

THE UNION COURIER

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

220 Main Street
Groton, Massachusetts 01450



June 2019



FROM THE PASTOR

As I make my way through my final weeks with you, I am mindful of how important it is to live in the moment. I'm doing my best not to look too far ahead, lest I miss what's right in front of me! Though it does seem like the days are passing too quickly, and important things are right around the corner.

- June 2:** Communion and three Baptisms
The Memorial Service for Bob Goudey's father (also Bob Goudey) who died in December
- June 9:** Confirmation - 14 youth are being confirmed! (The largest class in all my years here)
- June 16:** Final Worship and Goodbye Party
- June 22 (Sat.) - June 30 (Sun.):** Youth Mission Trip to West Virginia
- July 2-17:** Pack my office / organize files
- July 18:** Turn in my keys / drive away for the last time

After June 16, I will no longer be in worship on Sundays (Mission Trip and then we'll be traveling on the weekends - a rare opportunity for a pastor's family), but will be pleased to have lunch or coffee or a quick word with you in my office as respite from the packing! I have arranged for summer preachers (Gary, Susan Scott, Kaz Bem, Sarah Hubbell) through Labor Day. The July newsletter will have details about pastoral coverage throughout the summer.

Some of you have asked if I'll be coming back to visit here and what our relationships will look like after I leave. I won't be returning, except by invitation of the next pastor (Interim or Settled). It will be important for the new pastor to be your only pastor, and so it'd be inappropriate for me to remain in your lives. (I will read the monthly newsletter and hold you in my prayers. And you can check out the Trinitarian Congregational website to see what I'm up to there.) We will each figure out how to honor the ways in which our 13 years together have shaped who we are - you as a congregation, me as a pastor - while we begin new chapters taking us in different directions.

Here is a prayer that I've turned to through the years during times of disruption:

Lord God, You have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Lutheran Book of Worship, 1978)

I am grateful for your kind words of expressed sadness and support for this new opportunity to serve in Concord. It is truly a bittersweet time for me (Mike and Sophia as well). I hold onto the promises of God - not that He will be with us, but that He IS with us!

For thirteen years I have signed these pastoral letters "With you on the journey," and since our journey together is not quite over....one last time....

With you on the Journey,



Our Church Family/News



Ongoing Prayer List—Refreshed as of June 1

In order to keep our prayer list current and relevant, it is refreshed twice a year. Names added recently, and any other names requested to remain are here. If you would like a name put back on the list or a new name added, please email Carol Zaiatz (unioncc@uccgroton.org) with the person's name and the prayer request, or contact Gail Miller directly (gail@uccgroton.org). Thank you.

Megan Bettison
Robina Carestia
Mike Corbett & Family
Peg Elwood
Tiffany Gibb

Ellen Hargraves
Frank Kanour
Joe Marchesani
Jan Miller
Helen Misselhorn

Bill Moeller
Myrtle Murphy
Karen Sands
Rudi Schmid

Matt and Mandy Spain
Diane Thorne
Edie Tompkins
Karen and Marc Vandenbulcke
Betty and Liz Waggoner

Prayers

- The Kenyon family in the death of Julie.
- Janna Oakfellow-Pushee, whose father died suddenly on May 2.
- Dick and Sheila Smith, their daughter Cheryl and granddaughter Kate (17 yrs. old), in the sudden death of Cheryl's husband, Brad Post.



Recent Births

Congratulations on the **birth of Joy Violet Meiners to Valerie and Joel on May 18.**



Recent Baptisms

Congratulations to the following families and their children who were Baptized on June 2:

- The Dabritz family, in the Baptism of Lily and Ryan.
- The Meiners family, in the Baptism of Joy.

Celebrating An Anniversary This Month

Milestone Anniversary

Bob and Nancy Huguenin will celebrate their **50th Wedding Anniversary on June 21**. Congratulations!

June Birthdays

Bill Gale, Sr.	06/01	Hayley Cahill	06/10	Alison Houde	06/24
Liam Clinton	06/01	Aiden Luth	06/11	Cailidh Houde	06/24
Gerry Cahill	06/05	Sammi Smith	06/11	Kim Burgess	06/25
Barbara Avey	06/07	Grant Howard	06/12	Isabella Meehan	06/27
Jillian Van Pelt	06/08	Amy Nickerson	06/13	Bill Semienko	06/28
Doris Barreiro	06/09	Kathy Bates	06/14	Ed Stratton	06/28
Peg Elwood	06/09				

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?

The Birthday Fund

This is a fun way to contribute above and beyond your regular giving to the church to something above and beyond our normal operating budget. Simply make a donation on (or around) your birthday in the amount of your age (Memo: Birthday Fund)! If everyone participates, this will add up to a significant amount. Please participate and watch our gifts grow!



Our Church Family



A Message from Mike Smith

The past 13 years at UCC Groton has been nothing short of wonderful! So, it is with a very heavy heart that, along with Gail and Sophia, I say goodbye to this wonderful church family. Gail has always preached there is no “church” without the congregation, the extended church “family”; and all of you certainly have become our very close family. You all have meant so much to us as a family, and to each of us as individuals. As a congregation and as individuals you have been generous with your love, support, time and treasure. We have truly been blessed with such a wonderful “family.”

As for Sophia, being 15 years old this has been the only church she has known. We have lived in the same house for her whole life. She has been in the same school system with the same friends. So this is a new and difficult experience for her. I think she is coming to understand how much she has learned and been loved here. Your love and caring for her through her life will always be a cherished memory for Sophia and for us.

We will miss each and every one of you, and will never forget you. Leaving is going to be difficult; it already is. Once it became clear this change was coming, I have experienced each worship service, each interaction with all of you, differently. I have become aware that “this is the last time I will experience Maundy Thursday with this congregation; the last time I will experience music appreciation day; the last time I will do this, that or the other thing.” It has been difficult not to weep through each of these.

What will I miss about UCC Groton? More than I can articulate. Physically, all the lovely and quirky aspects of our building and grounds: the quintessential New England church structure, the slightly leaning steeple, the constantly evolving and improving interiors, the kitchen, the sanctuary without a center aisle, the lovely stained glass, the dimming lights when the organ is turned on. On the human side I will most miss the closeness of the small congregation, “where everybody knows your name,” to steal a line from the popular song from “Cheers!” Sometimes there is strength in small numbers.

There are so many things for which to be grateful, but perhaps what means the most to me is that we are leaving one another on such wonderful terms! We are leaving a healthy church. We are not leaving because we have to. No strife, no drama. That is truly a gift that not everyone gets to experience.

My daily prayers are, and will be for, the Groton church and its church family. I pray the next pastor will be wonderful for you. I pray the accessibility addition will be a quick success. I pray the congregation will thrive and grow. I pray for you all; my extended family.

God Bless You!

Mike Smith



May 29 Meeting Summary

The Council voted to postpone the Stated Congregational Meeting that normally takes place in June. This meeting will now be held on either the 15th or 22nd of September and the congregation will be notified as soon as the date is set. At this time the Accessibility Steering Team also hopes to present to the congregation the architect’s design and cost estimates for the accessibility project.

Our Confirmation Class has met for the last time; there will be a rehearsal and celebration dinner on June 8 prior to Confirmation the next day. We have a group of 14 confirmands, so expect a full church that day!

The Missions committee has chosen *Hagar's Sisters* to be the recipient of our Harvest Fair profits this year. Hagar's Sisters vision is "Ending the cycle of domestic abuse through the transforming power of God".

The timing of Gail’s departure and final weeks was finalized. Her last service will be Sunday, June 16, followed by a celebration at Gibbet Hill. She will be away with the Youth Mission Trip from June 22-30, and then will be in the church office (although not preaching), packing up until July 18th. This will be her last day at the church.

The Deacons are completing our Church Profile so that the search for an Interim Pastor can begin in earnest.

Church News



Ladies' Lunch

Friday, June 7 (Meet at the church at 11:30 a.m. to carpool)

Devens Grill (4 Ryans Way, Devens)

All women of the church are invited! Contacts: Janice Owen, Brenda Semienko, or Peg Lloyd. **RSVP to Margaret Wheeler so we have a head count for reservations.**



From the Collector

There are two ways to keep your donations current as you start your summer vacation season:

1) Use the online giving tool on our church website. You can quickly set up an account, amount and frequency. Go to www.uccgroton.net and click on "Giving." We currently have eight families doing this.

2) If you use a bank provided payment tool, set up UCC Groton, 220 Main Street, Groton, MA 01450, as a payee. Then create payment amount and frequency. We currently have ten families doing this.

Questions, please contact me. Enjoy your summer holidays!! Be safe — be a blessing.

Bob Goudey, Collector
bgoudeyucc@gmail.com

Spring Fair Thank You!

We thank all who crafted, baked and worked in the kitchen...as well as those who got the hall ready for the fair and those who rebuilt it at the end of the day. Our profit was approximately \$1,087.



2019 Graduates

Congratulations to all our recent graduates and wishing you God's blessings for a bright and happy future!

- **Caleb Brennan** graduated from Groton Dunstable Regional High School (GDRHS) and will attend college in Colorado in the fall.
 - **Cloe Bridge** graduated from GDRHS and will be attending The College of the Holy Cross this fall.
 - **Allison Cebollero** (Doris Barreiro's granddaughter) graduated from Ayer Shirley Regional High School and will be attending the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.
 - **Gordon Platt** graduated on Memorial Day from Bates College with a BA degree in Environmental Science. Gordon will be starting his new job in July with Rock Solid in Grand Rapids, Minnesota.
 - **Nathan Townsend** graduated from GDRHS. He was Captain of the Varsity Lacrosse team and took classes through the dual enrollment program with Middlesex Community College and GDRHS. He will be attending the University of Rhode Island in the Fall.
 - **Randy York** graduated from Brown University with a Masters Degree.
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Mid-Summer Courier

The "Mid-Summer Courier" will be available the beginning of July and will include information for **July and August**. Please email (unioncc@uccgroton.org) your information by **Friday, June 14**; and remember to include anything that needs to be known for early September. Thank you.

Accessibility Project Update

The Accessibility Project Steering Team has been working closely with Paul Adison of Adison Architects to refine the plans to make both floors of our church fully accessible to all. The plans include a new entrance off Willowdale Road with a three-stop elevator that eliminates the need to construct a ramp to reach the Fellowship Hall. This approach will save on construction costs and also future maintenance costs associated with a ramp. Not needing a ramp also preserves the architectural character the church. The plans include new ADA compliant restrooms, two on each of the two main floors of the church, elements that we feel are essential to being truly accessible and hospitable to all. In addition to providing a welcoming entrance, the plans also include a coat closet, storage area for liturgical supplies, as well as a new music office/rehearsal room on the Sanctuary level. The proposed access way from the addition through to Fellowship Hall calls for relocating our current storage of tables and chairs to the current music office/storage room. Thus, the need to provide music related space elsewhere in the plan and at a better location on the Sanctuary level. The rear of the proposed addition at the first floor level includes a small covered porch facing Hollis Street that is in keeping with the character of neighboring homes and shops while also providing additional means of egress for safety.

The team will be reviewing the cost estimate and continuing to work with our architect in the coming weeks and into the Summer. Given the upcoming events in the life of our church, including Pastor Gail's departure, we have postponed our presentation of the project to the congregation to September. We want to do this project WELL, not rushed. Continue to ask us questions and also please continue to keep the project in your prayers.

Accessibility Steering Team

—Anne Cahill
—Karen Sherwin

—Chip Detwiler
—Chris Sullivan

—Bebe Goudey
—Sara Zambuto

—Rev. Gail Miller

Sunday School



June 2—Paul and Silas
Acts 16:16-40

June 9
Confirmation—No Sunday School

June 16
Activities for young children in the Fellowship Hall

Teacher Appreciation Sunday

June 2 During Worship

During 2018-2019, nine people volunteered their time to teach our Sunday School classes. Some have consistently taught for multiple years, while others taught or helped for the first time. Together they have taught over 100 classes to approximately 30 children during the course of the year! What a wonderful way to share the Word of God with our children!

Christian Education Committee

—Carl Prestia, Chair

—Bonnie Marchesani

—Amy Nickerson

Missions

Youth Mission Trip

The Missions Committee is excited to announce that the **proceeds from this year's Harvest Fair will go to Hagar's Sisters**, whose mission is "*Ending the cycle of violence through the transforming power of God.*" The organization offers holistic services that empower women to find healing and a new way of life that is free from abuse. We look forward to learning more about Hagar's Sisters' ministry in late Summer/early Fall and working with its staff in deciding how to highlight this important ministry at the Fair.

On April 27, volunteers from UCC Groton served at the Hagar's Sisters Comedy Benefit in Burlington, MA. Four volunteers purchased flowers and helped with the morning set-up for the event, preparing the tables and decorating the hall. Three additional people helped during the event itself, working the silent auction tables. The benefit featured live comedy, silent and live auctions, live music, door prizes and an amazing assortment of desserts. The comedy event raised \$50,000 to benefit Hagar's Sisters in the upcoming year.

Opportunities to Serve

Loaves & Fishes - your donations of non-perishable food items at the top of the stairs are always welcome. Thank you for your generous donations!

Our Father's Table - two or three people from our church are invited to help with serving dinner and a light clean-up at Our Father's Table in Fitchburg. The time commitment is 4:00- 6:30 p.m., including travel time. If you would like to serve on June 25 or on a Tuesday evening later this summer, please contact Julie Platt (juliensp@verizon.net).

UCC Groton Backpack Drive

Once again, we will be providing 250-300 students with donated backpacks and school supplies at the Community Center in Devens. We will need volunteers to help with **set-up on Wednesday, August 21** (unloading a truck, setting up and stocking tables with donated backpacks and school supplies), and with one-on-one **shopping with families on Distribution Day, August 23**. Please stay tuned in the upcoming months for more information and details about timing and involvement.

Missions Committee

—Julie Platt, Chair
—Sue Lunt

—Brenda Barker
—Lynn Manalo

—Stefanie Lempp
—Halsey Platt

Youth Mission Trip

June 22—June 30

Clendenin, West Virginia

Please hold these kids in your prayers and offer your gratitude to the adults who are serving as their advisors. How blessed we are to have this opportunity, and so many who said "yes" to God's call on their lives to serve in this manner.

Youth

Abby Burgess
Hayley Cahill
Ben Coviello

Hasi Gedara
Emily Hanson
Kristina Hnath
Anna Kubick

Ellie Kubick
Emma Milano
Curtis Prestia
Kirsten Sjoberg

Sophia Smith
Bryce York
Chloe York



Advisors: Gail Miller, Mary Hanson, and Pete Hnath



Important Mission Trip Dates

Sunday, June 2 5:00 p.m. Mission Trip Meeting

Sunday, June 16 10:00 a.m. Worship — Commissioning Prayer in Church and Departure
Mission Trip leaves on Saturday, June 22

Summer Worship

Summer Worship starts Sunday, June 23: Holy Communion (first Sunday of the month) is by intinction. Worship (still at 10:00 a.m.) is at a more relaxed pace, with a shorter (45 minute) service. *When you are not away on vacation, we hope you will continue to worship with us during the summer months!*

Something for the Children: Our Nursery Attendant will lead/supervise an activity for children in the Fellowship Hall during worship each week.

Fellowship Hour: Weather permitting, our Fellowship Hour team will serve outside on the front lawn to enjoy fresh air while the children play in the front yard. Hot coffee will be supplemented by cold beverages and lighter fare. If you are assigned Fellowship Hour on a summer Sunday and will be away, please contact the Kitchen Ministry or Carol Zaiatz (978-448-2091) as soon as possible. *Questions? Greg Balligan, Janet Carey, Bill Colbert, Wendy Jones or Sara Zambuto.*

Altar Flowers: Again this summer, we would like to have flowers from your gardens on the altar from June 23 through Labor Day. We have an assortment of vases available in the kitchen, if you'd like to make your arrangement here. *Please sign-up on the Flower Chart in the hallway downstairs at church.* Thank you!

Greeters, Ushers and Readers: With people away on vacation, we need your help. If you are interested in serving as a Greeter or Usher, please contact **Juliet Silveri**; Reader, contact **Craig Smith**. And, if (after volunteering) your schedule changes (even at the last minute) and you can't make it, just let us know. Remember, summer worship is more relaxed and we welcome whatever help you can give!



Harvest Fair

Saturday, October 5
10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

This year, the Missions Committee has chosen *Hagar's Sisters* as the recipient of our proceeds from the Harvest Fair. Their mission is "*Ending the cycle of violence through the transforming power of God.*"

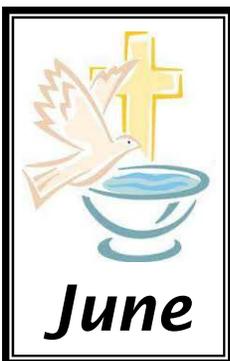
How can you help NOW?

- **Save your kids clothes** for donating to the Children's Clothing room.
- Do you have an **idea for the Silent Auction**? It can be a physical thing (tickets to an event, a vacation home, a painting, a handmade blanket....) or you could offer your services (house painting, making dinner, cleaning a yard...). Contact Liz Brennan (Liz.Corcoran@Bain.com)
- **Bake and freeze things for the bake table.** Do you have an extra crop of blueberries? Save them for blueberry pies!

*Do you have an idea for the fair or want to help somewhere specific?
Contact Mary Hanson*

Union Congregational Church
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220 Main Street
Groton, MA 01450

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Please return to your mail carrier.

*The Church Council & Deacons
invite you to a*

Farewell Reception for Pastor Gail



**Sunday, June 16
11:30 AM to 2:30 PM**

**The Barn at Gibbet Hill
61 Lowell Road, Groton**



**RSVP to Carol in the Church Office
(unioncc@uccgroton.org; 978-448-2091)**