

# The Steeple

A monthly publication of  
The First  
Congregational Church  
of Milford,  
Massachusetts.  
A member of the United  
Church of Christ.

December 2024

Volume 12 No. 2024



~From Pastor  
Rev. Greta MacRae

“Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, you will see these things taking place, you will know that the kingdom of God is near.”

My Dear Congregation,

We enter Advent on Sunday. We move into Year C of the Revised Common Lectionary and the gospel of Luke will be our focus for 2025. Scripture, this week, is about looking for signs, staying alert, being ready; it’s about being open to see change through small cues that will alert us to something new growing. Surely that is happening here in our congregation. Here’s what I see: new people taking on leadership roles, including some of our young adults, and some old friends of the church who have been noticing our need for help and have stepped up to offer assistance.

That’s growth as visible as the new shoots on my fiddle leafed fig tree. I rescued that plant from the side of the road and it has taught me how to care for it—it’s a persnickety plant. It likes filtered light, enough water—but not too much—and good soil. I placed it in the shaded part of my backyard this summer and it flourished! It’s fun to find ways of supporting an organism so that it can be its best self and that reminds me of a community of faith. We can flourish if we pay attention to the small things that are appearing amongst us but we have to keep watch and respond. Two things in particular have my attention: online worship and religious education for adults.

This past Sunday I led worship online on Facebook. It was not without glitches—I had to switch to my own Facebook page when I couldn’t get our page to record but the number of people who watched and commented from outside our community stunned me. I believe we are being called to create a team of digital deacons. We could grow our church online—something the nesting churches have been nudging us to do!

I miss teaching Bible study. Every year I choose two things to focus on as a way of growing personally. This year one of my goals will be religious education and I’m hoping each of you will join me for at least one chapter of this pursuit. January will focus on Mitch Albom’s book, “Have a Little Faith.” It’s about a little church in Detroit that committed to a ministry to the homeless. There were many challenges and lots of walking in faith. It’s an inspiring read. For those of you who might be interested, send me a message and I’ll order the book for you if you can’t find it. We’ll agree on a time during the second week of January.

In the meantime, give thanks for all God has done for you and our congregation. We have so many blessings. The more we notice the more we see and can give thanks for.

*Living into the kin-dom of God with you,  
Pastor Greta*

**Doing God’s work by filling needs in  
our community.**

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**Office Hours  
10am-2pm Mon., Wed., Fri.**

First Congregational Church,  
United Church of Christ  
4 Congress Street, P.O. Box 344,  
Milford, MA 01757  
(508) 473-5259

[milfordcongregational@gmail.com](mailto:milfordcongregational@gmail.com)

[milfordcongregational.org](http://milfordcongregational.org)

<https://www.facebook.com/church.milford>

Pastor: Rev. Greta MacRae  
Gretamacrae1@verizon.net  
508-816-6866

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**Worship Service 10:30am  
& Sunday School**

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**Christmas Eve**

Our service of lessons and carols will take place this year at 4:00 p.m. Come and worship God together. It will be a gentle, child friendly, introspective service.



**Christmas Pageant**

Our Christmas Pageant will be held on December 22. We need participants!! Here is my all-church challenge: bring someone you love who might not get to a Christmas pageant. If everybody invites someone, we will have an amazing pageant!

**Hello!**

My name is Cindy Mower, and I am the new Office Administrator/Bookkeeper. I recently moved back to MA from NH, and am glad to be in a slightly less-snowy area. I live in Shrewsbury with my son and daughter, and am a busy taxi service to horseback riding and Tae Kwon Do most evenings. I will be in the office Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 10-2, so please stop in and introduce yourself!



102148434 © Veeksegal | Dreamstime.com

**Salvation Army Angel Tree**

Holiday Blessings from the Missions Committee! This year we are doing things a bit differently and using an online system called Sign Up Genius for coordinating the Salvation Army Angel Tree gifts. The link is:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0F4CAA722A4FC1-53540277-salvation>

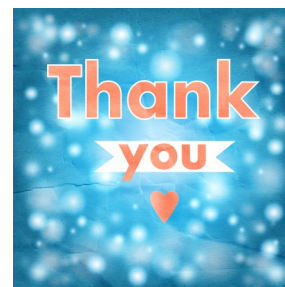


You can scroll through the list with the different options (=tags) below and you will see the details in the smaller text. Note that there is more than one page of options for gifts and clothing/shoes. Once you choose the item(s) you wish to purchase, you can click on "Sign up" and add your name and email address. The system will send you an automatic email with a reminder of what you signed up for. You can sign up for as many as you wish! Please bring your items to the church by December 8 (if you need more time, please contact us).

The Missions Committee (Kim Stover, Kim Engblom, Nara Paccico) will also be available after the service on Sunday to assist you with sign ups if you are having any trouble. You can also feel free to reach out to any of us during the week if you want some assistance or have questions.

**The Boiler**

The boiler continues to need care and cash. It seized this past week and we pivoted and went to online worship on 11/24 because the sanctuary was cold. The parts have been ordered and the boiler should be repaired for Sunday, December 1. The new parts were costly, at \$5,000, but before we even had a chance to begin to worry about how to pay for them, Shirley Dennett's son Bill and his wife Debbie walked into the church Monday morning and offered to pay the final amount we needed to close those bills. There is something taking root here. Wherever I look, little sprouts of faith are encouraging people to take part in keeping this church alive. If you see Bill or Debbie, give them a high-five or a hug.



35846095 © Tatiana Korchemkina | Dreamstime.com

**Founder's Day**

A hearty "Thank You" to everybody who came and played Jeopardy on Founder's Day. It was a fun way to celebrate our founding, and have some fellowship and worship.



# STEWARDSHIP

We have handed out our stewardship letter and pledge cards and will begin to gather them this Sunday, December 1. Keep praying and commit to a specific amount, or offer when you can. Having an idea of who is able to pledge helps us create a budget for next year. We love offerings of time and talent. God will bless whatever you can offer.



## **Communion Education and Faith Formation for Young Adults**

If you have a Third Grader or someone who would benefit from Communion Education, please reach out to Darlene Crawford and let her know. We will get a class together.

In the same way, I would like to gather the young adults of this church once a month for Confirmation Class. If someone you know is interested, we can do a hybrid class, some on Zoom, and a few field trips. Let me, Darlene Crawford, know if anyone comes to mind.



126480146 © Chernetskaya | Dreamstime.com



## **Chandelier Cleaning**

Volunteers needed to help clean the chandeliers on Saturday, December 7th. We will be starting at 9 a.m.



6423604 © Iwona joanna Rajszcak | Dreamstime.com



## **Santa Parade Open House**

**Sunday, December 1, 2024**



Our tradition continues! We will host the community, and hopefully the high school band, at the end of the town's Santa Parade. Help is needed to provide cookies, to serve as a friendly face, to make cocoa and for set up and clean up. Come anytime from 3 PM on to participate. Cookies can be dropped off that morning or after 3.

This is a great way to get that holiday feeling.



## *Christmas Memorial plants*

We will have 15 poinsettia plants adorning the chancel. We will also have the bulletin insert in memory or honor of someone.

We are asking for a \$15 .00 donation. If you would like to take a poinsettia home, please let us know. If more than 15 people wish to take a plant home, we will have enough so everyone has one.

We will be accepting donations from December 1<sup>st</sup> through December 15<sup>th</sup>. Please complete the form below to designate any special family member or friend you wish to remember or honor. Also check if you wish to take your plants with you after Christmas Eve service.

Please make checks payable to:

### **First Congregational Church**

Donation \$15.00

Donations must be made in advance; we accept cash or check.

Given by: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone/Email: \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

In Celebration of: \_\_\_\_\_

Taking plants home \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you!*

You can mail checks and order forms to the Church office. Someone will also be available after worship on December 1<sup>st</sup>, December 8<sup>th</sup>, and December 15<sup>th</sup> to take your form & your donation.

First Congregational Church  
PO Box 344  
Milford, MA 01757

## Join Our Online Community!

Did you know you can find us on social media?

Our church has an official Facebook page, and we would love for you to be a part of our growing online community!

Our Facebook page is a place where you can stay updated with church news, events, and inspirational messages. It's also a great platform for connecting with other members and sharing your experiences.

Stay informed about upcoming services and events.

**\*\*How to Join:\*\***

1. Visit our Facebook page at First Congressional Church, Milford Massachusetts

<https://facebook.com/100083182840055>

2. Click the "Like" or "Follow" button.

3. Invite your friends and family to join us as well!

Your support means so much to us, and together, we can create a vibrant online space where everyone feels welcome and connected.

Thank you for being a valued member of our church family. We look forward to seeing you online!

P.S. Feel free to share your favorite moments from church on our page using #ChurchFamily!"



## Daily Bread Food Pantry Collection



We will be collecting food for the Daily Bread Food Pantry on **the first Sunday of the month**. We know you may have multiple opportunities to support our local food bank. If you have donations, you are welcome to drop off any donations at the church on Mondays, Tuesdays, or Wednesdays between 9am & 12pm.

### **Additional Items Always Needed:**

- ♥ Dish Soap
- ♥ Baby Wipes
- ♥ *Diapers*: Especially sizes 4, 5, and 6 (generic is fine)

**Dinner is Served!**

**Dinner is Served**

**Have a Seat & Something to Eat:**  
Canned stew, canned pork & beans, instant potatoes, stuffing mix, all kinds of soups, etc.



**December Kindness 2024**

| SUNDAY   | MONDAY  | TUESDAY  | WEDNESDAY   | THURSDAY   | FRIDAY  | SATURDAY  |
|--|---|--|---|--|---|---|
| 1 Spread kindness and share the December calendar with others    | 2 Contact someone you can't be with to see how they are             | 3 Offer to help someone who is facing difficulties at the moment | 4 Support a charity, cause or campaign you really care about    | 5 Give a gift to someone who is homeless or feeling lonely     | 6 Leave a positive message for someone else to find             | 7 Give kind comments to as many people as possible today      |
| 8 Do something helpful for a friend or family member             | 9 Notice when you're hard on yourself or others and be kind instead | 10 Listen wholeheartedly to others without judging them          | 11 Buy an extra item and donate it to a local food bank         | 12 Be generous. Feed someone with food, love or kindness today | 13 See how many different people you can smile at today         | 14 Share a happy memory or inspiring thought with a loved one |
| 15 Say hello to your neighbour and brighten up their day         | 16 Look for something positive to say to everyone you speak to      | 17 Give thanks. List the kind things others have done for you    | 18 Ask for help and let someone else discover the joy of giving | 19 Contact someone who may be alone or feeling isolated        | 20 Help others by giving away something that you don't need     | 21 Appreciate kindness and thank people who do things for you |
| 22 Congratulate someone for an achievement that may go unnoticed | 23 Choose to give or receive the gift of forgiveness                | 24 Bring joy to others. Share something which made you laugh     | 25 Treat everyone with kindness today, including yourself!      | 26 Get outside. Pick up litter or do something kind for nature | 27 Call a relative who is far away to say hello and have a chat | 28 Be kind to the planet. Eat less meat and use less energy   |
| 29 Turn off digital devices and really listen to people          | 30 Let someone know how much you appreciate them and why            | 31 Plan some new acts of kindness to do in 2025                  |   |  |   |   |



**ACTION FOR HAPPINESS**

**Happier · Kinder · Together**



## ***Member Owned Businesses***

We thank the following member-owned local businesses who contribute each year in support of the Church. If you are a business owner who would like to contribute, please contact the Church office.

### **Buma-Sargeant Funeral Home**

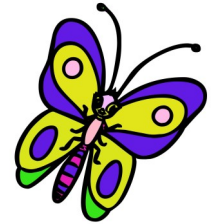
42 Congress Street  
Milford, MA 01757  
(508) 473-5511  
[www.bumafuneralhome.com](http://www.bumafuneralhome.com)

### **Watson Colonial Funeral Home**

Dwight L. Watson, Funeral Director  
24 Congress Street  
Milford, MA 01757  
(508) 473-0282  
[www.watsoncolonialfuneralhome.com](http://www.watsoncolonialfuneralhome.com)

### **Whitinsville Monumental Works**

1312 Providence Road, Rte. 122  
Whitinsville, MA 01588  
Thomas C. Delfanti, Proprietor  
Mary Delfanti, Manager



## **DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS**

3 Stefanie Dillon  
11 Janet Doherty  
13 Paula Homer

24 Jane Wilson  
28 Raymond Tiberio  
30 Neil Rouleau  
31 Jacob Stover



If your birthday isn't listed and you'd like it to be included, please notify the Church Office at [milfordcongregational@gmail.com](mailto:milfordcongregational@gmail.com).

# DECEMBER 2024

| Sun  | Mon   | Tue   | Wed  | Thu   | Fri  | Sat  |
|--|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| <b>1</b><br>-10:30am Worship<br>-3pm Santa Parade<br>Open House<br><br>-8-10am Ecuadorian<br>-12-2:45pm Spanish<br>-5:30-8:15pm Brazilian  | <b>2</b><br>-8-10am AA<br><br>-6-9:30pm INE                                     | <b>3</b><br>-8-10am AA<br>-7:30pm AA<br><br>-7-9pm AOG                                  | <b>4</b><br>-8-10am AA<br>-5:30-7:30pm<br>Brownie<br>Troop<br><br>-7-9pm AOG       | <b>5</b><br>-8-10am AA<br><br>-7-9pm INE<br>-7-9pm AOG  | <b>6</b><br>-8-10am AA<br>-7pm AA<br><br>-7:30-9:30pm AOG  | <b>7</b><br>-9am Clean<br>Chandeliers<br>-6am-9pm<br>AOG (Pastor<br>Angel) |
| <b>8</b><br>-10:30am Worship<br>-1-3pm Girl Scouts<br><br>-8-10am Ecuadorian<br>-12-2:45pm Spanish<br>-5:30-8:15pm Brazilian               | <b>9</b><br>-8-10am AA<br><br>-6-9:30pm INE                                     | <b>10</b><br>-8-10am AA<br>-7:30pm AA<br><br>-7-9pm AOG                                 | <b>11</b><br>-8-10am AA<br><br>-7-9pm AOG  | <b>12</b><br>-8-10am AA<br><br>-7-9pm INE<br>-7-9pm AOG | <b>13</b><br>-8-10am AA<br>-7pm AA<br><br>-7:30-9:30pm AOG | <b>14</b><br>-6am-9pm<br>AOG (Pastor<br>Val)                               |
| <b>15</b><br>-10:30am Worship<br>-11:30am Sharing<br>Coffee Hour<br><br>-8-10am Ecuadorian<br>-12-2:45pm Spanish<br>-5:30-8:15pm Brazilian | <b>16</b><br>-8-10am AA<br>-6pm<br>Governing<br>Board Zoom<br><br>-6-9:30pm INE | <b>17</b><br>-8-10am AA<br>-7:30pm AA<br><br>-7-9pm AOG                                 | <b>18</b><br>-8-10am AA<br>-5:30-7:30pm<br>Brownie<br>Troop<br><br>-7-9pm AOG      | <b>19</b><br>-8-10am AA<br><br>-7-9pm INE<br>-7-9pm AOG | <b>20</b><br>-8-10am AA<br>-7pm AA<br><br>-7:30-9:30pm AOG | <b>21</b><br>-6am-9pm<br>AOG (Pastor<br>Angel)                             |
| <b>22</b><br>-10:30am Worship<br>-10:30am<br>Christmas Pageant<br><br>-8-10am Ecuadorian<br>-12-2:45pm Spanish<br>-5:30-8:15pm Brazilian   | <b>23</b><br>-8-10am AA<br><br>-6-9:30pm INE                                    | <b>24</b><br>-4pm<br>Christmas Eve<br>Service<br>-8-10am AA<br>-7:30pm AA<br>-7-9pm AOG | <b>25</b><br>OFFICE<br>CLOSED for<br>Christmas Day<br>-8-10am AA<br>-7-9pm AOG     | <b>26</b><br>-8-10am AA<br><br>-7-9pm INE<br>-7-9pm AOG | <b>27</b><br>-8-10am AA<br>-7pm AA<br><br>-7:30-9:30pm AOG | <b>28</b><br>-6am-9pm<br>AOG (Pastor<br>Val)                               |
| <b>29</b><br>-10:30am Worship<br><br>-8-10am Ecuadorian<br>-12-2:45pm Spanish<br>-5:30-8:15pm Brazilian                                    | <b>30</b><br>-8-10am AA<br><br>-6-9:30pm INE                                    | <b>31</b><br>-8-10am AA<br>-7:30pm AA<br><br>-7-9pm AOG                                 | * AOG = Assembly<br>of God Church<br>* INE = Iglesia<br>Nueva Ecuadorian<br>Church |   |  |  |