

# THE SPIRE

OCTOBER 2020

**Church of Christ, Congregational, UCC**

142 Exchange St., Millis, MA 02054

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**An Open and Affirming Congregation**

Church of Christ Vision Statement:

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

## A Message from the Interim Pastor

Dear Members and Friends,

I write to you about the pandemic and the church building. I expected this letter to go out two weeks ago. This has been a difficult letter for me to write because I need it for myself as much as I need to share it with you.

Many of you have contacted me about finding yourself in a dark place which is unusual for you at this time of year. I think the fact that many of us are still standing and so many are going to work, school, and caring for loved ones is amazing. Grief and struggle are cumulative. When loss and struggle happen in rapid succession our systems get overloaded and we begin to shut down. Simple tasks become difficult. Small things frustrate and even anger us. We lose perspective. This is normal. It is a normal reaction to an abnormal situation. What we are living in is an abnormal situation. Feeling frustrated or scared or down or useless is actually normal.

What is unique about this current situation is that we are all going through it at the same time. Usually when one of us is overwhelmed there are many others to lean on and who will pick up the slack for a while. Right now, we are the tired and lonely holding up the tired and lonely.



We will adjust. We will come through this and will even grow when we support each other. Cobwebs will clear from our brains.

- Regular sleep patterns will return, as will
- our contagious smiles. We are not alone.

God is with us, supporting, comforting and guiding. Hang in there. And if it continues to feel like you are slogging through your days, please seek professional help. Sometimes our mental health doesn't bounce back and we need professional support. Either way please lean on each other. Supporting each other through times like this is one of the reasons for the Church to exist.

*continued on p.2*



*First Weekend in October*

**Saturday**

**October 3 at 9:00am**

**Blessing of the Animals**

*see page 2 for details*

**Sunday**

**October 4 at 10:00am**

**Worship Service on Zoom**

*(please note: no outdoor worship)*

*see page 6 for details*

**Sunday**

**October 4 from Noon-2:00pm**

**Transition Gathering**

**to Discuss Search Process**

**Church Parking Lot**

*see page 3 for details*



**Jolly Holly  
Online  
Marketplace**

**November 15 – December 4**

*See page 5 for more information.*

*From the Interim Pastor, continued from p. 1*

Spending time outside is often helpful. With the days getting shorter absorbing natural light is important to our health. If you are finding it difficult to make yourself go out, find a buddy so you can hold each other accountable to a couple doses of nature each day. If you need a buddy, call the church office and we will help.

I will also begin to offer some spiritual exercises that might be helpful. Read your Friday Email to learn more about this.

One step toward normalizing life is the return to use of our building. This will be a very slow process so that we can ensure that all who use the building remain safe.

Three very important ministries take place in our building, The Metro West Center for Well Being, Happy Hours Preschool and The Food Pantry. These three tenants, essential to our bottom line, are all using the building, each in their own space. Please do not enter these areas even after hours. This might sound frustrating to you. It's our building, why can't we go in. Right now, we need to let our tenants get settled as they test and make changes to protocols. Once they are operating smoothly, we can begin conversation about how we might use the building safely.

If you need to be in the building for any reason, please let the office or me know beforehand. This is a courtesy so if any arrangements need to be made for safety sake, we can plan for it and not be surprised.

Some church staff will also be in the building most days to monitor its use. It is my hope, that if all goes well, we will be able to begin to use the second floor with small, appropriately distanced groups in the not too distant future. For the time being, the preschool is using the former women's room as their restroom. The counseling center, church staff and food pantry are using the men's room as a unisex restroom. There is a lock on the outside door. If you are in the building and need to use a bathroom, please use the former men's room.

Not being able to use our building adds to the frustrations we experience because of this pandemic. I am beginning to see some blessings as we re-imagine some of our gatherings and work.

Creativity is beginning to flow. When we do return to full use of the building, I believe we will use it quite differently than in the past. It is amazing how God can open possibilities when our normal gets shut down. May we continue to be open to the movement of Spirit and not miss this opportunity that none of us ever imagined.

I wish you grace and peace through the days ahead. Please reach out to me via phone, text or email so I can help. Also, I would love to come sit in your driveway and visit. Give me an invite so I can put you on my schedule.



Grace,

Jennifer



## Blessing of the Animals

**Saturday, October 3  
9:00am at Outdoor Altar**

In honor of St. Francis, patron saint of animals and ecologists, we will gather to bless the animals, wild and tame, who enrich our lives. Bring your pet or a picture of your pet to the outdoor chapel on **Saturday**, October 3 at 9 AM. Plush pets are also welcome.

**Please bring pets on leash, or crated.** If your animal doesn't do well around people or other animals, please bring a picture for everyone's safety. This service can also be joined by zoom. All animals that participate via internet will receive a blessing. Please observe all pandemic precautions.

Click below to join the Zoom Meeting from a computing device:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89652319228?pwd=S1d3WkdXZGdnZi9TbINCawI1Uy85QT09>

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

**Meeting ID: 896 5231 9228**

**Passcode: 02054**

Find your local number:

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

## Message from the Deacons

Over the past six weeks we have enjoyed seeing each other for worship services on the back lawn and to have those unable to attend continue to view the service on Zoom. We made it through a bit of technical difficulties and a wide variation of temperatures. We are very adept at social distancing and mask wearing. It was especially nice to be able to have the confirmation of Rev. Geary as our Interim Pastor and of the Transition Team on September 20th.

The Transition team has jumped right into their work with Zoom meetings with Rev. Geary and our SNEUCC contacts for training and discussions on the process going forward to eventually call a settled pastor. This process cannot be completed without the input of the congregation.

To that point there will a whole church meeting in the parking lot on Sunday, October 4 from 12-2 PM. Please make every effort to attend this important step in the search process.

The Deacons are in the beginning stages of reviewing the church membership lists to have a more accurate representation of active members. Watch for more information over the next few weeks as we complete this process.

As we return to online services if you would like to participate by being a "host/greeter" on Zoom, doing a reading or have an idea for the service, please feel free to contact Rev. Geary or one of the Deacons. We would like to thank Maria Melchionda and Sue Purkis for their online assistance and Art Payne for helping with the setup and breakdown for outdoor services over the past few weeks. It does take a village.

Be well,

Sue Conte  
Wendy Schneider  
Co-Lead Deacons



## TRANSITION GATHERING to Discuss Search Process

**Sunday, October 4 from Noon-2:00pm  
Church Parking Lot**

Join us for the first, and potentially only, in-person large-group gathering to discuss the transition time in which we are now living. With hope the weather will cooperate, we will gather in the parking lot from 12-2 pm to begin the transition process. If you are comfortable gathering in a larger group you are urged to attend. For those who do not feel well and/or are uncomfortable, please stay home. We want everyone to feel comfortable and safe. The meeting will be recorded and other on-line opportunities will be available to engage in this particular discussion. There will be many small-group opportunities for conversation in the months ahead. Should the weather not cooperate, this gathering will be postponed to a time in the future after we've figured out how to effectively engage a large group on-line.

## Delegates Report from the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual SNEUCC Virtual Meeting

On Saturday, September 26, Deacon Sue Conte and Art Payne, along with Rev. Geary, served as delegates to the virtual 1st Annual Meeting of the Southern New England Conference. There were 535 voting members in attendance; 275 of which were ministers and 260 were lay members.

During the morning's schedule we voted on four actions, interspersed with wonderful music and worship, and information. The four votes were: 1. A Covenant for Behavior 2. Next year's slate of officers 3. Dissolution of the search committee 4. Election of the 1st Executive Conference Minister.

Rev. Darrell Goodwin was elected to the position of Executive Conference Minister, which is similar to a University President, with the responsibility for running day-to-day operations of the Conference. Rev. Goodwin, who will start in his role Jan.1, 2021, began his education at Boston College, and is currently a Doctoral Candidate in the Doctor of Ministry program at San Francisco Theological Seminary.

Also, during the conference 50 year and 25 year Ordinands were celebrated and our own Rev. Jennifer Geary was recognized as a 25 year Ordinand. **Congratulations to our Interim Pastor, Rev. Geary!**





## Children's Ministry

Check the church website for children's activity pages that tie into the Sunday worship services. We plan to post new material weekly.



Also, keep checking the weekly Friday email for additional information on children's activities, as we are currently discussing ideas for future programming. If you have ideas or wish to organize an activity for our Elementary age children and younger, please contact Rev. Geary.

## Neighbors in Need Special Missions Offering on October 18, 2020



*all children have the right  
to simply be children...*

Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds of this offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through grants.

Neighbors in Need grants are awarded to UCC churches and organizations doing justice work in their communities. These grants fund projects whose work ranges from direct service to community organizing and advocacy to address systemic injustice. This year, special consideration will be given to projects focusing on serving our immigrant neighbors and communities.

The theme for the 2020 campaign is "all children have the right to simply be children." Please consider mailing a donation to the church with a notation of Neighbors in Need Special Missions. We will dedicate our Neighbors in Need offering during worship on October 18<sup>th</sup>.



## Youth Group is back!

### Outdoor S'more meeting!

**Date: Friday, October 16**

**Time: 5:30-7 PM**

We will enjoy a hot dog smorgasbord (with all sorts of creative toppings!), and a fire pit with s'more ingredients. We will reconnect and play some games as well! Bring a friend!

### Trick or Treat so All Can Eat!

**Date: Friday, October 30**

**Time: TBD (but probably 5:30ish)**

We will gather on the back lawn of the Church and pick up food donations from the surrounding neighborhood. We not be ringing doorbells, but picking up donations left in bags on doorsteps. This is an all church event hosted by the Youth Group. We will need extra adults and will welcome young children!

### College Care Package Meeting

**Date- Friday, November 6**

**Time- 5:30-6:30 PM**

We will meet inside (regulations permitting) fellowship hall to put together care packages for former members of the group who are now in college.

**Wear a mask to all gatherings.** Please contact Doug at [dbriggs498@gmail.com](mailto:dbriggs498@gmail.com) with any questions.

*The Youth Group is open to youth grades 7-12.  
Contact Doug if you are interested in joining.*



## Jolly Holly Online Marketplace

### November 15-December 4

Dear Church Members and Friends,

As we all know, this pandemic has affected everyone, including the church, in many ways – and the Jolly Holly Fair is no exception. But given that this is our biggest fundraiser of the year, we just couldn't cancel it.

Instead, we will be having a primarily online version of Jolly Holly starting at noon on November 15<sup>th</sup>. We will be having online sales, including the Silent Auction, Knits and other items, along with several vendors. The online portion of the fair will close on Friday, December 4<sup>th</sup> at noon. We still plan to have an in-person portion of the fair on Saturday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, but at this time, we don't really know what that will be. Depending on the pandemic, it could be just a pick-up of items sold, or maybe some outdoor activities.

Following the recommendation of the Millis Board of Health, we will not be permitted to sell any kind of food, so we will not be having our traditional Fancy Foods Table, Candy, or the Snack Bar. Due to these restrictions, we will be focusing our energies primarily on the Silent Auction, to hopefully cover some of what our food tables would normally bring in.

### **We really need your help!!**

We are looking for items that potentially could bring in some high bids. Do you have a summer home you would be willing to donate for a weekend? How about a special talent like cooking or painting? If you have a small business, this is also a great opportunity to donate services for free advertising! If you are a regular customer at a local business, ask if they will donate something.

As the online sales will be going live on November 15<sup>th</sup>, all Silent Auction items must be in ***no later than November 1<sup>st</sup>***, to give us time to prepare the online system. As we get closer to November 1<sup>st</sup>, we will notify people of drop off days for the Silent Auction.

In the coming weeks, we will send out a form so you can let us know what you will be bringing for the Silent Auction, and other ways you can sign up to help with the fair! Keep an eye on your email!

**Please note: We are NOT accepting any donations for the Green Zone.** The basement is already full, and it is very unlikely that we would be able to include a Green Zone this year due to Covid restrictions. **Please respect this and do not drop off Green Zone items at the church.**

**This year, more than ever, we are counting on your support! Get creative by donating an item or a basket for the Silent Auction, and help us continue our long-standing tradition of hosting a successful Jolly Holly Fair!**

Becki Abalutzk and Gail Luck  
Co-Chairs, Jolly Holly Fair

## Schedule of Sunday Worship Services in October

Worship Services are at 10:00am. All services will be available on Zoom. Services will also be recorded and posted on Youtube.

**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

### Scriptures for October

**Oct 4:** Philippians 3:4b-14; Matthew 21:33-46

**Oct 11:** Philippians 4:1-9; Matthew 22:1-14

**Oct 18:** 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10; Matthew 22:15-22

**Oct 25:** 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8; Matthew 22:34-46

### Nov 1: All Saints

Micah 3:5-12

1 Thessalonians 2:9-13

Matthew 23:1-12

Revelation 7:9-17

1 John 3:1-3

Matthew 5:1-12



## 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=aGM2c2I2aGExMU1IS0NHVHRycjVldz09>

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

**Meeting ID:** 876 4148 4473 **Password:** 02054

October 7 Psalm 23

October 14 Psalm 96

October 21 Psalm 1

October 28 Psalm 34

## Sanctuary Is Open for Prayer Wednesdays from 1-2pm

On Wednesdays from 1-2pm, the sanctuary will be open for prayer and quiet reflection.

Masks will be required at all times. Enter through the front doors. Signs will be posted at the church with additional safety protocols.

**Please read the Friday emails as additional hours might be offered in the future.**

## 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!



## Note Re: White Privilege Class

Due to scheduling issues, the White Privilege class has been pushed off to January. Be on the lookout for registration information in December.



### 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

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/>

### A Message from the Visitors' Group

The Visitors' Group will not be meeting in October. We hope everyone is doing well. Please call the church office at 508-376-5034 if you need anything or have any questions.

*"He heals the broken hearted  
and binds their wounds."*

Psalm 147:3(NIV)



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

### Gratitude Corner

*A note of thanks from our friends at the  
Federated Church of Norfolk:*

Dear Reverend Geary,

We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to you and the people at Church of Christ, Congregational for welcoming us to your Sunday service of August 23<sup>rd</sup>. We especially appreciate that we were specifically welcomed verbally – that was very kind.

As you said, we are the church in this time and in this place. And as you also pointed out, we are all pieces, none of which are the same. Amen to that. That's what makes the world go around.

Thank you again for blessing us with your service (birdsong and all).

Blessings,

Donna Henry, on behalf of the Board of Deacons



Thank you to the Deacons and all the other helpers who made our outdoor worship possible.

Thank you to all those who have planted, weeded and watered the flowers around the building throughout the summer. The outdoor altar is enhanced by the beautiful flowers.

Thank you to Myrna, Becki and Deb for providing service music and helping us join in song.

Thank you to the Covid-19 preparedness team for sorting out all the protocols and making the necessary building changes to keep us all safe.

and a thank you to Sue Purkis from Rev. Geary for purchasing and donating the outdoor cable that made outdoor Zoom worship possible.

*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)*

In Memorium

*Heidi Alper*

October 25, 1961 - August 21, 2020



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*We're on the Web!*

*Visit us at:*

www.millisucc.org

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## Socializing with the M&M's 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=VENBMmRoY2krQW83RFJhNGJQQjJUdz09>

**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!

