



# The Courier

Newsletter May/June 2025



## **Worship**

May 4<sup>th</sup>  
Third Sunday of  
Easter  
Communion

May 11<sup>th</sup>  
Fourth Sunday of  
Easter

May 18<sup>th</sup>  
Fifth Sunday of  
Easter  
Annual Meeting

May 25<sup>th</sup>  
Sixth Sunday of  
Easter

Dear Friends,

Following Easter, it feels that we've gone full steam ahead into spring! We see the blooming of flowers and the return of green to the grass. As I walk or drive through our neighborhoods, I am surprised by the beauty of nature and giant flowering trees. For some reason, it almost feels surprising what the world is capable of as it returns to beauty in this season. There is so much bounty and abundance in the world.

It's a stark contrast to what we see in the paper or on our news feeds. Everywhere we turn it seems that we hear about how there isn't enough to go around. Whether that's in the government cutting workers, or in the economy of goods that come in shipping containers from other countries. These things are ultimately managed by humanity, and it's painful to see how we treat one another based on our perception of there being not enough to go around.

*continued*

## **Worship**

June 1<sup>st</sup>  
Seventh Sunday of  
Easter  
Communion

June 8<sup>th</sup>  
Pentecost Sunday  
Heifer Marketplace  
2 PM Installation for  
Pastor Chris

June 15<sup>th</sup>  
Trinity Sunday  
Blessing of the Animals

June 22<sup>nd</sup>  
Second Sunday after  
Pentecost  
Final Sunday of the pro-  
gram year.



In Easter and in the early church, this contrast between the beauty and bounty that God gives us and the difficulties of “the world” abounds (and in scripture that refers to the human world, controlled by the powers of the day). The church was surrounded by difficult situations. Most were not citizens of Rome and did not have rights in the eyes of the state. They were surrounded by people who didn’t want to give them legitimacy or power, whether religious or political. Many of them were persecuted and imprisoned. And yet, they thrived and grew because they experienced God among them and because they took care of one another. They welcomed people in and they provided for the needs that each person had.

We’re facing a difficult time in this country. This is where the church has historically thrived in coming together, in taking care of one another, in providing for our neighbors, and showing that what God provides, and that there is love to go around. We have this in front of us, and I believe that we can rise to the occasion. There is love and grace, and even justice at the center of what we do. As we come together to celebrate the 150 years that we’ve been a church, we’ll see the ways this has been who we are. There is a great beauty in that which matches the flowers in the spring. We can carry this forward! May we be surprised by the spirit of it as we bloom in caring for one another.

Blessings and peace,

Pastor Chris

## From the Desk of the Moderator

In my last Courier missive to you all, I complained about the cold and told you how much I was looking forward to Beer + Bites. Well, I'm now thinking seriously about turning my air conditioner on for the first time this year (yay, warmth!), and basking in pleasant memories of a fun evening at Memorial Hall. (Thanks again to everyone who helped make B+B a success!)

So May is finally here and we are moving into the final weeks of the church year — but that doesn't mean things are slowing down! There's still plenty going on here at MHCC: There are coffee hours to set up, scriptures to read (hello, liturgists!), a Music Director to hire, animals to bless, a big anniversary to prepare for (150!), and lots more! We are so lucky to have such a vibrant church community with so many generous, caring, and talented individuals. Thank you for all you've done and thank you for all you *will do* in the days and weeks ahead... you are needed and valued!

And your participation is needed and valued at our **Annual Meeting**, taking place after worship on **May 18**. We'll do the potluck thing, dig into some critical issues at MHCC (like money!), and maybe even have some fun. This is one of the most important milestones in the church year, and your voices (and ears) are critical to the conversation. I look forward to seeing you there. Questions, concerns, or suggestions? Let me know.

And yes, I'm **still** excited for what lies ahead. Especially the animals.

Warmly,  
John Swanson

## Service and Outreach

✧ Save the Date!

**Volunteer with Cradles to Crayons – Sept. 13** ✧

Join the Service and Outreach Team on Saturday, September 13, for a meaningful volunteer opportunity at Cradles to Crayons in Newton!

We'll spend two hours at the Giving Factory, sorting and packaging new and gently used clothing for children in need across Massachusetts. This is a family-friendly and all-are-welcome event—whether you're coming solo, with a friend, a partner, or kids. *(Volunteers must be age 5 or older; those between the ages of 5-18 must be accompanied by an adult.)*

📅 Mark your calendar now—and stay tuned for sign-up details coming in the weeks ahead!



## Bread of Life Dinner

**Bread of Life**  
*Food for the body...Nurture for the soul*

The next date for our church to provide dinner for the Bread of Life Feeding Ministry is **Wednesday, June 18**. We prepare the dinner, then serve it buffet-style at Bread of Life's new site at 54 Eastern Avenue in Malden. Volunteers who are helping to prepare the dinner need to arrive by 3 pm. Volunteers to help serve the meal need to arrive by 4 pm. The coordinator for this dinner is Anne Gilbert. *Volunteers are needed to bake and individually wrap 60-70 brownies.* Let Anne know if you are able to help prepare or serve the meal, or contribute brownies. Anne's contact information is: [annegilbert45@comcast.net](mailto:annegilbert45@comcast.net), and (781) 367-9508.

The Bread of Life Team is very happy to report that we have had several generous donors who have built up a healthy balance in our Bread of Life dinner account, so we don't need additional financial contributions at this time. Thank you to all who have donated!!

## Service and Outreach Continued

### Fall Fair Crafts in July

Spring is bursting out all over! This time of renewal gives us the energy to start preparing for our next Fall Fair. This July we will have several crafting sessions to create items to sell at the Fair. So far, we have fleece blankets to tie, catnip toys to make, and jewelry to create and sort. If you have any suggestions for a group craft idea, please let us know. In the meantime, keep a look-out in the late May and early June *enews* for the dates of the July craft events.

**\*\*\*Save the date: Fall Fair, Saturday, November 15, 2025!\*\*\***

Valerie Bowden, 774-219-1949, [valdalee14@yahoo.com](mailto:valdalee14@yahoo.com)

Anne Gilbert, 781-367-9508, [annegilbert45@comcast.net](mailto:annegilbert45@comcast.net)

### A Servant's Heart Food Pantry

The Food Pantry continues to see an increased need for groceries and everyday supplies. Please consider picking up a few items for the pantry.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jello packs</li> <li>• Jelly</li> <li>• Peaches</li> <li>• Fruit cocktail</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Popcorn</li> <li>• Spam</li> <li>• Pears</li> <li>• Canned pineapple, pineapple rings, or pineapple chunks</li> </ul> |
|---|--|



Donations can be brought to church on any Sunday or 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!

## Annual Meeting



Join us at our Annual Meeting on Sunday, May 18th at 11am in Fellowship Hall. There will be a pot-luck lunch, fellowship and reports from the various committees of the Church.

### WARRANT FOR ANNUAL MEETING

*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 the Annual Meeting of the Melrose Highlands Congregational Church will be held after worship on Sunday, May 18, 2025, in Fellowship Hall.**

1. To hear and act upon reports of Officers, Stewards, Deacons and Teams.
2. To discuss and vote on a balanced budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025.
3. To hear updates on Ministries of the Church with specific needs.
4. To elect the Officers, Deacons, and Stewards of the church.
5. To transact any other business that legally must be brought before the meeting.

**Maggie Sheets**

**Clerk**

April 29, 2025



***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.***

Nancy Chappel  
Christyne Cheney Daley  
Mary Edwards  
Laurie Lowman  
Lois Mackey  
Jack McLeod  
Marcia McCarthy  
Carol Trout  
Andy Wescott  
Ana Wescott  
The Andrews Family

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

Charlotte Swan, Greenwood Nursing & Rehab Center, 90 Greenwood St.,  
Wakefield, MA 01880

Beverly and Michael Harrison, Steele House, One Nason Ave., Apt. 514  
Melrose, MA 02176

Judy McSween, 57 Nowell Rd., Melrose, MA 02176



Please join us for lunch on Wednesday, May  
14th at 12:30 at Rising Eagle, 505 Main St.,  
Melrose. RSVP to Dianne Cheney at  
781-662-9138. All are welcome!

## Vision Statement

Our mission at MHCC is to strive to “Love our Neighbor” by building caring community, connection, and acceptance. We nourish ourselves spiritually by sharing God’s love, nurturing youth and serving those in need.

As an Open and Affirming community, we welcome into the full life and ministry of this church all persons, whatever their races, ethnicities, ages, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, family structures, faith backgrounds, abilities and economic circumstances. No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome in this church.

Wherever you are on life's journey – you are welcome here!



## Sunday School

We welcome children and youth from kindergarten through Grade 8 into our Sunday School; our classrooms are located on the upper level. We welcome children under five to stay with us during worship, but also provide nursery care if you would prefer, directly up the main stairs by the restroom. Fussy babies are very welcome to stay in worship! We also pipe in the audio into the parlor, to the right when you leave the sanctuary.

Our Sunday School classes are for Kindergarten through Grade 8; we integrate service into our program. Your child is welcome to visit a class any Sunday. Children stay in worship until the Children's Message and then are sent to Sunday School. On holidays, they remain in the sanctuary for worship.

MELROSE HIGHLANDS CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
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