

THE SPIRE

SEPTEMBER 2020

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

Church of Christ Vision Statement:

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

A Message from the Interim Pastor

September, a time of transition

September starts hot, and cools down to perhaps a frost as it comes to an end. There will be days when we wear a jacket or sweater to school or work and then forget it there, as it will be so warm when we head home.

Even if you have no children in your home, life in society changes as school begins. We are a little ragged at the beginning but get into regular routines by the end of the month. This year we will move into more structured and scheduled time for the first time since the pandemic started.

We will transition into mask wearing and appropriate distancing as just the way it is. We'll learn how to identify people by voice, eyes and mannerisms. We will learn a lot more about how to use technology to help us in our daily lives and as we seek to be servants of God.

We will consider what our ministry is if it doesn't involve us using our building. Our tenants provide valuable ministry and income. We will stay out of most of the building so they can do their work safely. September is a season of harvest. Our gardens and lawns will slow and require less from us. Except of course the increased work associated with falling leaves. We will begin to prepare our houses and properties for winter.

- continued on page 3 -



**In-Person Outdoor Worship
Continues in September.**

**All worship services will
also be available on Zoom.**

See pages 2 & 3 for the complete schedule of Sunday worship services in September, the Zoom link, and a list of the required safety protocols.

Let's Talk About the



Parents, we, as your community of faith, want to provide spiritual care and nurture for your children. BUT FIRST, we want to hear from you. What are your concerns? What would be helpful for you? For your children? Let's talk about the kids. Please join with other parents to talk about what's working and not working in your household. Let's talk about your hopes for your children during this pandemic. Let's talk about how the congregation can help nurture and support during this crazy time. Tuesday, September 8th, 7pm on Zoom. Non-parent adults are welcome to join this gathering to listen but not to talk. This is a time for the parents to have the floor. Questions? Contact Rev. Geary at: pastoruccmillis@gmail.com, or (774) 993-9407.

Join Zoom Meeting from a computing device:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88664311059>

Or, if using phone, dial:

+1 646 558 8656 (New York time zone)

Meeting ID: 886 6431 1059



Schedule of Sunday Worship Services in September

Worship Services are at 10:00am. All services will be available on Zoom. Weather permitting, services will also be held in-person, on the back lawn of the church. Please follow the Safety Protocols listed on page 3.

To join by Zoom, click on 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 **Password:** 02054

Worship in Community

Each Sunday in September we will celebrate different aspects of our congregation and ministry.

Sept 6 Communion & Blessing Our Work Romans 13:8-14; Matthew 18:15-20

September 6th is near Labor Day. You are invited to have with you an object that represents your work. Whether that is paid or volunteer work. This is also a communion Sunday. We will have prepackaged communion elements for those who are worshiping in-person but you are invited to bring your own elements to the service.

Sept 13 Blessing the Start of School Romans 14:1-12; Matthew 18:21-35

September 13th is a celebration of the beginning of school. Traditionally, a day to bless the backpacks, this day, we will bless the items needed for this peculiar school year. Have with you one or some of the objects that you will need to be successful in school this year.

Sept 20 Blessing the Interim/Search Philippians 1:21-30; Matthew 20:1-16

September 20th is Covenant Sunday when we formally recognize this interim time. We celebrate the opportunity for self-reflection and growth as a congregation while searching for a new pastor. We will covenant between interim pastor and congregation and also we will covenant between transition team and congregation to fully engage in the discernment and search work.

Sept 27 Blessing Our Mission Philippians 2:1-13; Matthew 21:23-32

September 27th is Mission Sunday. This day we will remember and celebrate that even though we are going through a time of transition we are still a blessed and blessing congregation engaging in vital ministry here and around the world.



Rev. Geary, church members and friends celebrate Sunday Worship on the back lawn of the church.

- From the Interim Pastor continued from page 1 -

As a congregation we will begin to look to the future with seriousness. We will engage in a variety of small and large group gatherings; some in person and some online. We will spend time getting to know each other again for the first time. Together we will paint a picture of who we are now and then we will lift our heads and look ahead to who we want to be.

September is an exciting time. The increasing structure actually gives us more time for imagination and wondering. I'm looking forward to celebrating life with you as we engage in this time of transition.

Grace,

Jennifer

Rev. Jennifer Geary



IMPORTANT NOTE RE: COVID SAFETY PROTOCOLS

The church building remains closed for church-related activities, unless an authorized, scheduled service or activity is taking place.

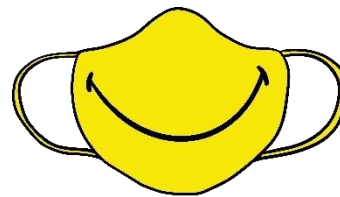
If you are authorized to be at the church for church-related business or an activity:

- Wear a mask
- Use hand sanitizer & wipe down surfaces
- Sign the contact tracing sheet
- Follow the protocols on the church's Covid Safety Checklist, which are posted on the church office door.

Church Check-Ins, Live on Facebook Wednesdays at 7pm

Join us for our weekly check-in where you'll hear the latest news and announcements from the church. You don't need a Facebook account to access the Church Check-In. Just click the link below to get to our Facebook page:

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



Required Safety Protocols for Outdoor Worship Services

The back lawn will be marked off, to allow for safe distancing for participants. Please arrive early so you have enough time to check-in and set-up your chair or blanket.

Ushers will seat you in pre-measured spaces for appropriate distancing.

In order to ensure a safe experience for everyone, please follow these protocols:

- **Stay home if you have any signs of infection, i.e. fever, cough, loss of smell/taste, scratchy throat or if you feel ill.**
- A mask or other face covering must be worn at all times by everyone over the age of two. Masks for children ages 2-5 are at the discretion of parents.
- We will have hand sanitizer available.
- Bring your own chair or blanket to sit on.
- All participants must check-in and provide contact information prior to the service. Bringing a note with you with your names and phone or email will speed this process.
- We encourage you to use your home bathroom before arriving for services. Restrooms will be open if needed.
- The rest of the building will be closed.
- Liturgies will be available on the church website and in the Friday email, so you can print at home and bring it with you, or follow along on your phone/tablet. No printed materials will be provided at the time of the service.
- You may hum or mouth the words during hymns. There will be no singing by the congregation.
- Please bring your pledges and offerings. A drop-off basket will be provided at the service. You can also mail in your donation to the church.
- Please stay at least 6 feet apart at all times.

Sanctuary Is Open for Prayer Wednesdays from 1-2pm

On Wednesdays from 1-2pm, the sanctuary will be open for prayer and quiet reflection.

Masks will be required at all times. Enter through the front doors. Signs will be posted at the church with additional safety protocols.

Missions Moment

The Missions Committee has continued to look for ways to help others. Recently we have contributed to the UCC Global Ministries both domestic and international. The funds will be used for aiding those affected by natural and manmade disasters.

We also have contributed to the Church World Services for their bucket and kits program.
<https://cwskits.org/>

Lastly, we are supporting Our Daily Bread Food and Resource Center in Taunton. Their mission is to provide a free nutritious meal in a warm and welcoming atmosphere to those in need. Their Resource Center provides mentoring for basic life skills, empathizing, encouraging and empowering a population that includes the homeless and disenfranchised. Needless to say that with the pandemic they have had to make changes to how they serve. Our hope is to volunteer in person sometime in the future.

We continue to support the Millis Food Pantry, the Millis Fund, New Life Furniture Bank and Habitat for Humanity.

If you have a charity you feel the committee would be able to assist, please contact one of the members of Missions.

Be well,
Jan Krohn, Art Payne, Mary Smith, Wendy Schneider

Notes from the Music Director

How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? Psalm 137 v. 4

In the past few months, this verse has come to mind many times. When I learned that The American Association of Choral Conductors and the UCC had issued a statement advising that choral singing should be deferred until September of 2021, I was heartbroken. The choir has been such an integral part of the life of our church that it seemed unthinkable, but it only took a moment to realize that this was what must be done.

The land, our land, does seem strange now. Often we don't recognize each other because we are masked; touching hands and hugging are no longer a part of Sunday morning greetings and services. We are distanced from one another and fearful.

The singing of praise to the Lord has been prominent in the history of the Church from Old Testament times; we sing hymns of worship and praise, of celebration, joy and comfort, but this question is asked in a psalm that speaks of great sorrow. This is a time of sorrow and loss and yet we sing. Our voices are muffled by masks, we do our best to master technology that helps us to include music in our services, and for most of us, we hear but cannot participate. And yet, we sing. We sing in our hearts, old and new hymns and I cannot help but feel that perhaps this isn't the empty attempt I feared. Becki Abalutzk and Deb Hall have recorded the hymns with their beautiful voices. How fortunate we are to have two such gifted musicians! And as they sing, we follow along, we read the words and hear and experience hymns in a way that helps us to better understand what singing the Lord's song means.

Myrna Rybczyk



Message from the Deacons

The weather cooperated for us in August to have our first outdoor services. They were a great success with only minor technical glitches. The Deacons appreciate everyone who attended and followed the COVID 19 guidelines. We are happy to announce that weather permitting, all of our Sunday services in September will be held outdoors. We have much to celebrate during the month, so be on the lookout for specifics of each week's services on the website and the Friday email. All services will continue to be streamed live via Zoom and also recorded for later viewing on FaceBook and YouTube.

Thank you to everyone who attended the August 15th final farewell gathering for Rev. Jen and her family. She was thrilled to see folks and very appreciative for the gifts of the pottery Communion set, scrapbook of memories, framed photo of the church steeple at sunset and gift cards. We all enjoyed the surprise treat of the ice cream truck provided by Rev. Jen. It was a safe and socially distanced way to have a party atmosphere. :)



September brings our need to make the Transition Team a reality. Please faithfully consider your time and talents to be one of the 3-5 volunteers from the congregation that will comprise the team. You can leave a message for the Deacons by email or phone with the church office if you are interested. This is a necessary and important group to move forward in gathering information from the congregation for a church profile as to where we see ourselves in the future ministering to our faith community and community at large.

Think of the church profile as our resume that will be posted by SNEUCC for ministers to review who are looking for a new call. Once the profile is completed a Search Committee will be formed to follow the protocols for calling a settled minister.

Lastly, the Deacons Fund is available for any church member who may find themselves in financial need. Contact Rev. Geary if needed.

Looking forward to seeing folks at our outdoor services this month.

Blessings,
Wendy Schneider & Sue Conte
Co-Lead Deacons



Thank You from Rev. Jen

Dear Millis Church,

Thank you for coming to say goodbye to me on August 15th. It meant so much to see you, to say goodbye and wish you well.

The beautiful communion set and generous gift cards were unexpected and deeply appreciated. I will fondly remember my years in Millis whenever I use the communion set.

It was one of the greatest honors of my life to serve as your pastor and I trust that God has amazing things in store for you.

Thank you again for everything.
May God bless you all.

Yours in Christ,
Rev. Jen Munroe-Nathans



A Message from the Visitors' Group

The Visitors' Group will not be meeting in September. We hope everyone is doing well during this difficult time. If we can help you in any way, please leave a message at the church office, (508) 376-5034.

"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." -Matthew 11:28

The Visitors:

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

Rev. Geary's Monday Office Hours on Zoom

Rev. Geary will be available to church members on-line via Zoom, from 10am-Noon on Mondays.

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.



On-line Bible Study

Each Wednesday at 11:00am, a group gathers on Zoom to listen to and discuss the Psalm of the week. Each gathering is a stand-alone event.

Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87641484473?pwd=aGM2c2I2aGEyMU1IS0NHVHRycjVldz09>

If using phone, dial: 1-646-558-8656 US (NY)

Meeting ID: 876 4148 4473 **Password:** 02054

September 2: Psalm 119:33-40

September 9: Psalm 103(1-7), 8-13

September 16: Psalm 145:1-8

September 23: Psalm 25:1-9

September 30: Psalm 80:7-15

A Special Thank You from Happy Hours

Dear Friends,

My sincere thanks to Kathy Stevens for organizing the "Cleansing of the Chairs" for Happy Hours. I know that so much effort went into making this happen ~ choosing a date, contacting the town so that outside water could be used at a certain time, and having members of the church on hand to complete the task.

My thanks to everyone who helped!

*With appreciation,
Marilyn*

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millisucc@msn.com



We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

www.millisucc.org

Socializing with the M&M's on Zoom!

The M & M's Monday Morning Needlework Group is now gathering virtually on Zoom! Join the Zoom meeting on Monday mornings, anytime after 10am.

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

Password: 866156



All are welcome – even if you're not working on a needlework project, join in for the socializing!

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