: 11:00am & 7:00pm.

Join the Zoom meeting from a computing device:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87578726712?pwd=RTJOMWszaGJpNmdPSVlScG9aVEVZZz09>

Meeting ID: 875 7872 6712  
 Passcode: 02054

Or, If using a phone, dial:  
 +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 875 7872 6712  
 Password: 02054

## Gratitude Corner

Special thanks to Doug Briggs and the youth group members – both current and alumni – for keeping those in need always in their view throughout the year. Recent outreach activities include the Trick or Treat So All Can Eat food collection, and the Winter Clothing CityReach collection. Thank you for sharing your faith and good works with the community.

Thank you to those who are helping to brighten our holiday and prepare for Advent & Christmas, especially Wendy Schneider and Sue Conte for putting the candles in the sanctuary windows, and Molly Hatch, Mia Coutts, Steve Howie, Doug Briggs and Alexa Briggs for setting up the manger scene in front of the church and hanging the large wreaths.

And, thank you to the Jolly Holly Committee for all their work to move the event on-line in order to keep the tradition going!

*If you would like to express your gratitude to others, either anonymously or with your name attached, please email the church office at [millisucc@msn.com](mailto:millisucc@msn.com)*

## IMPORTANT COVID SAFETY REMINDERS

Because of Covid, we have to be especially conscious of the need to avoid the space that has been designated for our tenants.

Currently, even when there are people in the building, the exterior doors are to be kept locked as a Covid safety measure.

If work needs to be done in an area used by any of our tenants, please schedule it through the office ([millisucc@msn.com](mailto:millisucc@msn.com) or 508-376-5034) or through the pastor ([pastoruccmillis@gmail.com](mailto:pastoruccmillis@gmail.com) or 774-993-9407), so that we can coordinate it with the tenants.

If you are at the church property:

- Observe posted signs and safety protocols (copies of the church's protocols are posted on our website and the office door)
- Wear a mask
- Use hand sanitizer & wipe down surfaces
- Sign the contact tracing sheet

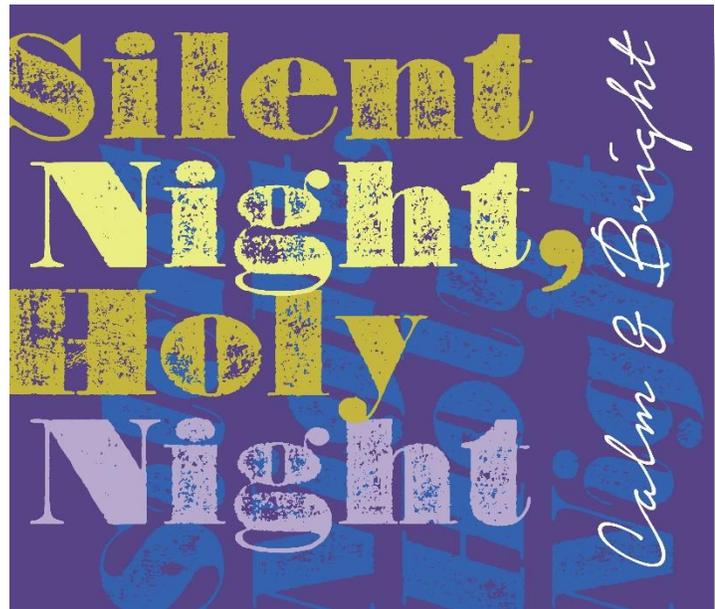
Thank you for helping us function in a safe environment!



Church of Christ  
142 Exchange St  
Millis, MA 02054

Phone:  
508-376-5034

E-Mail:  
millisucc@msn.com



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*We're on the Web!*

*Visit us at:*

[www.millisucc.org](http://www.millisucc.org)

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