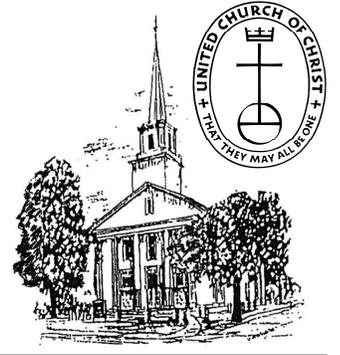


# THE UNION COURIER

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

220 Main Street  
Groton, Massachusetts 01450



## December 2016



## An Advent Message from Your Pastor

What time is it? (To borrow from the musical *Hamilton*!)

Looking around we might say that it's Christmas time. But the church marches to a different drum, and for us it's "Advent time."

The color is purple (not red and green) and the theme is waiting (not going and doing)! Here are twelve suggestions for how we can live this season differently — and I'd even say, more healthily, joyfully, and faithfully! (from [womenlivingwell.org](http://womenlivingwell.org))

1. Open a Bible to Luke 2 and place it in the center of your decorations.
2. Pray over each individual as you write out your Christmas cards.
3. Drink hot cocoa and sing Christmas carols with your friends and children.
4. Do not try to create the perfect holiday. Relax. Enjoy.
5. Keep peace with your spouse. Be patient when tempers are short.
6. Invite someone new to visit your church.
7. Donate money, food, clothes or whatever you can give to charity.
8. Don't overspend. Be a faithful steward of your money.
9. Pray over your gift list, asking the LORD for guidance.
10. Take a minute each day to reflect on the reality of Emmanuel, "God with us."
11. Call a friend or family member that you lost touch with over the last year.
12. Do a small, random act of kindness to touch someone with the love of God.

Bless you as we wait and journey together,

*Gail*

*For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given,  
and the government will be on his shoulders.  
And he will be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
(Isaiah 9:6-7)*

**Celebrate Advent**  
*Devotions, calendars, wreaths/candles  
and activities for younger and older  
children are available in the hallway at  
church.*





# Our Church Family/News



**Ongoing Prayer List:** This list will be refreshed again in January. Feel free to contact Gail Miller or Carol Zaiatz (978-448-2091 or unioncc@uccgroton.org) to add a name to this list.

Kathi Bond  
Norm Boucher  
Rosemarie Bradley  
Jack Cornforth

Sally Mayo DeWinkleer  
Evo Facchini  
Harold Gould

Liz Lienhard  
Debbie Sampson  
Rudi Schmid

Bert Tompkins  
Liz Waggoner  
Shirley Wishart



- Bert Tompkins, receiving hospice care at home.
- Alex Platt, who received his Eagle Scout Award November 6.
- Gordon and Doreen Campbell, in the death of Gordon's mother, Dorothy, who was buried on November 4.

## Thank You!

Dear Church Friends:

*I wish to thank all of you for your prayers and thoughts extended to my Granddaughter Jennifer May Vantour and her little "Bundle of Love" - Ella May Vantour. Both are doing well, with God's blessings.*

Ellie Kennedy



**Congratulations**  
to  
**Susan and Charlie Nelsen**  
married in our church  
on  
Saturday, October 29, 2016

## Milestone Anniversary

Congratulations to  
**Tom Wickham and Megan Mahony**  
celebrating their 20<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary  
on December 14

## December Birthdays

Brenda Semienko	12/02	Don Landry	12/17	Janet Carey	12/22
Will Nickerson	12/03	Darrion Slade	12/17	Hannah York	12/23
Gail Miller	12/08	Myrtle Murphy	12/18	Ken Lefebvre	12/25
Adam Elibero	12/11	Korbin Larsen	12/18	Taylor Ansted	12/27
Scott Burgess	12/12	Dick Burrier	12/19	Carolyn DiCenzo	12/29
Alyssa Slade	12/15	Tristan Row	12/19	Joe Barreiro	12/31
Dave Woods	12/16	Don Kennedy	12/21		

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 Report Deadline December 20

It's that time of year again! In order to have the Annual Report finished in time by mid-January, we need to collect committee and ministry reports now. Please email your report as a word document attachment to Carol (unioncc@uccgroton.org) by Tuesday, December 20. Also, if you haven't sent Carol your Committee Meeting notes on a monthly basis, please include in this email your Committee meeting notes for the entire year (12 separate documents for those who meet every month). Thank you!

## Serving on Committees and Ministries

As we prepare for the Annual Meeting January 29 (when the "turnover" of committee members occurs), the Church Council invites you to let us know your interest in serving on Committees and Ministries. *Committee* positions require formal membership in the church and *Ministry* positions allow for anyone to serve. The current Committee/Ministry Roster can be found inside the Church Directory (available on the back tables in the Sanctuary). *Feel free to approach Stefanie Lempp (Moderator) or Pastor Miller with your questions or to express an interest in a particular Committee or Ministry.*

## Church Council November 16 Meeting Summary

Our church will be, once again, hosting the Town Christmas Tree Lighting on December 4 at 4:00 p.m.; cookies are appreciated.

A healthy, open discussion regarding where the Harvest Fair proceeds should go was held. The 2017 Harvest Fair will be held on Saturday, September 30.

The Birthday Fund has over \$2K; it will be spent on round tables for Fellowship Hall, pens for the pews and a portable projection screen.

**Committees:** Please have your Annual Reports to Carol by Christmas. Please let Rev. Gail and Stefanie know if you have any suggestions for who might serve in 2017.

The Annual Meeting will be Sunday, January 29.

## Special Congregational Meeting Summary Sunday, November 20

The preliminary budget was passed; the final budget will be passed at the Annual Meeting on January 29.

The FaST Team continue to present the architects' drawings in small groups; anyone who is interested should contact a member of the FaST Team.

Church Council will spend the \$2,083 Birthday Fund on 12 round banquet tables, a portable projection screen, and pens for the pews.

The installation of the new stove is being worked on, but there have been a few challenges, such as code changes. There have been lots of good gains in the last few months.

The Technology Ministry has been asked to expand their charter to include more; anyone with expertise in this area should contact Mike Smith, Drew Davenport or Mary Hanson and attend their January meeting on this subject (TBD).

## Bible Study

**Wednesday Evening**  
7:30 p.m. in the Pastor's Office  
Contact: Janet Kennedy

**Thursday Morning Bible Study**  
10:00 a.m. 26 Court Street  
Contact: Marvin Caldwell (978-448-5496)

## Sunday School Schedule

### *Away in the Manger*



Each Sunday in December, the children will spend the **first 10 minutes of Sunday School learning a Christmas Carol — *Away in the Manger***. Bonnie Marchesani will sing with the children in the Fellowship Hall before they are escorted to their classes in the Parish House.



They will then be invited to sing it as a "Sunday School Chorus" at the 5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Worship Service.



Please join us in teaching Christian Carols to our children by listening to and singing these traditional carols at home and in the car throughout the month.



**December 4—*God's Peaceful World***  
Isaiah 11:1-10

**December 11—*John the Baptist***  
Matthew 11:2-11

**December 18—*Angels Visit***  
Matthew 1:18-25

**December 25—Christmas Day**  
No Sunday School

**January 1, 2016—New Year's Day**  
*Escape to Egypt*, Matthew 2:13-23

# Pledge Update / Missions / Handbell Choir



The Stewardship Team would like to thank all who participated in Pledge Sunday (11/13) and to those who mailed in their pledge for 2017. **As of 11/25, we have received 62 pledges for a total amount of \$206,242.** While we are still awaiting a number of pledges, the good news is that so far we have **five new first-time pledges** for 2017! ***So if you have not pledged yet, please mail your card to the Church Office, Attn: Collector (220 Main Street, Groton, MA 01450).***

***Year-end 2016 is approaching fast; please make sure all current year pledges are up-to-date no later than Sunday, December 25. Contact: Bob Goudey ( ).***

**Now That I've Pledged—What's Next?** In late December, the weekly giving envelopes for 2017 will be available at church. They are a handy way to keep track of your weekly giving. Since pledges are made for the upcoming calendar year, we start tracking 2017 pledges in January. Contact: Bob Goudey ( ).

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## The 2016 Stewardship Team

—Bob Goudey  
—Gail Miller

—Andrea McDonough  
—Halsey Platt

—Liz McQuillin  
—Craig Smith

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## Missions

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### Thank you from *Common Cathedral*

*It is a blessing to build the Kingdom of God together. Thank you for everything you do!!! See you at CityReach soon. ~ Mary*

*Dear Groton Community and Family: Thank you again for the warm welcome, amazing weekend and continued support of Common Cathedral and all our programs! We can't thank you enough for all you do. Thank you! Thank you! ~Amanda and The Whole Community*

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***CityReach*** Thank you to all who donated clothes for the homeless at *CityReach*. The donations were sorted and distributed by members of our congregation on an overnight visit to the *Church on the Hill* November 18-19. Thank you for sharing Christ's love with others.

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### Tewksbury Hospital Giving Tree

The Giving Tree is located in the back of Fellowship Hall, Please consider taking a patient's "wish" gift from the tree, signing the itemized list at the Missions table, and **returning your unwrapped gift to the designated box by December 11.** Thank you!

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## Missions Committee

—Julie Sutherland-Platt, Chair  
—Lynn Manalo

—Brenda Barker  
—Halsey Platt

—Pete Hnath

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## Handbell Choir Fun! *Halloween Night Rehearsal*



## Journey to Bethlehem

Friday, December 2, from 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Faith Evangelical Free Church in Acton (54 Hosmer Street)

Meet at the church in Acton at 6:45 p.m.

This adventure takes you back to biblical times and reenacts the journey a family would have taken to Bethlehem to be counted in the census as Mary and Joseph were. It's not a show, it's a journey that winds through the grounds of the church and can't be described with words. This is appropriate for children of all ages. Look for the Kubicks, Landrys and Larsens waiting in line so we can go through as a group.



Sunday, December 4 at 4:00 p.m.

The Groton Interfaith Council will host the annual Groton Christmas Tree Lighting service on **our church's front lawn**, featuring carol singing, prayers, and seasonal readings by representatives of Groton faith communities. Afterwards all are invited inside our church for warm drinks and goodies. *We are looking for volunteers to donate refreshments to serve, which can be dropped off in the kitchen after worship that Sunday (12/4).*

## All Church Christmas Caroling

Sunday, December 18 12:00—2:00 p.m.

We will gather at church to warm up. Then we'll visit people from the church who would appreciate a personal visit and the warmth of God's love shared in song. (It's Cookies 'n' Carols without the cookies!)



## Groton Community Christmas Concert

Sunday, December 11  
2:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Monday, December 12  
7:30 p.m.

Come and enjoy the 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Groton Community Christmas Concert. There will be wonderful music of the season, sung by children and adults from Groton and 11 surrounding communities; Edie Tompkins, Director. This concert is held in our Sanctuary and is free (though donations will be accepted at the door).



Christmas Eve  
WORSHIP

### 5:00 p.m.—Family Worship: Christmas Drama Especially for the Young

During worship, we will have our Christmas Pageant (directed by Kathleen McKenzie). The Children's' Choir will sing *Away in the Manger*; and there will also be a sermon, offering, and passing of the light at the end of the service.

### 7:00 p.m.—Traditional Lessons and Carols More Adult Family Worship Service

This service is more traditional and includes Lessons and Carols, along with a sermon, offering and the passing of the light at the close of the service. There will be lots of music and the full Christmas Story. *If you would be interested in reading scripture at this service, please contact Gail (978-448-2091 or [gail@uccgroton.org](mailto:gail@uccgroton.org)).*

# Christmas Day

# New Year's Day



Christmas Day  
Worship Service

## Sunday, December 25, 11:00 a.m. Worship Carols, Communion and Cake — Celebrating Jesus' Birthday!

On Christmas Day, we move our worship service one hour later to give folks more time at home before church. Then we'll gather at 11:00 a.m. for a brief service of Christmas carols, Communion, the Christmas story and some birthday cake for Jesus. Take a break from your normal routine to be with your Church community to worship the One who is the reason for the season. Bring the kids and keep it casual!



## New Year's Day Worship and Potluck January 1 at 4:30 p.m.

With New Year's Day falling on a Sunday, the Deacons, Church Council, CE, and Music Staff have decided to have worship in the later afternoon with a potluck meal to follow. This gives us an opportunity

to offer a different style of worship called "evening prayer," which will have a more meditative and reflective feel to it, with lots of music. Kids will stay in worship, as the service will be no longer than 45 minutes. And we will organize rides for those who don't want to drive at night. (Not to worry, the 1:00 p.m. Patriots game should be finished in time for you to arrive at worship on time.)

Then after worship, instead of Fellowship Hour, we will have a Potluck Dinner together! (Details to follow)

What a wonderful way to start the year — with your church community — in worship and fellowship!

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



## 2016 Poinsettia Order Form

**Due by Sunday, DECEMBER 18!**

An assortment of red and white Poinsettias will be placed in the Sanctuary for Christmas Eve, December 24

*Plants will be delivered (after Christmas) 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 \_\_\_\_\_

Make your check payable to **UCC Groton (memo: Poinsettia)**. Mail form and check to:

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

\_\_\_\_\_ Poinsettia Plant(s) @ \$15.00 each      Total = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

For the bulletin insert:

Plant is Given by: \_\_\_\_\_

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

In Honor 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 Christmas!*

# Just So You Know

## Union Congregational Church

### United Church of Christ

220 Main Street  
Groton, Massachusetts 01450  
978-448-2091  
[www.uccgroton.org](http://www.uccgroton.org)

### The Reverend Gail Miller

Cell phone: 978-877-2177  
[gail@uccgroton.org](mailto:gail@uccgroton.org)

#### Office Hours

Tuesday—Friday  
9:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.

### Carol Zaiatz—Office Administrator

[unioncc@uccgroton.org](mailto:unioncc@uccgroton.org)

Tuesday—Friday  
8:30 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

*(Church Office is closed Saturday—Monday)*

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

## Committee/Ministry Contacts

### Buildings & Grounds:

John Brooks

Barb Lefebvre

### Christian Education:

Anne Cahill

### Church Council Member-at-Large:

Pat Woods

### Diaconate:

Greg Balligan

Steve Legge

### Endowment:

Mary Hanson

### FaST:

Pete Hnath

### Kitchen Ministry:

Joel Hughes

### GPS:

Stefanie Lempp

### Missions:

Julie Platt

### Pastor Parish Relations:

Bebe Goudey

### Stewardship & Finance:

Liz McQuillin

### Technology Ministry

Mike Smith

Mary Hanson (webmaster)

*May the peace and hope of  
Christ's birth  
be with you now and in the days ahead...*

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

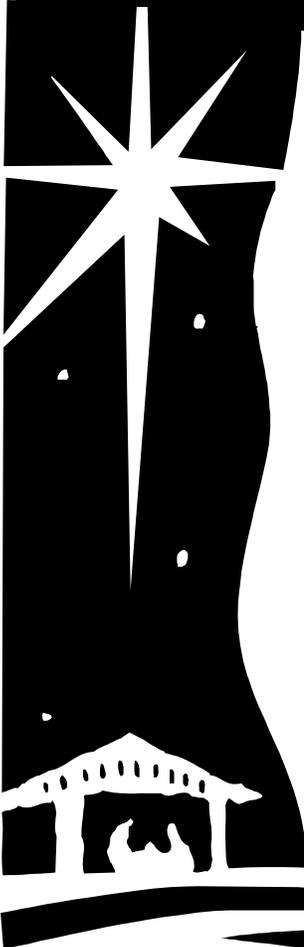
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Please return to your mail carrier.



## Advent/Christmas

**Friday, Dec. 2 – Journey to Bethlehem** (p. 5)

**Dec. 4 – Advent Two!**

Holy Communion  
Senior and Junior Choirs  
12:00 p.m. —Christmas Pageant Rehearsal  
4:00 p.m.—Community Tree Lighting at our Church (p. 5)  
5:00 p.m. —Confirmation Class

**Dec. 11 – Advent Three!**

Senior Choir

**Dec. 18 – Advent Four!**

Senior, Cherub, and Handbell Choirs  
Poinsettias Orders Due (p. 6)  
12:00 p.m.—Caroling (see p. 5)

**Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship** (p. 5)

5:00 p.m.—Family Worship (including Christmas Pageant and Children’s Choir)  
7:00 p.m.—Lessons and Carols

**Dec. 25 – Christmas Day Worship at 11:00 a.m.** (p. 6)

**January 1 – New Years Day Worship at 4:30 p.m.** (p. 6)  
Potluck Dinner after Worship!