



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.*

## From the *Interim Pastor*



### Ordinary Time

The Christian year began with Advent back six months ago. From Advent to Pentecost we have rehearsed and retold the church's birth story. Now we enter Ordinary time, which this year, I think, is going to be anything but ordinary. But maybe, by our gracious living, we can make this strange time seem ordinary.

Ordinary time is the longest season of the Christian calendar stretching from June to November. What happens during Ordinary time? The other seasons we know well. We have our traditions for Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter and Pentecost but what do we do during Ordinary time? The work of the Church!

It is a time of evangelism and faithful worship as most newcomers visit during this season. Our liturgy now focuses on the teachings of Jesus and our relationship with God right now more so than celebrating the story of old. We focus on discipleship and mission. While there are fewer rituals & traditions, there is greater responsibility. We do because we want to, not because we have to. We hold ourselves accountable for our personal discipleship in daily living. There is a different feel during Ordinary time. Ordinary time is a wonderful season of blessing as God's Spirit blows through our lives, opening possibilities. May you feel the refreshment of God's grace through this season of growth and harvest.

When we arrive at Reign of Christ Sunday in November we will be a different congregation than the one who began the Advent season in 2019.

- Continued on page 2 -

*The Church of Christ, Congregational is open through our on-line platforms, although our building remains closed for now. Please see page 3 for an important message from the Moderator, with details on the planning that is taking place to get the church in position to re-open the building.*



## Worship for June

All worship for the month of June will occur on Zoom. Zoom links will be sent out on the Friday prior to the Sunday worship date. As much as possible it will be recorded and posted to Facebook at a later time.

As we progress through the month, please share your feedback with the Deacons on what is working/not working for you from Facebook Live, Zoom and other ways spiritual care is being offered. Please plan on virtual worship for the foreseeable future.

**June 7** **Trinity Sunday, Communion, Graduation Sunday**

Matthew 28:16 - 20.  
2 Corinthians 13:11-13

**June 14** **"Action in Faith"**

Matthew 9:35-10:8  
Romans 5:1-8

**June 21** **Father's Day, "Live to God"**

Matthew 10:24-39.  
Romans 6:1b-11

**June 28** **"Discipleship"**

Matthew 10:40-42  
Romans 6:12-23

*From the Interim Pastor cont.*

*Interim Time*

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.

Beyond that work, I will be your pastor. I've never pastored a congregation through a global pandemic but I will do my best relying on God's grace to provide spiritual guidance and care over the coming year. Please contact me for whatever you might need. I have set regular office hours via zoom on Mondays 10am -12pm. I will eventually have hours set for an evening time slot also. Feel free to email or text me about anything at anytime. During the night and on my day off, I will turn off text and email notifications and will only answer the phone if it rings, so please call me with any emergencies. Thursdays will be my day off.

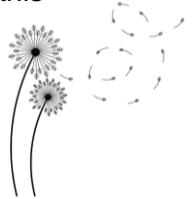
*Pandemic Time*

The church is open, alive and well. It will continue to be even while we are unable to gather in person. By staying home we have slowed the spread of this virus and want to keep the spread low. To that end we all need to learn new ways of being where we do not expose ourselves or others to the coronavirus. As society slowly re-engages, we will make mistakes and have to be reminded to step back or put on our mask. Eventually, the masks, physical distance between us, sanitizing and on-line communication will become a matter of habit but until then I pray we are able to be graceful with each other. I pray we will honor the fear experienced by ourselves and others and not ridicule or belittle. I also pray we will find ways to safely gather in the vicinity of each other.

Until the day comes when we no longer need these precautions due to Covid-19, I pray for the strength of our community to look out for one another regardless of our age. I encourage you to consider what you will do if you or a loved one become ill.

Have you made plans for your family, your house, your business? Do you have friends or family with whom you should speak? Important discussions need to happen and plans need to be put in place, before a person becomes ill.

I pray that this pandemic will make us nicer people; that we will see the inherent worth of each person and will treat them as valuable and precious. May God bless us as we stumble along this new path that eventually we will stride confidently along together.



Grace,

Jennifer Geary

## Join Us Weekly on Wednesdays

### Bible Study at 11:00am on Zoom

Our weekly Bible Study will focus on the Psalm that relates to the upcoming Sunday worship.

June 3 - Psalm 8  
June 10 - Psalm 100  
June 17 - Psalm 69  
June 24 - Psalm 89

To join by phone: Call 929-436-2866

Or join by clicking this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85996712754?>

Meeting ID: 859 9671 2754

Password: 02054

The Bible Study log-in will be the same each week.

### Church Check-ins at 7:00pm Livestreamed on Facebook

Hear the latest announcements and connect with others through prayer.

You don't need a Facebook account to participate. Just click this link:

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

## Message from the *Moderator*



Happy June!

Who knew that back in March we would still be in an uncertain time with all things COVID-19. I hope you are all settling into the new way of life for now.

I wanted to give you a quick update of where we are as a church during this pandemic. I'm sure you have seen that the state and federal governments have given the green light to start holding church services, providing that we follow their strict guidelines. While we have the go-ahead from them, our Southern New England UCC (SNEUCC) Conference leaders have recommended that we hold off any gatherings until September.

The church council takes all of the recommendations very seriously. We believe we should be on the conservative side and be cautious, so at this time, Millis UCC will continue with online services with Rev. Jennifer Geary running them. Jennifer and the Deacons are looking to create more ways to worship remotely, and to make sure all our members feel connected while we go through this phase of slowly re-opening.

Part of the requirements to re-open is the need to develop processes around handling infectious diseases. These processes can be used not only for COVID-19, but for any infectious disease that may come about in the future. Jennifer and the Trustees are leading this effort, and if you would like to help in this effort, please reach out to Jennifer.

The church council is meeting every other week now, to make sure progress is being made on reaching out to our members and to get the church open again. We also continue to monitor the finances that have been impacted by COVID-19. Fortunately, the church was approved to receive the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) which means employees of the church will continue to get paid. We are also working with Happy Hours Nursery to make sure the church is ready for them when they are ready to re-open.

We thank everyone who has continued with their pledges and donations. While we received the PPP Loan, we still need more than the loan to fund our church. I appreciate all of you who have made sure the church continues to do the work it is called to do, especially at this time. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to reach out to either Jennifer, the Deacons, or myself.

Again, take care and stay healthy and safe until we physically see each other again!

Gail Luck, Moderator



## *M & M's Help the Homeless*

Over the past several years, some members of the M & M's (Monday Morning group) have contributed knit panels to the Chatham yarn shop, **A Great Yarn**. Volunteers then assemble blankets from the panels and distribute them to the Cape's homeless population.

This year the number of blankets made was 229, topping last year's record of 215. Over 325 different individuals prepared at least one panel, and they were sent in from 11 different states. This was the shop's fifth Knit-a-Thon. The first was in 2015 and produced 29 blankets. Five years later the number has increased by 200 blankets. Over the five-year period, the Knit-a-Thons have produced nearly 800 blankets for the Cape's homeless.

A Great Yarn shop collect panels year-round and stores them for the next Knit-a-Thon, and we have already dropped several off for next year's collection.

## Meet the Reverend Jennifer Geary



Jennifer Geary grew up on a dairy farm in Westhampton, MA. She is married to Bud Geary; together they have three grown children and four grandchildren. She attended Washington University in St. Louis and Westfield State College, from which she

graduated with a BS in Biology. In 1995, she graduated from Lancaster Theological Seminary with a MDiv and was ordained in the United Church of Christ.

Prior to and in the midst of ministry she worked as a Substitute Teacher, Athletic Coach and Nursing Assistant. Her first eight years of ministry were in Morristown, VT where she served as full-time settled pastor, Community Critical Care Chaplain and Hospice Chaplain.

Jennifer spent ten years as an Interim Pastor serving seven churches in Vermont and Massachusetts for various lengths of time from two months to three years. For the last seven years, Jennifer served as the Director of Irons Homestead Camp & Retreat, the Outdoor Ministry site for the former Rhode Island Conference, UCC.

While in Vermont Jennifer served as the chair of the Board of Directors and as the Disaster Response Coordinator for the VT Conference UCC. She also served as the clerk/treasurer and moderator of the Northeast Association.

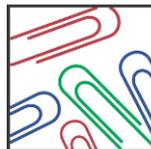
Jennifer currently lives in Burrillville, RI and will commute to Millis. For the next several months most of her interaction with members of the congregation will be via phone or internet although she is hoping to be able to conduct some door-yard visits throughout the Summer.

Jennifer prefers to be called Jennifer or Reverend Geary, whichever feels most comfortable for you.

### Contact Information:

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

Phone: (774) 993-9407



## Rev. Geary's Office Hours on Zoom Mondays 10am-12pm

Visit with Rev. Geary during Zoom Office Hours.

Click this link to join:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87349255741>

Or to join by phone, call: 929-436-2866

Meeting ID: 873 4925 5741

If you are unable to visit during Zoom office hours, you can reach Rev. Geary at:

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

Phone: (774) 993-9407

## Trustees' Update on Church Building & Covid Procedures

The Trustees, along with two members of the Leadership Council, have formed a committee to work on developing the written procedures and policies and to acquire the supplies that will be needed before we can safely open the church building for worship and other gatherings.

In the meantime, while the church building remains closed, the Trustees are hoping to complete a few cleaning projects. We don't know when the virus restrictions will be lifted, but the church will be ready!

Projects include cleaning walls, woodwork, kitchen stove, refrigerator, counters and drawers, pews, windows and sills.

Kathy Stevens is coordinating the work. Masks will be mandatory, and there will be a limit on the number of people who can work at one time. If you have a few hours and would like to help out, please call Kathy at (508) 376-8124.

And a big thank you to Steve Howie for painting the ramp and the flag pole, and mowing the lawn! Everything looks great!

## Deacons Update on Next Steps in the Transitional Ministry Process

The Search Committee was pleased to call The Reverend Jennifer Geary to the Interim Minister position at UCC Millis. Rev. Geary began her service with us on May 18th. To find out more about Jennifer, refer to her welcome and biography.

This is an unusual time for beginning with a new congregation and Rev. Geary has begun her time with us with grace, enthusiasm and new avenues of outreach to our faith community. The diaconate will be working closely with Jennifer on worship services and how to address the spiritual needs of the congregation now and when we are able to be in the church building at a point in the future.

So, now what? Where do we go from here? What is the timeline? How do we get involved in the next steps?

*As explained on the Southern New England UCC (SNEUCC) Transitional Ministry site: Interim time is a crucial time in the life of a congregation. It's an important time to reflect on where the church has been and where it is going. To prepare for the next chapter in the life and ministry of the church this is a pivotal time to discover "Who we are?", "Who is our neighbor?", and "What is God calling us to do and to be?" Finding this crystal clarity is pivotal to an effective search process for the next pastor, as well as a healthy, faithful and effective start in the church's next chapter.*

Over the next several months, we as a congregation with Jennifer's guidance, will be answering these questions to discern where we want to be as a church in the future. In time, we will be seeking volunteers to be on a task force for the development of a new church profile and also one for the settled minister search and transition. Obviously due to our small congregation there will most likely be overlap on these task forces.

The general guidelines by the SNEUCC for completing the work to answer these questions, develop a new church profile and then complete a search for a new settled minister is 12 to 14 months.

Please remember the Deacons Fund is available for church members who may be in financial need during these trying times. Confidentiality is maintained. If you are in need, please contact Rev. Geary by the contact the pastor email link on the church website.

Lastly, thank you to everyone who made the Drive-Thru Farewell for Rev. Jen and her family a wonderful send off. From the blazing sirens of the Fire and Police departments, signs, balloons, flags and of course a visit from Dino brought smiles and tears to all. Remember, we are planning to have a proper party within the next few months when we can all gather again safely.

Be well,  
Wendy Schneider and Sue Conte  
Deacon Co- Chairs



## You Are Not Alone!

### If you need anything, contact the church:

Office Phone: (508) 376-5034

Office Email: [millisucc@msn.com](mailto:millisucc@msn.com)

Pastor's Phone: (774) 993-9407

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

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

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

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

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

## Visitors' Group Update



The Visitors' Group will not be meeting in June.

We welcomed our Interim Pastor, the Reverend Jennifer Geary, to our church on May 18. We are looking forward to meeting and working with her.

We hope and pray that everyone is doing well during this difficult time. Let us continue to be in touch with those we visit and those who live alone, by making a phone call or by sending a card or a note. Please contact the church (508-376-5034) or one of the visitors if you have any questions or are in need.

"I will never leave you or forsake you."  
Hebrews 13:5



The Visitors:

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

## How Can I Keep from



This song has been running through my mind for the last few days.

*My life goes on in endless song  
Above earth's lamentations,  
I hear the real, though far-off hymn  
That hails a new creation.  
Through all the tumult and the strife  
I hear its music ringing,  
It sounds an echo in my soul.  
How can I keep from singing?*

This is a question that we as a congregation and choir ask ourselves in this strange time. I don't know when we will be able to join in song, but I can assure you that Reverend Geary, Eileen and I are working on finding ways to make it happen on our current, virtual platforms.

If you're a singer, keep your voice in shape by singing and humming as you go about your daily life. If you play an instrument and can record yourself, we can add that into the service.

We also need technicians, and I welcome anyone with recording and computer skills to be in touch with me as we try new ways to keep the music going. Please contact me at: [myrnmusic@comcast.net](mailto:myrnmusic@comcast.net), or (508) 376-3729.

Myrna Rybczyk, Director of Music



Happy  
Father's  
Day  
June 21

**Please note: The Youth Hiking Camp** that is usually held in July has been canceled this year since trailheads and campgrounds are closed.

