

*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***

I am the convenor for Rhode Island Ministers Association. We did not meet for almost six months last year. We began to meet on Zoom in December 2020. For the next several months we did mostly check-ins and not much business. We realized that we needed to get to know each other again. We are not the same people we were a year ago. We, and the world, have been through a lot. At our last meeting we had speakers join us as we are now ready to do business.

During an intentional interim time, it is recommended that a congregation engage in five specific tasks.

1. Come to terms with our history
2. discover our current and/or new identity,
3. negotiate shifts of power and leadership changes,
4. renew denominational linkages
5. commit to new leadership and a new future.

Recently, these have also been boiled down to

- Who are we?
- Who is our neighbor?
- Who is God calling us to be?

The pandemic has hindered this congregation's ability to work on these tasks. With restrictions easing, there is greater opportunity to gather in person. We have all been changed by this past year and so has the life of this congregation. A year ago, I wrote, "For the next month we will continue to get to know each other and begin to set up the process to search for your next pastor. Part of that process is looking through and considering all the things that this congregation does and doesn't do. I'm going to ask a lot of questions. This is not to annoy you or to raise doubts. I do this so you can affirm what you do and why you do it. In the process you might add new things and let go of old. When your new pastor arrives, you will be clear about who you are as a congregation, what your mission is for this time and what kind of leadership you need to pursue that mission."

Throughout the summer, I am going to lead a few large group gatherings. I know we have been cooped up for a year and I expect many will be traveling. Not everyone will be able to participate in a particular gathering, but I hope everyone will join as many as possible. You will get to know each other again and become clear eyed in seeing who you are as a congregation, as a gathered body, more so than just a group of individuals. You will identify and commit to your purpose and the specifics of living out that purpose. Then, you will be ready to begin to search for a new pastor.

I look forward to these engaging conversations. The first will be on June 6<sup>th</sup> immediately following worship. Sandwiches will be provided.

Grace,

Rev. Jennifer Geary

## Sunday Worship in June

To join Sunday worship services 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

Passcode: 02054

Find your local number:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kc6vTurh6j>

During the Summer months, the Old Testament, Gospel and Epistle lessons will each be a continuous story. The sermon will focus on just one of those stories each week but we will read all three lessons so worship participants can hear all three stories as they continue throughout summer.

### June 6: Celebration of the Christian Home

(Blanket & Tools offering); Senior Sunday;

Communion

1 Samuel 8:4-20; Psalm 138; 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1; Mark 3:20-35

### June 13: Guest Preacher

1 Samuel 15:34-16:13; Psalm 20; 2 Corinthians 5:6-17; Mark 4:26-34

### June 20: Where others fear to tread

1 Samuel 17:32-49; Psalm 133; 2 Corinthians 6:1-13; Mark 4:35-41

### June 27: Open and Affirming Sunday

2 Samuel 1:1, 17-27; Psalm 130; 2 Corinthians 8:7-15; Mark 5:21-43



## Mission - Vision - Reality

A Large Group Discussion on  
the future of this congregation

Immediately following worship on **June 6th**, **11am - 1pm** will be a reality check and visioning discussion as part of our interim work. Sandwiches will be provided.

Folks can also join via Zoom. (Sorry, lunch will be on your own with this option 😊). Please register so we know how much food to prepare. Feel free to bring your own food if that feels safer.

[\*\*Click here to sign up\*\*](#)

or call the Church to sign up (508) 376-5034

### Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82897229025?pwd=UzA5bnBBVWIVdGhHNGR1YUdpZDF0Zz09>

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

Meeting ID: 828 9722 9025

Passcode: 02054

## Rev. Geary's Monday Office Hours

Rev. Geary will be available to church members on-line via Zoom, or in person, from 11am-1pm 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)



## ***Proposed Community Garden at the Church of Christ***

We are exploring the idea of creating a Community Garden at the Church of Christ!

We're in the process of developing a plan on how we might install a small number of raised gardening beds on the church property for community use. The vision is to have the garden beds be available for free, on a first-come, first-served basis, with the set-up costs of the beds being covered by individual, community, and business sponsors. **Lauren Briggs** is leading the project. If you would like to be involved, contact Lauren at [briggslf@gmail.com](mailto:briggslf@gmail.com).

### **Some potential areas for help would be:**

- Reaching out to local businesses or organizations who might be interested in sponsoring a bed
- Sponsoring a bed yourself
- Setting up the beds
- Gardening in a bed yourself
- Painting or decorating a garden bed
- Helping to staff/check in on the garden once it is set up
- Visioning other possibilities



Tech Upgrades

## ***WE'RE LOOKING FOR SOME GUIDANCE ON UPDATING OUR CHURCH TECHNOLOGY***

Are you savvy with technology? Do you have an Information Technology background? The church is looking for some volunteers to help review and assess our technology infrastructure including internet, laptops, applications, and to make recommendations on what our next steps should be. If you are interested in helping us get the church technology up to date, please email the church at: [millisucc@msn.com](mailto:millisucc@msn.com).

## **Worship Team Forming**

Would you like to help plan worship? Do you have ideas of ways to present the scriptures, visuals, movement, sounds, silence, that you would like to have as part of worship?

A team of people are gathering soon to discuss and plan a few upcoming worship services. If you would like to participate, please let Rev. Geary know.



### ***Camera Crew Needed!***

As we move forward with more in-person events we want to be as inclusive as possible. We would like to offer an on-line option but that is dependent on volunteers being available to operate the camera. We are currently training folks to operate our camera and zoom set up. Please consider if this is a ministry for you. The more trained folks we have, the easier it will be for us to be fully inclusive at all our events. If you are willing to be trained and to occasionally help out with operating the camera for worship and other gatherings, please contact Rev. Geary.

### **Congratulations Graduates!**

As is the tradition of this congregation we will be honoring graduates during worship on **June 6th**. We would also like to hear your plans for the future. Please send a brief message with details about work, volunteering or further schooling that you have planned. Also, please include any honors or awards that you received. This will be included in the July Spire.



### ***On-line Bible Study***

Each Wednesday at 11:00am, a group gathers on Zoom to listen to and discuss one or more passages from the upcoming Sunday's worship service. Each gathering is a stand-alone event. For a list of each Sunday's passages, see the "Sunday Worship in June" section on page 2 in the newsletter.

**Bible Study Zoom link:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87641484473?pwd=aGM2c2I2aGExMU1IS0NHVHRycjVldz09>

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

**Meeting ID:** 876 4148 4473

**Password:** 02054



## ***From the Deacons***

June will bring more new changes for worship with the easing of restrictions for COVID 19 protocols. We will be reviewing the sector specific guidelines for worship determined by Massachusetts. Please check the Friday email and/or the website for the most current information as we go forward. Our goal is to have all who worship with us feel comfortable and safe within the sanctuary.

Due to the COVID 19 pandemic we had to be creative in our worship services and how to reach the congregation. Zoom online worship has become a wonderful way for many to attend our services. This online platform will now be a permanent part of our worship offerings.

Rev. Geary had asked for assistance in figuring out the technology and equipment needed to have Zoom and record services from the sanctuary. A big THANKS to Doug Briggs for his research, time and expertise in ordering and setting up the equipment, Suzi Sennott for her assistance on Sundays and Andy Bolton for running cables to the sanctuary. This new equipment will be used for recording other events throughout the year.

The membership list review is almost complete, and a new church directory will be available soon.

May 23rd was our Pentecost service where the congregation participated in sandwich making and lunch packing for the Youth Mission project to Common Cathedral in Boston. Several of us went into Boston to deliver the lunches and attend the service on the Boston Common. A wonderful experience for all involved in every aspect of the day.

Blessings,

Wendy Schneider and Sue Conte

Co-lead Deacons

## ***Adult Education***

Beginning in June, we will have lectures, discussions and classes on relevant topics for adults. These will take place at the church and will be open to and advertised in the wider community. Is there something you want to know more about? Please submit topic requests. Is there something you want to share? Please volunteer. Our first event will be **Wednesday, June 23 at 7:30 PM**, the topic to be announced soon. Watch the Friday email, the Church's Facebook page, the Website and the Sunday bulletin for more information.

## ***In-sanctuary worship***

So much has changed in the last month in relationship with the Corona Virus. Here are our worship guidelines as we know them at this time. Please continue to be flexible as all society participates in the great experiment of how to move out of a pandemic.

- Registration is no longer required. We will continue to maintain a list of attendees in case we have an active case of Covid-19 and need to contact folks.
- Masks are optional
- It's been fun to enter through the front doors but either entrance is fine.
- Attendees will **not** be able to walk through the preschool area
- Bring your own liturgy either printed out or on your electronic device. Some printed bulletins will be available at the door. Please take everything with you when you leave.
- The windows and doors will be open.
- All services will be recorded. By being present, attendees give permission for their image and voice to be recorded and shared.

## **Friday emails to decrease in frequency**

During the month of June there will be just **two Friday emails, June 4 and June 18**. Announcements will be included in the weekly worship bulletin which will be available on the church's website, as will the Zoom links for worship and other events.

## ***Gratitude Corner***

I offer gratitude for Doug Briggs and Marguerite Monahan for their many years of service in volunteering with the youth group. Thank you for stepping up to the leadership position when Jessica left. Special thanks to Doug who continued on after Marguerite moved, keeping the program going during the pandemic. I am grateful for the successful worship and service with Common Cathedral on June 23rd. - Jennifer Geary

I offer gratitude to Kerry Sullivan for her many years as the sexton for the church. When I first saw the church a year ago, it was clear that it was maintained by someone who cared about the space and the ministry that occurred here. Thank you for your continued commitment as you pass your knowledge and experience on to the next generation.

- Jennifer Geary

I offer gratitude for Becki Abalutzk for volunteering to lead our hymn singing through recordings for the past year. The sharing of your talents enabled all of us to fully participate in worship while we were physically separated from each other. - Jennifer Geary

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

## Visitors' Group Meeting

June 17th at 10:30am

*In the Church Parlor*

Please let us know if you or someone you know may like to be visited.

Perhaps you have thought about becoming a visitor. If so, please let one of the visitors know.

***"I give you peace, the kind of peace that only I can give. It isn't like the peace that this world can give. So, don't be worried or afraid." John 14:14 27 (CEV)***

### **The Visitors:**

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

## Resources for Children, Youth & Young Adults

**Parents** – Each week in the Friday email and on the church [website](#), we post children's activity sheets to go along with the liturgy.

**Millennials** – For the 20-30 crowd, Southern New England United Church of Christ (SNEUCC) has a Millennial Ministry, which includes monthly virtual meetings.

[Click here to check it out.](#)



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

The M & M's Monday Morning Needlework Group gathers virtually on Zoom! Join the Zoom meeting on Monday mornings, any time after 10am. All are welcome – even if you're not working on a needlework project, join in for the socializing!

**By computer, click this link:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2987904285?pwd=VENB MmRob2krQW83RFJhNGJQQjJUdz09>

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

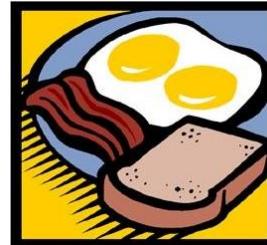
**Meeting ID:** 298 790 4285

**Passcode:** 866156



## Men's Fellowship Breakfast Meeting on Zoom

**Sunday, June 13 at 8:30am**



Grab some breakfast and join us for a virtual get-together on zoom where we can catch up with each other and discuss future projects. All men who consider our church to be their spiritual home are automatically members of Men's Fellowship. So even if you're new to the group, you are welcome to join us!

**To join meeting using a computing device, click the link:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83545179309?pwd=ckVZK3daOGkwRDBmSINFbkg1OEpwdz09>

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

**Meeting ID:** 835 4517 9309

**Passcode:** 02054

To find your local number:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kcxEas5lr3>

## A Celebration of the Christian Home – June 6, 2021

In honor and celebration of those who helped to raise us, we are collecting donations to benefit the Church World Service Blanket and Tools of Hope program. For \$10 you can purchase a blanket or tool in honor or memory of your parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, or anyone who helped bring you up. On Sunday, June 6<sup>th</sup>, these dedications will be listed in the weekly bulletin, which you can share with the person you are honoring.

Church World Service's vision is a world where everyone has food, voice and a safe place to call home. To do that, we come alongside families and communities, helping them to make that vision a reality. You are part of this vision. Together, we're going to keep pushing and keep fighting until people everywhere have the tools, education and opportunity they need.

Mail your donation to the church, clearly marked "Tools of Hope" along with this [dedication form](#).

## The Prudential Committee

2020 and into 2021 has been a challenge for many, with the Church also facing similar challenges. In an effort to include as many people as possible during the pandemic, we upgraded and added to our technology, incurring significant unplanned costs above and beyond what was approved in the budget at Annual Meeting. Specifically, we added a new video camera to broadcast the worship service while we were unable to physically be in the church; this will continue for those wishing to stay remote as restrictions loosen. This included updating the wiring and the Wi-Fi in and around the sanctuary. A new laptop was purchased for the video broadcasts and we will double up the use of this laptop with the Collector's software and usage.

We have been as frugal as possible and these enhancements have a total cost of \$2500, which was not in the budget. We discussed this being a Capital expense, but there are some more significant things coming down the road (i.e. the roof) that will need attention and Capital monies. We will consider adding a separate line item in the budget for technology expenses, but that would be for next year.

We are humbly asking that if anyone would be willing to make a donation towards these technology improvements, it would be a tremendous help. Any amount would be appreciated, send to the church with a note that the funds are for "technology" improvements.

Thank you for your consideration,

The Prudential Committee

## Changes in our Workforce

Our church has been through a lot of changes these past two months.

- As most know, Shelley Goes is now our Administrative Assistant.
- Our long-time Sexton, Kerry Sullivan has stepped aside for, passed the torch on to, her daughter Abigail. Much gratitude for Kerry's labor over many years. Welcome to Abby. Abby grew up helping her mother out, so she has hit the ground running.
- Doug Briggs has filled the position of Youth Minister for the last year and has decided to step down effective the first week of June. Much gratitude for Doug's many efforts with our youth. The Church Council will be discussing how to move forward with Faith Formation and what type of employee if any we might need.
- Also, during the month of May we transitioned from a monthly pay period to a bi-weekly pay period bringing ourselves in line with Fair Labor Practices.

## From the Music Director

In a recent meeting of the choir, we discussed the challenge before us. It bears repeating that we have experienced a loss of members through retirement, illness, and death. I have written articles for the Spire for years and am sorry to say, it seems to have little effect on membership. At this point Plan A is to scale back on how often we sing and with one male singer, we need to choose different music.

Here's how you can help - ideally, join the choir. If that doesn't seem possible for you, how about submitting the titles of one or two anthems or songs that you would like to hear? You all know how to reach me.

We all need to find new ways to participate. Vocal and instrumental solos are very welcome.

In an attempt to make rehearsal time convenient, we discussed meeting on Thursdays for singing and a BYO supper. We have some long days of sunlight ahead, so rehearsals outside might be a good time for singing safely and fellowship.

We're all in this together - let us hear from you.

Myrna

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*We're on the Web!*

*Visit us at:*

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

## IMPORTANT COVID SAFETY REMINDERS

Currently, even when there are people in the building, the exterior doors are 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 during school hours:

- Observe posted signs and safety protocols (copies of the church's protocols are posted on our website and the office door)
- Wear a mask (masks are optional at other times)
- Use hand sanitizer & wipe down surfaces

Thank you for helping us function  
in a safe environment!



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