NOURISH NURTURE SERVE BUILD

# The Courier

**Monthly Newsletter** **February 2021**

### *Worship*

February 7th
Guest Preacher—Rev. Amanda Mackenzie Howland
Fifth Sunday after Epiphany
Holy Communion

February 14th
Rev. Beth returns
Sixth Sunday after Epiphany
2 Kings 5:1-14
"What Does Love Look Like?"

### From the Deacon of Worship

We are very pleased with how well the Christmas and Advent season came together. Despite the challenges of online worship, we managed to come up with a series of services that helped make the holidays NEARLY as good as in-person worship -- including Katherine's amazing musical offerings, the beautifully decorated Sanctuary, and the always entertaining Christmas Pageant. Our thanks to the entire congregation for helping us make it happen!

After the new year, Rev. Beth had surgery on her shoulder and while she recovers our services are being led by two very capable guest preachers (Debbie Gline-Allen and Amanda Howland) through Feb 7. Beth plans to be back in the pulpit on Feb 14.

Our plan is to resume in-person services once the vaccine has been distributed and the infection rate is under control. The new variant of the virus is highly infectious, so it's critical that we stay vigilant for the safety of everyone in our church family. As always, feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

John Swanson
Deacon of Worship
(john.swanson1@verizon.net)

### *Worship*

February 17th
Ash Wednesday @ 7 PM
We join with our brothers and sisters from First Congregational Church to begin our Lenten journey.

February 21st
Lent I
Psalm 25:1-10,
Mark 1:9-15
"God, in You I Trust"

February 28th
Lent II
Mark 8:31-38
"A Life"

## Lent Bag Lunch Bible Study

Begins Monday, February 22nd at noon. We will follow a Lent Devotional. If you'd like to participate, please contact Rev. Beth for a copy.

### MHCC VIRTUAL COMMUNITY

We hope to see you in our virtual community. Please join any of the virtual groups listed below.

**"COFFEE HOUR"**- Thursday nights at 7 P.M**.** This is a relaxed time to get together and share in community.

**MORNING PRAYER** - Wednesday mornings at 8:30 A.M. All are welcome to join in prayer for those on our prayer list and for our world.

**VIRTUAL OPEN MIC** - Organized by Bob Nasella on the third Sunday of each month at 7 P.M. The next Open Mic is February 21st. For more details on participating as a musician, contact Bob: robert.nasella@mdlz.com

**ANTIRACISM TEAM** – Usually meets on the second Tuesday of the month. For February only, the meeting is on **Tuesday, February 23rd**. All are welcome to join.

The above events can all be accessed through links on the church calendar at: https://www.mhcc-ucc.org/church-calendar.html

**Ash Wednesday - February 17th 7:00 P.M.**

We join with our brothers and sisters from First Congregational Church to begin our Lenten journey.

## Service & Outreach

### A Servant's Heart Food Pantry

The Food Pantry, in combination with the City of Melrose continues to provide much needed groceries to members of our community. Please consider picking up a few items for the pantry this month. Current list of needs:

- Hot cocoa or coffee
- Jelly or jam
- Microwave popcorn
- Beef stew or chunky soup
- Canned fruit
- Bar soap or dish soap

Donations can be dropped off at Faith Evangelical Church(200 Franklin St. Melrose). You can enter the driveway on the Albion St side of the church and locate a wooden shed to place your items. Thank you for your continued support!

## Membership and Growth

We were fortunate to host a few outdoor in-person coffee hours this fall before the weather turned on us. As many of us hunker down at home we, as the membership and growth team, would like to know if there is something we can do to get us together, either virtually or in a socially-distanced event. We would love to hear from you with ideas. For virtual events, some suggestions are another movie or games night, bingo, or trivia. The socially-distanced events are a little tougher but people have had picnics, walks, or small gatherings on porches. We are happy to coordinate the event we are just looking for ideas!
Please send your ideas to any member of the Membership and Growth team, if you have any questions or you may email Joanne Hartung at joanne.hartung@envestnet.com.

## From the Moderator

The next Congregational Meeting is March 21st at 4PM. There will be a ZOOM link sent in advance and a Warrant with a formal agenda. The plan at this point is do something fun. We may be virtual but, it doesn't mean we can't enjoy ourselves as a community. We'll also likely will be taking a look at the budget and having a conversation about that. The idea being that we want input from throughout the congregation for how we can best move forward and continue to accomplish our mission. Often some of the best ideas for how to improve things, become more efficient and save money have been generated by these sorts of community conversations. Input from all is needed and welcome. And we all need to review where things stand to make the best possible decisions together, as a community.

This has been a challenging time for many. There have been health challenges and scares. Time and again I have seen members of this community support one another. We've had in person coffee hour and outdoor Sunday School. Folks have served members in our congregation by delivering meals as well as surprise gifts in some cases to one another's homes. We are resilient and we are guided by a common bond. We want to worship together. We appreciate and find joy in one another's company. While we cannot get together in person, there is a lot we can do to continue to serve one another.

Please contact me or Pastor Beth with your needs, ideas or suggestions. If you need something, please let us know. If we can run errands for you, bring you groceries, help you move or just be a listening ear on the phone....please know, we are all there for one another. If there is a better way to do something or a new idea you want to share, please don't hesitate to be in touch. I can be contacted on my cell phone anytime at (617) 957-9360 and I live just footsteps from the Church. We are all so very blessed to have one another to call upon and lean on.

There are exciting improvements underway at the church. There are plans in place to upgrade technology to better serve you and groups working together to help us become an anti-racist Congregation. There are no shortages of challenges. But, we also have new grants in the pipeline, PPP loans to consider applying for and all kinds of opportunities. And I deeply believe, there are better days ahead for all of us.

Thank you for being there for one another. I look forward to all of us deepening and further connecting with one another in the weeks and months ahead.

Robert Ayles, Moderator

**"Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does." ~William James**

## Finance Team

Hello from the Finance Team and Happy Winter. Much has happened since the last edition of the Courier. First, we are grateful for all the volunteers, customers, and general support of the very successful Faux Fair held last November. The funds raised exceeded our expectations! Next, we are blessed with having received notice that our Paycheck Protection Program loan of $32,540 has been successfully converted to a grant as of December 18th and will not need to be repaid. Halleluiah! These funds will help cover current gaps in our budget including less than expected rental income. Finally, Winter marks the last quarter of the fiscal year for the church. We ask that you look at your pledge commitment and if possible, try to get those commitments in before the close of the year. Thank you for your financial support of the church. Stay Warm!

The Finance Team

## A Note from the Music Director

I took my first ukulele lesson last week! It was wonderful and I realized I have so much to learn! Music continues to be an important part of worship at MHCC. We continue to record new pieces, and will have some things from Bob Nasella and Eugene Kaminsky to look forward to. It has been such a difficult year, and I hope that the music each week brings you some joy and solace. I can't tell you how much I miss hearing you ALL sing the hymns each week, and I look forward to the day we can all be together again, raising our voices in song.

Katherine Foley, Music Director

***Please join us in praying for God's comfort and guidance in their lives and this world, as well as for all those whom you know need God's love and caring.***

*Please call or email the church office to add a name to our prayer list.*

Marilyn Ayles (Rob Ayles' mother)
Natalie Boutwell (Joy Erb's mom)
Jim Braden
Joanne Hartung
Erin Heyneman
Bonnie LaBossiere (Carol Trout's daughter)
Paul Lind
Art Ratté (Teri Vienot's father)
Rachel Steeper
Shirley Swanson (John Swanson's mother)
Prayers for MHCC members and friends who work in health care: Alexandra, Lynn, Jillian, Kathy, Evan, Jolyn, Lindsey, Nicole, Jane, Anne, Amberly

Our Sunshine List: *Please send cards, visit and hold in your prayers.*

Ralph Archibald, Country Manor, 180 Low St., Newburyport, MA 01950
Barbara Kenworthy, The Fitch Home, 75 Lake St., Melrose, MA 02176
Phyllis Greene, Rosewood Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, 22 Johnson St., Peabody, MA 01960
Charlotte Swan, Greenwood Nursing & Rehab Center, 90 Greenwood St., Wakefield, MA 01880
Janice Blanchard, Oosterman Rest Home, 93 Laurel St., Melrose, MA 02176
Nancy Chappel, 101 Cottage St. Apt. 426, Melrose, MA 02176
Beverly and Michael Harrison, Steele House, One Nason Ave., Apt. 514, Melrose, MA 02176

## Congregational Meeting

Sunday, March 21st at 4PM

There will be a ZOOM link sent in advance.

# WARRANT FOR THE CONGREGATIONAL MEETING OF MARCH 21, 2021

*To the Legal Voters of the Melrose Highlands Congregational Church:*

**You are hereby notified, in accordance with Article 6, Section 4 of the By-Laws, that a Congregational Meeting of the Melrose Highlands Congregational Church will be held on Sunday, March 21, 2021, via ZOOM at 4:00 PM, to transact the following business:**

To hear a financial update.

To hear an update on our church's response to the global pandemic and Easter worship plans.

To hear an update from the Antiracism Team.

To share in a ZOOM **fun** event *during* the meeting.

To transact any other business that legally must be brought before the Meeting.

***The link to access the ZOOM meeting will be provided in the MHCC eNews in the week of March 14.***

**Carol Rosseland, Clerk** January 25, 2021

MHCC

Feb 2021 (Eastern Time - New York)

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 31<br>10am - WORSHIP @ | 1<br>7pm - Executive | 2<br>7:30pm - Wise | 3<br>8:30am - Morning | 4<br>7pm - Coffee Hour @ | 5 | 6 |
| 7<br>10am - WORSHIP @ | 8 | 9 | 10<br>8:30am - Morning | 11<br>7pm - Coffee Hour @ | 12 | 13 |
| 14<br>Birthday Wishes @<br>10am - WORSHIP @ | 15<br>President's Day | 16 | 17<br>Ash Wednesday<br>8:30am - Morning<br>4pm - BOL-Meal<br>7pm - Ash | 18<br>7pm - Coffee Hour @ | 19 | 20 |
| 21<br>Lent I<br>Stewardship begins<br>10am - WORSHIP @<br>7pm - OPEN MIC @ | 22<br>12pm - Bible Studt<br>7pm - Outreach @ | 23<br>7pm - Antiracism | 24<br>8:30am - Morning | 25<br>7pm - Coffee Hour @ | 26 | 27 |
| 28<br>Lent II<br>10am - WORSHIP @ | 1<br>12pm - Bible Studt<br>7pm - Executive | 2 | 3<br>8:30am - Morning | 4<br>7pm - Coffee Hour @ | 5 | 6 |