CALLS TO OFFERING

Advent - Neighbors in Need

When God called, Mary answered. When God wanted to employ her in new and unexpected ways, Mary answered. When God asked her to join with God in changing the world forever, Mary answered. Now it’s our turn.

This week and next, we will give and receive the UCC’s annual Neighbors in Need offering. Funds from the Neighbors in Need collection support the UCC’s justice programs across the United States and Puerto Rico. One third of the offering supports the Council for American Indian Ministry, including twenty UCC congregations. The remaining two-thirds is used to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects.

Give if you imagine a world without aggression or gang violence. Give if you imagine a world without poverty or children going to bed hungry. Give if you imagine a world without oppression, without racism, sexism, homophobia. Give because you imagine a world where the Gospel of love and light overcomes the darkness.

Place your offering in the NIN envelopes in the pews. You can also make out a check to Old South Church and write “NIN” in the memo line. Any offering not in the envelopes or marked in this way will go directly to enable the work and mission of Old South.

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The morning offering will now be given and received.

Advent

The Christmas tree is up and the lights are hanging, Bells are ringing and choirs are singing, .

It seems the city is full of cheer As we share our love with those so dear,

The stores are packed, oh just a few Of course that’s just my point of view.

But prepare the way, the prophets said, Just wait on all that green and red,

Advent is a time to wait, Not quite time to celebrate,

For we have much more work to do, Of course that’s just my point of view.

We have got to live out justice, Acts of mercy, peace and kindness.

Give the world God’s blessing and grace, Invite them in to this sacred space,

For what else should the Christian do, but of course that’s just my point of view.
The morning offering will now be given and received.

Advent

Last Friday, Black Friday, the deals were endless. You could have got a 32-inch television for $100 dollars, an iPad for cheap, sweaters for pennies. You could have got a brand new desktop computer for $80, an e-reader for $50 dollars, jeans for nickels.

But I know a deal you probably never knew existed that day. It’s still going on today, right now— and it’s free. God is pouring down grace and love for nothing. A sale with no end in sight and you don’t even have to risk the large crowds, endless store lines, or shopping bags on the T.

Of course we have the responsibility to package and wrap that love and grace and send it out into the world through acts of mercy and justice. We have the responsibility to ‘re-gift’ that love and grace, keeping a bit for ourselves. We have the responsibility to share, share abundantly what has already been given to us.

The morning offering will now be given and received.

Christmas

Last night I had a dream…

At first it was just his mother and his father. At first it was just the three of them huddled together in a lowly stable. The scent of fresh hay, the flickering of the stable lamp, the whispers of the cattle and the donkey.

And then the angels appeared, hovering over this holy family, their wings singing God’s praises.

And from the same country, from another field came shepherds. Leaving their flocks they journeyed to the manager, crowding around this newborn babe in awe.

And from the east came the wise men. They followed the star and knelt before the humble cradle offering their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

And then you came. Then you came before this child, a newborn king. You came to keep vigil, you came to kneel before him to offer him your gifts of time and gifts of treasure. You came to present yourselves to this cradle, a cradle full of hope and promises of God’s new creation.

You came and gave an offering that brought Good News of a Great Joy to the poor and to the needy. It was good news of justice, mercy, and grace. Friends I know we can make this dream become a reality.

The morning offering will now be given and received.
**Epiphany– Transfiguration Sunday**

Peter had offered to build a tabernacle, a dwelling on the mountain for Jesus. He had offered to create a space for Jesus to remain on earth, poor Peter!

Here is where God dwells: God dwells in the houses made with human hands. God dwells in the offering of ourselves in service to those she loves. God dwells in the sacrifices made to build community, to bring justice and be a light to those in need throughout the world.

God dwells in you.

The morning offering will now be given and received.

**Ordinary Time – Hymn Sing Sunday**

A hymn is a song of praise written for the purpose of adoration; written to give glory to God the creator, the sustainer, the redeemer. We have gathered here in this place to offer our hymns to God; to sing of God’s unfailing love. Giving is an act of adoration; giving is a hymn from the depths of our hearts singing thanksgiving and blessing to a God who has offered us so much. God, our great composer will transform our offering into a hymn of justice, mercy, and grace. Now is the time to join the mighty chorus, to open our hearts and allow a new hymn to flow throughout God’s creation.

The morning offering will now be given and received.

**Ordinary Time – African Famine Relief**

In the church of Jesus Christ, we take our gifts and we bless them, knowing that our gifts are stronger when blessed and offered to God, we can serve the needs of this community and the world around us- from victims of disaster to the hungry and homeless in our midst- our gifts matter.

Today the Christian Service and Outreach committee is sponsoring a special offering that will go directly to assist in famine relief in the eastern horn of Africa, where the worst drought in 50 years has resulted in widespread famine. According to the U.N. Famine is declared when acute rates of malnutrition exist among children, exceeding 30 percent; when more than two persons per 10,000 die daily; and when people are not able to access and sufficiently utilize food and other basics.

If you choose to offer your gifts to the relief effort you can make checks payable to Old South Church in Boston with “African Famine Relief” in the memo line or by placing your offering in the marked envelopes in the pews. Your money will be gathered with offerings from congregations across the United Church of Christ and send to mission partners on the ground in Africa. Remaining offerings will be used to further the greater mission of Old South Church.

Christ calls us to give and to give abundantly. We give, and by some miracle, our gifts become blessed and are transformed into acts of mercy, justice, and grace.

The offering will now be given and received.
Ordinary Time - All Saints Day

We are saints you and I. We are all saints in light, all blessed and consecrated, sent by God “to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God.” Come. Come walk in that light. Come walk as companions to those who often walk in the shadows. As saints we walk arm in arm, sisters and brothers, driven by God’s vision for creation. Walk with me. Walk with me as together we share our gifts, our time, our talents and become companions for all who we meet on the way.

The morning offering will now be given and received.

Lent - St. Patrick’s Day

Saint Patrick was always big in my Irish-Catholic household. Sitting next to my bed was a small picture of Satin Patrick and every time my grandmother came to visit she would tuck me in and kiss me on my forehead and say “Be strong like Patrick, share the Gospel”

You see Patrick is credited for bringing the Gospel to Ireland and driving out all of the snakes.

Today you have the opportunity to drive out darkness and share the Gospel in a different way. Inside each of your bulletins should be a _____ envelope. Any money placed in these will go to the United Church of Christ mission efforts. Offerings placed in these will go directly to the Midwest to assist with tornado disaster relief.

Any money not in these envelopes will go to further the mission of Old South Church to bring justice and love to this world in a radical way.

Be strong like Patrick, share the Gospel.

The morning offering will not be given and received.

Lent

Mark tells this story about Jesus…sitting across from the offering box; he was observing how the crowd tossed money in for the collection. Many of the rich were making large contributions. One poor widow came up and put in two small coins—a measly two cents. Jesus called his disciples over and said, The truth is that this poor widow gave more to the collection than all the others put together. All the others gave what they'll never miss; she gave extravagantly what she couldn't afford—she gave her all.

The morning offering will now be given and received.

Lent - Palm Sunday

On Palm Sunday in medieval times, the community began their morning by gathering together outside of the city. Palms branches were distributed and, on a cue, they began to process toward the church while singing hymns and waving palm branches.

When they arrived at the church, they processed past the statue of Jesus and, one by one, placed their palm branch at Jesus’ feet. They were ministering to Jesus: leaving him their palms as symbols of hope and light before the looming darkness that he would endure.

Today, we invite you to join our forebears by laying hope at the feet of Christ ... by presenting to Jesus the light of love. How? Your gifts! Your gifts of money are as mercy to the stranger, as love to the broken, and as life to a world yearning for the presence of God. Let your money serve as sign and symbol to Jesus that his death was not in vain, that we continue to bear witness to the hope and light he carried and for which he died.

The morning offering will now be given and received.
Calls to the Offering

They weren’t filled with new wine.

They were filled with God. They were filled with God’s hunger for justice and mercy, God’s hunger for charity and love, God’s hunger for compassion and beauty.

They were filled with God’s Holy Spirit.

And then they became the church. They were of one glad and generous heart as they sat at table to break bread. They shared everything in common and gave whatever they had to those in need.

As it was in that first community, as should it be with us today.

May God’s rumbling hunger, God’s Holy Hungry Spirit, be with you and all of us as the morning offering is given and received.

Marathon Sunday

You have just passed the finish lines. You ran those 26.2 miles with urgency. The blue and gold banners disappear behind you. And as you slow down, heart racing, face radiating heat—dripping with perseverance. And someone hands you’re a small simple cup of cool fresh water. The minute it touches your mouth comfort and relief begins to engulf you. A simple cup of cool water.

Jesus too knew the power of a single cup of water as the evangelist Mark records for us, “For truly I tell you, whoever gives another a cup of water to drink will not lose his reward.”

Friends, the world outside these doors is yearning, thirsting for a simple cup of cold water. Yearning and thirsting for the relief that comes with a cup of grace, love, justice. We give today because we know God transforms our gifts into cups of relief and mercy for those who need it most. For the moment it touches their mouth, they begin to taste the sweetness of God.

Pour and offer yourself today.

The morning offering will be given and received.

Earth Day

This week is Earth Day and school children all across the nation this week will study and learn about ways to protect and preserve the resources on our planet. Many of them will plant trees in local parks and schoolyards. They plant trees to offset the diminishing resources around the globe. They plant trees to refresh and produce clean air in their community. They plant trees to provide shade and relief from the summer sun. They plant trees so they can bring new life to the landscape and to the soil around them.

Today, we are asking you to plant trees in this world. With your offering today we can grow the church up like a tree with a strong trunk, rooted in Christ, rooted in mercy and in love. With your offering today we can grow the church up like a tree with strong branches to support and protect our brothers and sisters suffering from poverty and homelessness. With your offering today we can grow the church up like a tree with lushish leaves that will provide nourishment and beauty to a world facing hunger and thirst.

With your offering today we can grow the church up like a tree.

The morning offering will now be given and received.
Annual Meeting Sunday

There exists evidence, that from its earliest days this congregation took seriously its mission to give. Joseph Sewall recorded that in March of 1725, the congregation voted that their public collection be received for ‘pious and charitable uses’. Records show that as time moved forward the collection was uses to supply the poor of this church and congregation, to provide wood and other necessities to those in need, the support overseas missions, and as Thomas Prince put it “advance Christ’s kingdom”.

Our history as a congregation is long and rich, but now the responsibility is in our hands to shape the future not only for this church, but for the entire world. Our collection today will go to pious and charitable uses, not just for wood and other necessities, but to support ministries of mercy, justice and grace.

This mornings offering will now be given and received.

Ordinary

If you were like me, your summer evenings as a child consisted of running around the back yard barefoot with an old mason jar trying to catch a firefly; a lightening bug. And once you did the jar filled with light, and your face would fill with amazement. But if you kept that creature in the jar, if you tried to sit it next to your bed as a night light the glow would fade, the buzzing would halt and the amazement would end. So often we want to bottle up our light and use it for our own amazement, our own joy. But if we let go of that light, if we share what we have, we can light the entire world.

The offering will now be given and received.