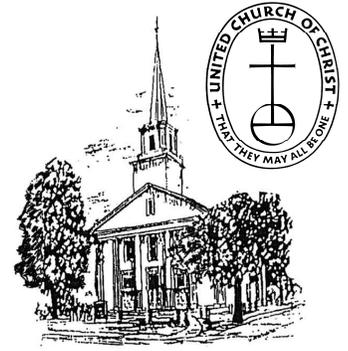


THE UNION COURIER

Union Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
The Reverend Gail L. Miller, Pastor

220 Main Street
Groton, Massachusetts 01450



March 2015



Here is a poem, written by a pastor in Acton, which is fitting for this season — and not just the "season of snow" in which we find ourselves, but the season of Lent as well!

*In three feet of snow,
plowed shoulder deep beside the roads,
along the driveways,
we confess that we are human,
that we are weary,
the streets lined with quadriplegic cars,
that we are small, dependent, fragile.
The knife wind comes down on us
where we are tender.
We confess our bondage
to the narrow paths we've dug,
and keep digging.
Winter swallows our voices, erases speech;
our chanting shovels confess
we are not masters.
The silver sun hears us,
assures us straightening between shovelfuls
that ...This is not punishment,
just life,
that we must shovel.*

~Steve Garnass-Holmes

Lent is not "punishment" (though generations ago, it may have been portrayed as such). It is a time to pay attention — to the world around us, to the details of our day, and most importantly to what God is doing in and around us. Sometimes it does seem as if we're "shoveling" our way through life. But as Christians, we know it's never just "shoveling."

Christ has promised to be with us, and to make a way through for us. When we follow him, we find our way; and then joy comes when we realize that the path we're shoveling is really HIS WAY!

As we follow Jesus to the cross and beyond, notice how alive and active Christ, God and the Holy Spirit are in the world — IN YOUR LIFE! Not sure if you've experienced the power of God in a certain moment? Choose to believe you have! It will make the shoveling a lot easier, and you'll find a song in your heart as you go.

Gail



P.S. On March 29 the Senior Choir will sing a gorgeous piece for Palm Sunday. It is so rich that we could use more voices! See me or Bernard if you'd like to join us for the next four weeks — you'll be glad you did!



Our Church Family



Ongoing Prayer List

Our Ongoing Prayer List: (These names are prayed out loud at Open Sanctuary Time each Wednesday.)

Marvin Bernstein	Carol B. Hess	Leigh Mezzetti	Betty Sowkin
Jim Breault	Sean Koller	Holly Norton	Joe Swales
Marlene Byron	Doris Lewis	Karen Sands	Erin Tucker
Betty Goulet	Lavon McMurrian	Rudi Schmid	Liz Waggoner
		Opal Smith	Gerry Westendorp

This list is refreshed twice a year (January and June). Please contact Gail Miller or Carol Zaiatz (978-448-2091 or unioncc@uccgroton.org) to add or remove a name.

Confidential Prayer Chain

Need prayer and need it now? Simply email prayer@uccgroton.org and your request will go to the confidential pray-ers; or call Lori McElroy (

1) and she will put your prayer request in motion for you. Prayer requests are held in confidence among those who are praying for you, and you may request that your name be withheld.



Thank You!

I would like to thank everyone for their prayers, well wishes, visits, phone calls and cards that I received following my recent operation and during my recovery. Your kindness and encouragement made my recovery easier.

Thanks again and God bless,
Paul Brown

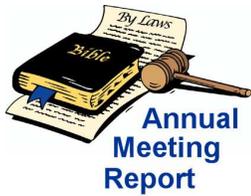
- Thanksgiving for Dick Burrier's continued recovery from brain cancer surgery.
- Bruce Wyman, recovering from surgery.
- Karen Sherwin, recovering from surgery.

March Birthdays

Jim Brennan	03/03	Emma Nickerson	03/14
Jim Daly	03/03	Craig Smith	03/18
Ethan Scheve	03/03	Bridget Fortier	03/19
Christina Daly	03/06	Tyler Milner	03/19
Timothy Dumont	03/07	Sheila Mitchell	03/21
Mike Fortier	03/07	Dominique Larkin	03/25
Janet Goudey	03/09	Jackson Fraser	03/26
Kaleb Larsen	03/11	John Brooks, Jr.	03/26
Sophia Smith	03/12	Bob Huguenin	03/26
Leslie Row	03/13	Bonnie Biocchi	03/28
Alyssa Hecht	03/13	Dana Bresnahan	03/28



If we missed your birthday, it is not in our database. Please email unioncc@uccgroton.org to give us your birthday. Also, we would like to recognize significant anniversaries — would you share that information with us?



Annual Meeting February 1, 2015

Nominations were approved for Committees, Ministries and Church Officers.

The amended budget was approved; the pledges came in \$20K less than anticipated.

The Endowment is showing a 10% growth; 2% will be distributed this year.

The GPS gave an update; our draft vision statement is 'A welcoming Christ-centered church sharing His life-changing message of love, joy and forgiveness in service to all people for the glory of God'.

Church Council Meeting Summary February 25

The new Church Council was welcomed and we had "getting to know you" conversation and orientation.

Feedback is being sought for how the Annual Congregational Meeting was run on February 1. See Rev. Gail or Moderator Stefanie Lempp.

The GPS is seeking feedback on the vision statement: *A welcoming Christ-centered church sharing His life-changing message of love, joy and forgiveness in service to all people for the glory of God.*

The Youth Mission Trip this summer will be to Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, SD.

2015 Church Council Members: Stefanie Lempp, Dennis Carey, Lori McElroy, Bob Goudey, Bruce Wyman, Jean Armstrong, Pat Woods, Andrea McDonough, Mary Hanson, Julie Sutherland-Platt, Bonnie Marchesani, Bebe Goudey, Holly Haase

April Courier Please email all submissions for the April Courier by Friday, March 13 (unioncc@uccgroton.org). Thank you.

Youth Mission Trip Fundraiser



Church Supper Sunday Evening, March 22 5:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall

Menu: Pasta and Sauce, Garlic Bread, Salad, Dessert
Free-will Donations in support of the Youth Mission Trip will be received.

This June, sixteen youth and three adults will travel to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in the southwest corner of South Dakota. They will serve the community in a variety of ways: working with children, the elderly, and painting/repairing local homes. All the while we will be getting to know the people of "the rez" as we share Christ's love through serving. Please, come support our teens as they grow in faith and in service.

Welcome New Members—Joined January 11!



WELCOME
to Our Newest Members!

Janet and Dennis Carey

Janet was raised in Falmouth, Maine, and Dennis was raised in Freeport, Maine. They were introduced to each other by mutual friends and were married in 1999. Their two children are Matthew, age 14, and Ryan, age 12. Dennis works for Reval, a financial software company.

Before moving to Groton in July 2014, they lived in Attleboro and North Attleboro, Mass. They moved to Groton in order to be closer to family. Janet is Karen Sjoberg's sister and, prior to moving to Groton, the families have come to worship together when visiting the area. They are also friends of Cathy and Brian Keese. Dennis and Janet found our congregation to be warm and welcoming.

When not busy with family or work, Janet enjoys cooking, baking, and exercising. Dennis enjoys being with his family and caring for his dog.

They transferred their membership from Immanuel Lutheran Church of Attleboro, MA.

Next New Members' Class



New Members' Class

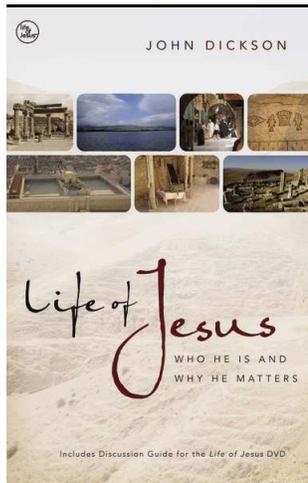
Sunday, March 29

12:00 – 3:00 p.m. (lunch provided)

Church Parlor

As soon as coffee hour winds down and the children's choirs are finished rehearsing, we will gather with Pastor Miller and a few Deacons to talk about the Christian faith, the church, and our church. Childcare and lunch will be provided. Attending this in no way obligates you to become a formal member. If, however, you are interested in membership, we will receive new members during worship on an agreed upon date sometime after the class. All are welcome to attend, whether you've been here two times or for two years. *Please RSVP to the church office (978-448-2091 or unioncc@uccgroton.org) so that we can plan for food and babysitting.*

Adult Education



Faith Fridays — *The Life of Jesus*

February 27 — March 27 (five weeks during Lent)

9:30 - 11:15 a.m. in the Parish House

What really happened back in the first century, in Jerusalem and around the Sea of Galilee, that changed the shape of world history? Who is this figure that emerges from history to have a profound impact on culture, ethics, politics, and philosophy? *Life of Jesus*, a video-based study, will help you and your friends dig deeper into what is known about Jesus' life and why it matters. **Contact/Questions?** Kelli Hnath () or Gail at church.

Watch the trailer: <http://www.gotothehub.com/video-bible-studies/john-dickson/>

Sunday School Schedule



Can You Help?

We need volunteers to spend one hour doing some of the most fulfilling work of the church—teaching our children about God's love. We still have openings on the calendar. Please sign up on the white-board in the hallway downstairs at church or email Carol Zaiatz in the Church Office (unioncc@uccgroton.org). Once signed up, Carol will send out an email the week before your class that gives instructions for the online system and how to access the curriculum for activities, etc.

Christian Education Committee

- Anne Cahill, Chair
- Jean Armstrong
- Dena Hance
- Kelli Hnath
- Diane Landry
- Anne Larsen

Bible Study



Wednesday Evening Bible Study

7:30 p.m. in the Pastor's Office

Acts of Worship, the upcoming unit of study, explores the topic of worship as it pertains of the human response to God. The topic is broken down into three parts: "In Awe of God," "Learning to Pray," and "Stewardship for Life." In March we'll read scripture from Hebrews, Psalms, Luke, and Matthew, which explore the awesomeness of God. God's people respond with worship to the true miracle of Jesus and the gift of salvation. God is the rock of our salvation and is worthy of praise and worship. *Contact: Janet Kennedy*

Thursday Morning Bible Study

10:00 a.m. in the Church Parlor through April 9

While Marvin is away, the Thursday Morning Bible Study continues to meet in the Church Parlor for study focusing on the lectionary. Rev. Skip Lloyd will do the background work and members will take turns facilitating discussions. Sunday Worship, Church School, and Bible Study will be in sync through April 9. Meetings at Marvin's house resume Thursday, April 16. *Contact Marvin Caldwell ()*

GPS Update

GPS (God's Purpose Seekers) Summary Statement

On February 8, during worship, the GPS Task Force gave the sermon on their draft vision statement. They shared more deeply about how this statement informs and shapes us as a congregation. Copies are available in the Sanctuary (on the back tables), as well as on our website at www.uccgroton.org.

A welcoming Christ-centered church sharing His life-changing message of love, joy and forgiveness in service to all people and for the glory of God.

- **Welcoming:** *We are eager to invite all into the fellowship and community of our church family, and to help them find a home in the body of Christ. We are a church, not a club.*
- **Christ-Centered:** *We believe that Christ is our Savior and so everything that each of us does will point to Christ individually and collectively.*
- **Sharing:** *We believe God wants each of us to feel so familiar with Christ that everyone is comfortable and eager to share Him with others in your life.*
- **Life-Changing:** *We believe that, while God values "living a good life," that is not enough. When we make Christ the center of our lives, everything in our lives changes because we are different.*
- **Message:** *The message is the Gospel — the Good News of Jesus Christ, who died for us and who rose from the dead giving us hope in all things. We learn about what this means through studying the Bible, individually and together.*
- **Love:** *God loves all people unconditionally. As followers of Christ, the ultimate manifestation of God's love for the world, God wants us to share this love in word and deeds.*
- **Joy:** *We want to grow deep enough in Jesus that each facet of our lives has a steady drip of joy, i.e., church life, home life, family life, business life, generosity, service.*
- **Forgiveness:** *Live our lives so that it is evident to those around us that we are joyfully living in the forgiveness of Christ... and when they ask why ... we point to Christ.*
- **Service to Others:** *Jesus commands us to love our neighbors as ourselves — we will practice this as consistently and faithfully as possible, by actually doing the serving, both near and far, and by giving our resources.*
- **To all people:** *To people in our congregation, to people in our community, to people outside our community.*
- **For the Glory of God:** *All that we do must honor God, magnify His greatness, and be responsive to His will. Everything we do at church — from the way we worship to the smallest — it's all about God.*

GPS Task Force

—Bonnie Biocchi

—Pete Hnath

—Halsey Platt

—Tim Dumont

—Stefanie Lempp

—Larry Robinson

—Mary Hanson

—Gail Miller

Comments from the Collector

Welcome to 2015 everyone!

If you have not yet made a financial pledge to support our 2015 Operating Budget, and would like to, please contact me so that I can get a pledge card into your hand. Once we receive your pledge card back from you, I will add you to the system and have weekly giving envelopes sent to you.

If you have chosen not to pledge, but still would like the weekly envelopes, again send me an email and I will get them to you.

Many folks have asked about making an electronic payment of their weekly offering. My recommendation is for you to work with your bank's bill paying service and set the church up as a payee/vendor.

To make sure your payment is received in a timely manner, please mail to:

Union Congregational Church
220 Main Street
Groton, MA 01450

—Bob Goudey, Collector
()

Spring Craft Fair



10th Spring Artisan/Craft Fair

Saturday, March 28

10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

Needed:

Kitchen: Joel Hughes () needs a kitchen crew and cashier, as well as some folk to make muffins and soups.

Bake Table: Think snacks and yummy desserts

Craft Table: Always likes new items

Set-up Help Needed:

Sunday, March 22: After church, break-down the Nursery.

Wednesday, March 25, at 6:00 p.m.: Set-up the Fellowship Hall

Saturday, March 28, starting at 2:40 p.m.: Break-down the fair and rebuild the nursery

Come shop for Easter, birthdays, weddings, yourself! All "Made in America"! Contact: Bonnie Martin
()

Fall Harvest Fair



Mark Your Calendar!

Harvest Fair

October 3, 10:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

Books: Martha Dean will start collecting books now in order to have them sorted. A box will appear in the foyer for your donations.

Kids Clothing: Also can be collected now (once you are done with winter wear!). Contact Krista Kubick
()

Kids Fair: Looking for many folk to take a small part for an activity. Set your own time/schedule, which can be set-up on a poster board and advertised as: small play, reading a Christian based story; sing-a-long, face painting, craft, game. Little work and fun for kids all day! **Moon Bounce** will be here.

Again Joel Hughes () will need a kitchen crew and any takers for the grill??

New Thoughts About Our Harvest Fair

On January 18th we had our first informal Harvest Fair meeting of the year. It was a very exciting meeting that has the potential to bring our fair in a new direction.

There was broad agreement that the fair should represent us as a church. Our fair should demonstrate our values (reflected in our vision statement) and welcome the community to come and see what we stand for as a church. This should become our Open House.

- Every activity at the fair should seek to feature some aspect of church life; worship, music, Sunday School, hospitality... In turn, it's everyone's job at the fair to represent our church.
- We need a clear call to action — most notably... come to worship the next day!
- Ideally, each Harvest Fair team would identify ways to share and demonstrate who we are. For example...
- We would like to connect the proceeds of the Fair to missions... This is not possible this year because the budget is already set up. But if we think of it symbolically as a mission instead of "paying the bills" our perspective about how we approach the fair would change.

Some concrete ideas:

- Everybody that participates at the fair could have a t-shirt with our Vision Statement on it. All the t-shirts would be the same color making us easily identified as being a part of the church.
- We would love to see music become part of the fair: piano, handbells, kids.
- A "flash mob" hymn or two.
- A prayer station could be available.
- We should use the Sanctuary! Our most God-centered room doesn't get used during the fair.
- One of our biggest draws is the events for children. We should add some meaning to these games with Christian prizes or games themselves that have more meaning.
- We can make up postcards or bookmarks that get handed to people with every transaction. It could say who we are, what to expect at worship (such as childcare, SS...). The web address should be included on these.
- We need our signage to inform the community of how the fair will benefit the community. Signs should include things like "all our unsold clothing gets donated to...". And there should be signs that break down our church values into smaller chunks. These could be put up throughout both buildings on poster board.
- We should have a "Schedule of Events" poster that indicates what is going on (for example, Bells at 10:30 in the Sanctuary, children's story time at 11:00 next to the bouncy house...).

We'd like to thank all who attended and please bring any new ideas for the fair to the next meeting.

If you'd like to contact someone about this or anything fair related, please contact Bonnie Martin () or Mary Hanson ().



Daylight Savings Starts Sunday, March 8
Remember to set your clocks ahead one hour
Saturday night!

Missions



Heifer International

Quarter Drive

Starts March 1 (through Easter)

We are excited to kick-off our Fourth Annual Heifer Quarter Drive. We hope to collect enough quarters to purchase at least two larger animals for families in need in developing countries. **Children are welcome to take an ark from the Missions table during coffee hour.** Please help us fill the quarter tubes each week and learn about the Heifer Project at our Missions table.



Annual Pancake Breakfast

Overlook Farm (Rutland, MA)

Saturday, March 14, at 10:00 a.m.

Enjoy pancakes covered in Heifer Farm's maple syrup and pork sausage with coffee and juice. After breakfast, tour the farm to view the maple sugaring operation, meet the animals, and explore Heifer's Global Village. **We have reserved a block of seats for 10:00 a.m. — sign up at the Mission's Bulletin Board in the Fellowship Hall by Sunday, March 8. For those who wish to car pool, we'll meet at the church at 8:30.**

Cost: Adults \$12; Children (3 -10) \$6. Children age two and under are free.

Contact: Janet Kennedy ().

One Great Hour of Sharing Offering

March 15 and 22

This is one of four special mission offerings of the United Church of Christ that we collect, providing hope to people in more than 80 countries. The UCC works with international partners to provide support for health, education, refugee, agricultural and emergency relief initiatives. Look for the inserts in your Sunday bulletins or the special offering envelope in your Weekly Offering packet.

Loaves & Fishes Volunteers

L&F is looking for help in a number of ways: assisting with administrative tasks, receiving/checking/sorting/stocking the donations, receiving and organizing the clothing donations, distributing food, stewarding, and helping with special events. If any of these opportunities to volunteer are of interest, informational sessions are held on the first Wednesday evening of the month at 6:30 p.m. and on the third Thursday of the month at 9:30 a.m. *Call 978-772-4627 X300 for more information or visit the website at: www.loavesfishespantry.org*

Thank You!

Church World Service Blanket Drive

Thank you to those who bought Valentines to support the Church World Service Blanket Drive. We received \$285 in donations, which covers the cost of 28 blankets. These blankets will provide warmth and shelter, as well as other functions, to people in a disadvantaged region of the world. Thank you to Cassie Sampas for providing the special Valentine's cards. Last year CWS sent blankets to Honduras and many states in the US to help the homeless and economically disadvantaged.

Missions Committee

—Janet Kennedy, Chair
—Halsey Platt

—Brenda Barker
—Julie Platt

—Tony DiCenzo
—Pete Hnath

Easter Plant Order Form

Please use the order form below to order Easter plants to decorate our Sanctuary — cut out on the dotted line and mail with your check as instructed below. Thank you!



2015 Easter Plants Order Form

Easter Sunday is April 5!

An assortment of Lilies, Daffodils, Hyacinths and Tulips will be placed in the Sanctuary

FORM DUE BY: Sunday, March 29

Please return this form and a check made out to UCC (memo: Easter Flowers) to the Church Office:

Carol Zaiatz
 Union Congregational Church
 220 Main Street
 Groton, MA 01450

You are welcome to take your plant(s) home after worship Easter Sunday (April 5) or plants will be delivered to folk in the church who might appreciate a gift of love. If you have a specific person in mind, please enter their information here:

(Name) _____

(Address) _____

Qty. Ordered	Flower	Cost	Total
_____	Double Stem Lily	\$15.00	\$ _____
_____	6" Potted Daffodils, Hyacinths or Tulips	\$ 8.00	\$ _____
		Total Order	\$ _____

For the bulletin insert:

Plant is Given by: _____

In Loving Memory of: _____

In Honor/Celebration of: _____

If you have any questions, please contact Carol Zaiatz (978-448-2091 or unioncc@uccgroton.org). Thank you very much and may you have a Blessed Easter!



If you have any further questions, please contact Carol Zaiatz (978-448-2091 or unioncc@uccgroton.org). We appreciate your help decorating the Sanctuary! Thank you very much and may you have a Blessed Easter!



Just So You Know

Union Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

220 Main Street
Groton, Massachusetts 01450
978-448-2091
www.uccgroton.org

The Reverend Gail Miller

Cell phone: 978-877-2177

gail@uccgroton.org

Fall Office Hours

Tuesday: 9:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.

Wednesday*: 2:00 p.m.—5:00 p.m.

Thursday—Friday: 9:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.

*available by cell phone or email in the morning

Carol Zaiatz—Office Administrator

unioncc@uccgroton.org

Office Hours

Tuesday — Friday

8:00 a.m. — 3:00 p.m.

(Church Office is closed on Mondays)

Music Director: Bernard Crane

Cherub Choir: Bonnie Marchesani

Handbell Choir: Cheryl Townsend

Church Officers

Moderator: Stefanie Lempp

Treasurer: Dennis Carey

Clerk: Lori McElroy

Collector: Bob Goudey

Internal Auditor: Bruce Wyman

March Deacons

Cassie Sampas/Brenda Semienko

Prayer List

Feel free to call the church office to add or remove names from the prayer list.

Booking Events

When planning meetings, please call the church office to be sure the space is available.

Sermons

Copies of Pastor Miller's sermons are available on the website.

Weekly News Email

Gail prepares the email to be sent from the Office Administrator's account, usually on Fridays.

Name Tags help us become friends. Please wear yours. Sign up on the nametag list on the small table in the vestibule, call or email the church office. You can use one of the blank name tags in the basket on the table until yours is ready.

Committee Chairs

Christian Education Committee:

Anne Cahill

Church Council Member-at-Large:

Pat Woods

Diaconate Committee:

Tim Dumont 978-448-6748

tdumont@groton.org

Endowment Committee:

Mary Hanson

om

Missions Committee:

Janet Kennedy

Music Committee:

Sheila Mitchell

gypsyhart@live.com

Pastor Parish Relations Committee:

Bebe Goudey

Stewardship & Finance Committee:

Don Kennedy

Union Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
220 Main Street
Groton, MA 01450

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Palm Sunday

March 29 at 10:00 a.m.

Palm Sunday Worship

Senior and Junior Choirs
Handbell Choir performs



Holy Week Calendar



"Given for you..."

April 2 at 7:30 p.m.

Maundy Thursday/Tenebrae Worship

Holy Communion and the Extinguishing of the Light



April 3 at 12:30 p.m.

Good Friday

We gather to read the biblical account and reflect on Jesus' death.



Easter Sunday

April 5 at 10:00 a.m.

Easter Worship

Senior, Junior, and Cherub Choirs sing
Handbell Choir and Trumpet
Holy Communion will be served.

No Sunday School: Childcare is provided for infants and toddlers.