

THE SPIRE

JANUARY 2022

We seek to be a Christian community by worshipping God through prayer, music, and the proclaimed Word. Following Christ's example, we enthusiastically reach out to everyone with compassion, respect and love so that we may grow in faith and commitment together.

Church of Christ, Congregational, UCC

142 Exchange St., Millis, MA 02054

www.millisucc.org • (508) 376-5034 • millisucc@msn.com



An Open and Affirming Congregation

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

Sunday Worship in January

Come, praise God

January 2 – Epiphany & Communion

Isaiah 60:1-6; Matthew 2:1-12

January 9 – Baptism of Jesus

Acts 8:14-17; Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

January 16 – First of Jesus' signs (Water into Wine)

1 Corinthians 12:1-11; John 2:1-11

January 23 – Hunger and Thirst for Justice

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a;
Luke 4:14-21

January 30 – Homecoming: Joy or Disappointment?

1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Luke 4:21-30

To join Sunday worship services by Zoom, use 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

Mark Your Calendar!

Annual Meeting

Sunday, January 30, 2022

Immediately following worship

In person

Warrant to be published in a few weeks.

Leadership Retreat

Saturday, February 5, 2022

8:00 am – 12:00 pm, in Fellowship Hall

All elected leaders, officers, and committees will gather to map out the year together, identifying priorities and responsibilities. Breakfast will be served

Volunteers Needed!

The following positions need to have nominees prior to the Annual Meeting on January 30.

Prayerfully review the church directory to see who God is calling to serve. Is it you? Position descriptions can be found further along in the Spire.

Moderator

Treasurer

Assistant Treasurer

Assistant Collector

Deacons

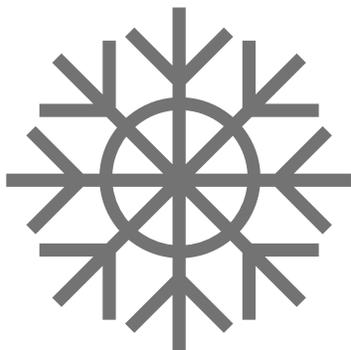
Trustees

Prudential

Christian Education

Missions

Welcoming



From the Interim Pastor **Swirling Negativity**

The news is full of information gathered about the January 6th attack on the Capitol. Over and over, we hear folks apologize and express how they just got caught up in the frenzy of the crowd. As Christians, we know another story of folks getting caught up in the frenzy of the crowd who brought about the death of Jesus. And we know that wasn't the end of the story. We are an Easter people who can see through the gloom to the everlasting light.

A year ago, with the vaccine roll out, we were all so hopeful that life would start to feel less anxious. And yet...somedays it feels like we are out on the sea in a big storm and our ship has gone down. We find ourselves in a wild sea of negativity. Everyone is swimming toward the shore. We are swimming as hard as we can while looking side to side to make sure we are all making it together. Occasionally, an individual or group finds a piece of floating debris to hold onto and catch their breath but then a strong wave forces us off and we are swimming again. The waters are choppy and there are swirling eddies that try to suck us down. We thought we were nearing the beach when we got caught in a riptide that rushed us back out into the deep, finding it hard to catch our breath. It can be really easy to get sucked into a frenzy of negativity.

God gives us rest. God gives us strength. God gives us hope. God gives us grace. We might not be able to calm the sea, but we can share these gifts from God with each other. We fight the pull of the whirlpools of negativity and whisper or shout encouragement to each other. When we work together, no one will sink too low.

We will wash up on a shore. Let's do it together and not let swirling negativity suck us apart. Everyone of us can be the ray of light that helps another. Most of you have a phone nearby or in your hand. Stop, right now, and give someone a call. Make yourself a note to share sunshine instead of clouds. We need to hear each other's support and faith that God is with us.

Here is my prayer to God this day:

God, when life gets tough, we want relief; we want a savior; we want a scapegoat. We want someone or something to blame for all this trouble. Help us accept that stuff happens. Help us accept the challenge of figuring out how to be our best selves, together, no matter what life or death brings us. Help us focus on thriving in the midst of upheaval. Help us forgive ourselves and others.

We know we can do this, as we have read the stories of how you have been with humanity since the beginning of time. You, God, have never left us alone. Help us gain strength from your constant presence. Help us access your positivity and share it with others. For it is what the world needs most today - a love that never lets us go, no matter how dark or how choppy the seas become.

God, help us to see the good in each other and celebrate it. God, help us to see the good you are doing around us, every day, and celebrate it. God, remove the depression, remove the dull, remove the frustration, remove the confusion, remove the pressure. Lift this burden that we might join our voices in praise and joy instead of repeating tales of woe. Raise us up on eagles wings high above the fray of human pettiness and the whirlpools of negativity. Gently place us on the ground where you need us to be, that you will receive glory and honor and praise. I ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

Trustees Report

The sign has been made changing parking regulations for the upper lot spaces. Please plan on only parking in the upper lot for 15 minute periods between 3:00-6:00 p.m. Monday-Friday. This will allow the nursery school parents to pick up their children more easily each day. If you have church business during these hours and need a handicap space, please use it-all others, please use the lower lot.

The Trustees now have all the information about the needed steeple repairs. The biggest change is that the clock faces will be removed, as they cannot be maintained. Alternatives, costs, and all decisions will be presented at the Annual Meeting on January 30, 2022. Please plan on attending in-person or on Zoom to make your voice heard!

Missions Update **Advent Gift Giving**

Thank you:

For all who gave to the Food Pantry Holiday Gift program. The money was used for \$25.00 gift cards. All families were given gift cards for either Target-Walmart-Roche Brothers or Market Basket.

Thank you:

For all who participated in our Reverse Advent Calendar Giving Project. The Food Pantry appreciated all the food and personal items that were collected.

Healing Services

Going forward, there will be a healing service on a Monday evening each month. These services will take place in the parlor unless numbers dictate otherwise. The service will begin with a presentation on a certain type or form of healing prayer. The gathered body will then experience healing prayer in that form. This service is open to all. Some might have an acute or chronic need for healing of body, mind, or spirit. All of us have been dinged and dented by life and can use healing. Consider putting these services on your calendar.

The January gathering will be at 7:30 on Monday, January 24th.

In February, we will gather on February 21st, Presidents' Day.

Thank you to all Jolly Holly Fair Volunteers and Participants!

From Linda Jones (Chief Elf):

Thanks, Merci, Gracias for the donations to the Candy Table!

It was wonderful to greet our regular customers again at the Jolly Holly Fair. Special thanks to Myrna and Deb for the delicious fudge which sold out quickly! The peanut brittle from Jan, chocolate creations from Katelyn, and Christmas pretzels and crackers from Mrs. Coutts were also best sellers!

A HUGE thanks to the loyal crew of elves who filled containers and paper rolls, traced and cut fabric covers, and also worked the table on Fair day!!

Gratitude Corner



Thank you to...

Mary Jensen for managing the prayer chain

Our Advent Wreath lighters

Deb, Brian, Philip, and Nathaniel Hall

Allen, Kelly, and Ezekiel Williams

Kathy Stevens, Pam Johansson, and Pat Spearing

Rich, Pepper, and Ginger Manzano

Samantha, Jacob, Angelina, James, and Adam Scoppetto

Our Advent Scripture readers

Maria Melchionda

Nicole Bratsos

Jan Krohn

The Worship Team of Kathy Stevens, Suzi Sennott, Myrna Rybczyk, and Wendy Schneider, for planning and facilitating Advent and Christmas worship

Fellowship Refreshment Providers

Art & Jen Payne

Men's Fellowship

Kathy Stevens

Ellie Costa & Nancy Auger

Rick Jones for the Belltower music and fixing the pulpit microphone

Andy Bolton for fixing the broken outlets and installing new lights in the Food Pantry and other small repairs noticed around the building

All who created ornaments for the sanctuary Christmas tree – it was beautifully dressed

Myrna & the choir for beautiful Advent Music

Bud and I would like to thank everyone for your well wishes, cards, and gifts during this Christmas Season. We are blessed to be part of this congregation. – Rev. 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.

What Do The Church Committees Do?

We are looking for volunteers to be nominated to serve on church committees for the upcoming year. Nominees will be voted on at the Annual Meeting on January 30.

Do any of these committees stand out to you as a place where your time and talents might be of service? Please prayerfully consider joining a committee in 2022, and contact Rev. Geary or Gail DiGioia to nominate yourself or someone else.

Deacons - responsible for worship and spiritual matters

Trustees - care for the church building and property

Prudential - responsible for contracts and finances

Education - responsible for education for all ages. Has a strong focus on children and youth

Welcoming - responsible for inviting, welcoming, and helping everyone feel there is a place for them here at Church of Christ

COVID Protocols

We continue to follow current Health Department COVID protocols. Masks are to be worn in the building and during worship. Please continue to maintain a distance of at least six feet between you and others. Thank you for caring for others by engaging in these simple acts.

Rev. Geary's Office Hours on Zoom or In Person

Rev. Geary will be available to church members on-line via Zoom, or in person from **11am-1pm on Mondays**, and from **12pm-2 pm on Wednesdays**.

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

Adult Education

Please give us suggestions for topics or presenters you would like to see from the free adult education presentations.

Contact Rev. Geary for more information, or to make a suggestion.

The Power of the Prayer Chain:

If you would like to be added to the prayer chain, or if you or someone you know wants to receive prayers for a specific situation, send an email to

Mary Jensen at:

mejensen7@verizon.net.

From the Deacons

"New year—new verse, a new chapter, or just the same old story? Ultimately we write it. The choice is ours."

- Alex Morritt.

We are thankful that we were able to celebrate the season of Advent together in the sanctuary, as well as on Zoom. Thank you to all of our Advent wreath readers this year. It is always wonderful to have various voices read and light the candles. Celebrating with music from the choir made this year even more special.

The new year will be bringing changes to the Diaconate, once again. Our dedicated group will see Sue Conte, Doug Briggs, Joan Nichols, and Katelyn Andrews stepping off in February. According to the Constitution, the Diaconate may consist of up to eight active members of the congregation. With the above changes we will have THREE Deacons. This will be a challenge if we are not able to add to our team. We will be contacting members who we think would take an active role in the Diaconate. Please prayerfully consider if your calling would be to the Diaconate. If you have an interest, please contact one of the Deacons.

Best wishes for the New Year,

Sue Conte, Doug Briggs, Joan Nichols, Katelyn Andrews, Lauren Briggs, Suzi Sennott, and Wendy Schneider

Internship Alert!

The Southern New England Conference, UCC is pleased to announce an Environmental Justice Internship for 2022-2023!

The Environmental Justice Intern will help us create and lead school-year programming for youth or other church groups, hosted at two of our Outdoor Ministry sites, Silver Lake in Sharon, Connecticut and Irons Homestead, North Scituate, Rhode Island.

Now accepting applications from young adults with a passion for environmental justice, working with youth, and grounding in our justice-seeking faith!

This is a part-time internship with a \$5,000 stipend.

Full job description, application, and additional details available at <https://www.sneucc.org/environmental-justice-internship>

Please contact Emma Brewer-Wallin, Minister of Environmental and Economic Justice, with questions.



Socializing with the M&M's Mondays on Zoom and In Person!

The M & M's Monday Morning Needlework Group gathers virtually on Zoom, and in person in the Parlor! Join in the fun 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=VENBMmRob2krQW83RFJhNGJQQjJUdz09>

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

Meeting ID: 298 790 4285

Passcode: 866156

February Newsletter



The deadline for entries for the February Spire will be **January 20th**. Please have all your info in by then. Thank you.

Online 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 January" section on page 1 in this 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



Visitors' Group

Happy New Year!

The Visitor's Group will be meeting on Thursday, January 20, at 10:30 in the church parlor. We hope it will be a blessed year for all.

We hope everyone enjoyed the Christmas services and all the Christmas activities.

Our visits have been limited due to the increase of covid.

We hope and pray with God's help that our situation will improve.

"Be kind to one another tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you"

Ephesians 4:32 (NRSV)

Thought of the Day:

God has a special purpose for every season in our lives.

(UPPER ROOM)

The Visitors:

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



Transition to Search

The transition team is finishing up the Church Profile this month. Thank you to all who have contributed by surveys, small group discussions, leadership meetings, and after church discussions.

Now we come to the second phase of our search for new Pastor. We are seeking nominations for the search committee. You can nominate someone or yourself if interested in serving. All nominations will be considered by the Church Council and final selection will be made by Council. Please submit your nominee to the transition team by January 17th.

To be member of the Pastor search committee entails:

1. A faith commitment. Members engage in a 4-Way Covenant-a Covenant with their prospective pastor, the congregation, the UCC Conference and Association, and the Holy Spirit.
2. A time commitment. The process could take 9-18 months, from the first organizational meeting to the calling of the new pastor. The committee will mostly meet weekly.
3. A commitment to openness. They make a commitment to genuine consideration of all candidates.
4. A commitment to Consensus. Members need to be of one mind in recommending their prospective pastor to the congregation.

Transition team members:

Becky Abalutzk, Art Payne, and Jan Krohn

Leadership & Committees

Moderator	Gail Luck
Church Clerk	Nydia Rice
Treasurer	Mary Smith
Collector	Brooks Corl
Assistant Collector	Brian Hall

Diaconate		
Sue Conte	Wendy Schneider	Katelyn Andrews
Doug Briggs	Lauren Briggs	Joan Nichols
Suzi Sennott		
Missions		
Jan Krohn	Art Payne	Wendy Schneider
Mary Smith		
Trustees		
Kathy Stevens	Andy Bolton	Wayne Carlson
Bonnie MacDonald	Rich Manzano	
Prudential		
Bill Wright	Doug Coutts	
Christian Education		
Kelly Williams	Meghan Prescott	
Welcoming Committee		
Maria Melchionda	Katelyn Andrews	Judy Kosinski
Bonnie MacDonald	Myrna Rybczyk	
At-large Members of Church Council		
Judie Ackerman		
Pastoral Relations Committee		
Jo-Ellen Briggs	Jen Payne	John Smith
Linda Jones		

*The Pastoral Relations Committee is formed based on nominations from the Pastor, the Moderator and the Senior Deacon.

**Church of Christ
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We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

www.millisucc.org



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