

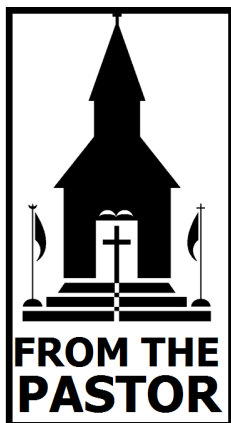
# THE UNION COURIER

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

220 Main Street  
Groton, Massachusetts 01450



## January 2014



January 1<sup>st</sup> is always the Eighth Day of Christmas (maids-a-milking), a little more than half-way through the Christmas season. We'll continue singing the carols and we'll keep the decorations in the Sanctuary with all the candles lit through January 5<sup>th</sup>, when we celebrate the Feast of Epiphany.

I like the counter-cultural nature of the Christian Christmas season — how it is off-kilter from the non-Christian season. When the rest of the world is putting stuff away, we're keeping it going; which is not unlike our Christian faith!

The good news of God coming to Earth — God With Us — in Jesus — is that HE REMAINS even though we put our decorations away! The story continues after Christmas Eve and Day. More will happen — to Jesus and to us! And so we follow him, wherever he goes.... (And in a couple months that will be another journey, this time to the cross.)

The Christian journey is a blessed journey for two reasons I think. First, because we are following Jesus, whom we can trust and who has promised that his Holy Spirit will NEVER LEAVE US. And, secondly, because we make the journey TOGETHER!

I am keenly aware of these two "prongs" of the Christians life, as I prepare to go on Sabbatical on January 6<sup>th</sup>. Trusting in God — His guidance and presence — will no doubt increase as we make our way across the globe and to our temporary home in Cape Town, South Africa.

And our Community of Faith will shift dramatically! Martin Luther said that the "first church" in our lives is the family. Sophia and I will be our own little church as we quickly seek a new church home in Cape Town. The woman, Angie, who runs the Bed and Breakfast where we'll be living, is a Christian and member of the Hillsong Church (coordinating our mission work), so I anticipate an easy fellowship with her and her family. The Hillsong Church is "ginormous" and a style of worship that will be new to me; so we may want to find a smaller more traditional church nearby as well.... We'll see — it's all part of the journey!

And I invite you to keep these two aspects of our faith before you during the Sabbatical time, rephrased as two questions:

- How are you knowing/experiencing God's presence each day — in real ways — not necessarily big ways, but in real ways?
- How is your Life Together being strengthened/broadened/deepened?

Christina, your Sabbatical Pastor, will be a good help to you on this leg of your/our journey as the Church.

I will miss you each and all ~ God be with you 'til we meet again!

In Christ and His love,

*Gail*



*Wise Men and Women Still Seek Him*



# Our Church Family



## Ongoing Prayer List

Our prayer list this month reflects your updates. Feel free to contact Pastor Miller or Carol at any time with further updates or additions (978-448-2091 or email: [unioncc@uccgroton.org](mailto:unioncc@uccgroton.org)).

Marvin Bernstein	Pat Hoggard	Beth McMinn	Todd Penniman
Jody Berren	Nate & Liz Hunterton	Rita McNally	Brent Peters
Sam Bisson	Gene Innis	Heather Meyer	Betsy Pielocik
Kathi Bond	Kayla	Lindsey Meyer	Betty Sampas
Dorothy Campbell	Hannah Keenan	Marge Meyer	Karen Sands
Lucy Chartrand	Emma Kennehan	Kathy Miller	Rudi Schmid
Sue Coulson	Pat Kelt	Maddy Grace Milot	Betty Sowkin
Carolyn DiCenzo	Barbara King	Susan Moore	The Spurling Family
Doug Downen	Scarlett Kostun	Linda Morey	Gayle Tapscott
Will & JC Dinyes	Suzanne Lampognana	Myrtle Murphy	Bert Tompkins
Joslyn Edmunds	Doris Lewis	Shelby Murphy	Eloise Van Niel
Charlie Elwood	The Lough Family	Holly Norton	Sharon Vincent
Anne Ford	Susan Lucier	Lynn O'Brien & Family	Liz Waggoner
Chuck Grey, Jr., & Family	Janet Luttrell	Margrit & John Oldenburg	Margaret Watson



- Charlie Elwood, being treated for Parkinson's
- Liz Smith and Evan Katz, who have received legal guardianship of Hasi
- Kristen, a friend of Liz Smith's, who had surgery for cancer in December
- Cassie Sampas' Mom, Betty, who is recovering from knee replacement surgery
- Mike Gambuzza, in the death of his uncle, Sal Corallo

**Thank you to Tom Hanson** for repainting the hallway in the church — it looks great!

*Thank You!*

We wish to thank our church family for their thoughtful prayers, calls, cards, and help during our time of need.

—Peg and Charlie Elwood



### *In Appreciation*

Thank you to the Groton Woman's Club for the Christmas wreaths on the front door and the greens in the flower pots. These were donated in appreciation for the use of the church for their meetings throughout the year and a workshop for the Greens Sale.

## January Birthdays

Peg DeBruyn	01/01	Casey Sjoberg	01/12	Bill Shute	01/21
Madeleine Bugbee	01/02	Andrea McDonough	01/13	Toni Bond	01/24
Chris Sullivan	01/03	Abby Burgess	01/14	Taryn Emerle	01/27
Marvin Caldwell	01/05	Barbara Wyman	01/15	Katie Scheve	01/28
Bonnie Marchesani	01/06	Matthew Plausse	01/17	Lucille Murrell-Edmunds	01/29
Emma Milano	01/09	Reverend Skip Lloyd	01/18	Gary Emerle	01/30
Gordon Platt	01/09	Catherine Daly	01/19	Bruce Wyman	01/30
Megan Mahony	01/11	Alison Rosenfeld	01/19		

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

# Church News

## Annual Report



The Annual Report will be available on the tables at the back of the Sanctuary on **Sunday, January 19**, two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting (February 2).

## COURIER

DEADLINE

## February Courier

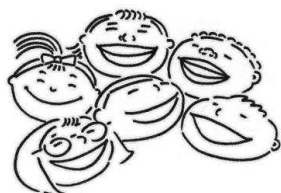
Please submit items for the February Courier by **Wednesday, January 15**, in order to be sure they get into this issue. All submissions to the Courier should be emailed to Carol Zaiatz at [unioncc@uccgroton.org](mailto:unioncc@uccgroton.org). Thank you.



## Annual Meeting Sunday, February 2 After Worship

The Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, February 2, in the Sanctuary immediately following Worship. All are encouraged to attend (especially church members)! We will go over the Annual Report and vote to approve nominations for Committees and Ministries, as well as any updates to the 2014 Budget. We will also hear a report from the Endowment Committee and any other business that may come before us.

—Leslie Row



## Smile!

Be sure to check out our new photo display boards, created by Leon Avey, on the wall in Fellowship Hall. Made from our most recent photo directory, "Our Church Family" shows us at our best. If you are not included and would like to be, or wish to update your photo, please contact Leslie Row ( ).

CHURCH



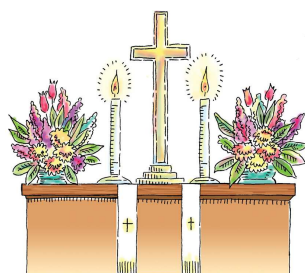
COUNCIL

## December 18

## Meeting Summary

Rev. Gail reported that Pastor Christina Williams and she had been finalizing plans for the sabbatical transition. A gift to the Endowments was accepted by the council. Bob Goudey noted that 90 pledges have been received so far. However, we are still about \$25,000 short of the budgeted pledges. Committees gave brief summaries of their work. The Annual Meeting of the Congregation is scheduled for February 2, 2014.

—Erica Davenport, Clerk



Altar Flowers

## 2014 Altar Flowers—New “Arrangement”

Starting January 5, we have a new “arrangement” with Lisa Wilkins at Country Florist. We will have a “standing order” where she will deliver a center arrangement to the altar on Saturday every week. If you would like to dedicate flowers on a particular Sunday, you would: 1) Fill in your name and special dedication on the 2014 Flower Chart in the downstairs hall (so that Carol can include this in the bulletin); 2) send a check for \$25 (made out to the UCC; memo: FLOWERS) to the church office. The church will pay the bill to Country Florist. You don't need to call Lisa at Country Florist (978-433-8974) unless you want to change the arrangement to two bouquets (she'll let you know the cost increase) or to request a particular color or design. Call Carol in the office with your questions (978-448-2091).

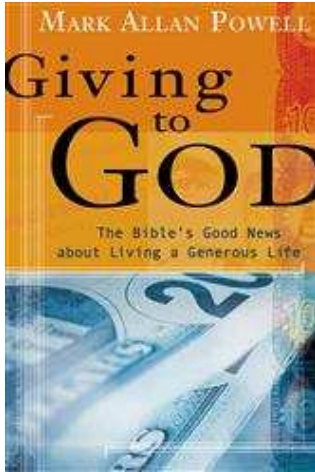
### Flower Ministry

—Connie Brown

—Donna Brown

—Ellen Hargraves

## You are Invited to a "Book Read" starting the Week of January 20<sup>th</sup>



### *Giving to God*

The Stewardship Team is inviting the entire congregation to take part in a small group book read this January/February. The book is *Giving to God* by Mark Allen Powell. The Stewardship Team read it this past year and found that it has deepened our faith and connection to Jesus. We want to invite everyone to join us on this blessed journey.

There will be three book discussion groups offered, each running for seven weeks starting the week of January 20<sup>th</sup>.

- Tuesday mornings 9:30 - 11:00 a.m. in the Parlor
- Tuesday evenings 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. in the Parlor
- Thursday evenings 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. in the Parish House

Members of the Stewardship team will be guiding the discussion and have study questions for us to read each week, as well as a video introduction to each session.

Books will be available at church beginning January 13<sup>th</sup>.

To sign-up, contact Carol Zaiatz (978-448-2091 or [unioncc@uccgroton.org](mailto:unioncc@uccgroton.org)).

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### *The 2013 Stewardship Team*

—Bob Goudey

—Jeff Kubick

—Gail Miller

—Halsey Platt

—Craig Smith

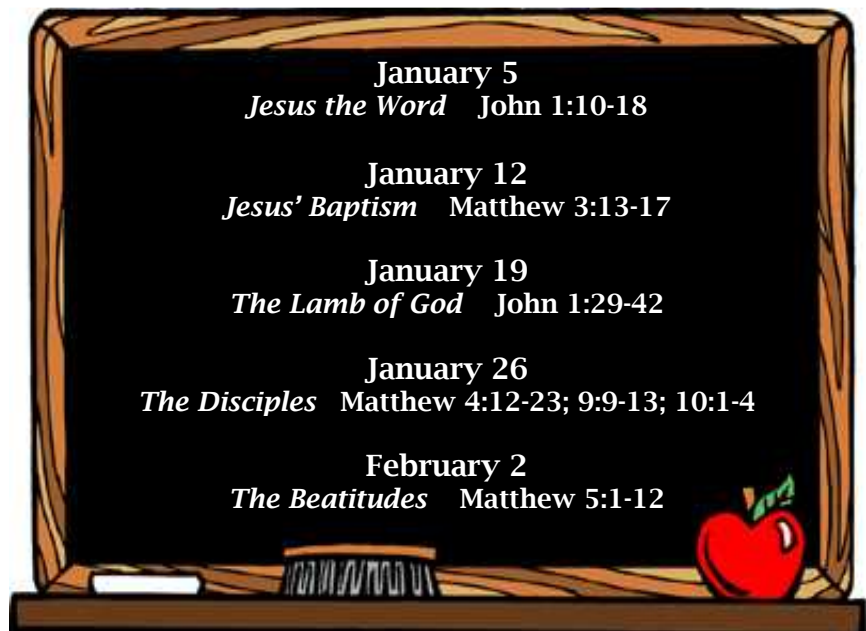
—Liz Smith

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## Sunday School News



**Sunday School**  
**MAKES A DIFFERENCE**



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### Christian Education Committee

—Patti Kilcommins, Chair

—Erika Delandy

—Nancy Bugbee

—Dena Hance

—Carla Carleton

—Pete Hnath



# Sabbatical Update / Deacons / Bible Study

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Pastor Miller's sabbatical begins January 6<sup>th</sup>! She and her daughter Sophia will spend two months in South Africa (two weeks on safari with her husband Mike and her mom; six weeks serving as missionaries with the Hillsong Africa Foundation). They will volunteer in an orphanage, a primary school, and a school for disabled children. Gail will return to us on April 6<sup>th</sup>.

While she is away, **Christina Williams will serve as our Sabbatical Pastor.** She will work part-time (20-25 hours/week) with primary responsibilities for worship/preaching, pastoral care, and two committees (Church Council and Deacons). (A detailed biography is available on our website in the November Courier.)

**Christina will have office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., as well as Sundays. She will have her own email address ([christina@uccgroton.org](mailto:christina@uccgroton.org)) and will have the church cell phone that Gail currently uses (978-877-2177).**

There is a Sabbatical booklet in the pews that contains all the details you could want to know about the sabbatical time — contacts for committees/ministries; emergency numbers; calendar of programs and activities offered, etc.

**Please plan to be in church on January 5 to say "good-bye" to Gail and "welcome" to Christina.**

Find any of us, anytime, with your questions! Julie Platt ( ), Liz McQuillin ( ), Don Kennedy ( ), Greg Balligan ( )

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## Updates from the Deacons

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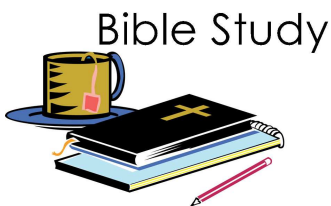
We thank outgoing Deacons: Lisa Gambuzza, Bebe Goudey, Jim Brennan and Liz McQuillan for their dedicated and loving service to this committee and their church community. Special thanks to Kristin Anstead for filling in over the holiday season.

At the Annual Congregational Meeting on February 2, the Deacons will renew the conversation/question raised at the Stated Meeting last June around the language of the Trinity and returning the traditional "Father, Son and Holy Spirit" to our By-Laws.

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## Bible Study

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### Wednesday Evening Bible Study 7:30 p.m. in the Pastor's Office

Do you feel like Christmas came and went without spending time to think about the meaning of the season? Come join us on Wednesday evenings as we read from *Luke*. We'll discuss Mary's Magnificat, Zechariah's prophecies about his son John, and Jesus' birth. Due to the holidays, we will not meet until January 8th. *Contact: Janet Kennedy*

### Thursday Morning Bible Study 10:00 a.m. at 26 Court Street

The New Year often begins with surprises and definitely new starts. Come join the Thursday Bible Study to spend time with some of the lesser known letters (Epistles) in the New Testament. As always we have good conversations that help bring the wisdom of Bible writers to today's world along with tea, coffee, and cookies. *Contact: Marvin Caldwell ( )*

# Cookies 'N' Carols / Family Ministry / Missions



On Sunday afternoon, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 25 people (of all ages) sang and delivered 32 cookie plates.

It was a joyful experience, as we shared more than cookies and carols; we shared God's love!

A sincere thank you to the cookie bakers, singers and helpers who participated in this wonderful event. We made \$305.00 toward the Youth Mission Trip this coming summer.

—Julie Platt and Cathy Rimkus



## Family Ministry



Let's Go Sledding

### Family Ministry Sledding Sunday, January 26 2:00 — 4:00 p.m.

*Let it Snow, Let it Snow, Let it Snow....* Weather permitting (snow, snow, snow), we will meet behind the library to go sledding and have hot cocoa. Bring your sleds! Drop by anytime between 2:00 and 4:00 p.m. for some family sledding fun! All ages welcome! If you have questions, contact Corissa and Larry Robinson at 978-433-6868.

### **\*New\* Family Ministry Skiing at Crotched Mountain Resort**

On Sundays from 2:00-5:00 p.m., it's family ski time at Crotched Mountain! The area offers discounted lift tickets, discounted rentals, and free ski tips. It would be great to get a group together to enjoy an afternoon of skiing. Contact Corissa Robinson ( ) to let her know if you are interested and she will coordinate a date (or perhaps dates!).



## Missions

### Groton Community Dinner January 31 — Our Turn to Serve

The menu is chili, corn bread, and cake. If you are interested in helping with set-up or clean-up, cooking or donating food, sign-up at the Missions table in the Fellowship Hall. (This dinner will be the one dinner that our Church will be responsible for organizing in 2014.) If you have any questions, contact anyone from the Missions Committee.

*Thank You, Thank You, Thank you...*

### Loaves & Fishes

We met our goal of 250 bags! The volunteers and staff at the pantry are sincerely grateful as the demand is so high these days.



Giving Tree

Tewksbury Hospital patients — our gifts are the primary element of their Christmas celebrations, making our support so much more important and valued.

**Typhoon Haiyan Disaster Relief** The special offering that was taken on November 17 to go toward the United Church of Christ's relief effort in the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan collected \$1,026 (from the congregation and the Missions Committee).

### Missions Committee

—Charlene Kelly, Chair  
—Randy DuBreuil

—Martha Dean  
—Janice Flynn

—Tony DiCenzo  
—Janet Kennedy

# 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)

### Christina Williams—Sabbatical Pastor

Cell phone: 978-877-2177

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

Tuesday and Thursday, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

### Carol Zaiatz—Office Administrator

Tuesday—Friday

9:30 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

*(Church Office is closed on Mondays)*

978-448-2091

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

### Office Hours

Tuesday - Friday, 9:30 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

*(Church Office is closed on Mondays)*

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

Music Director: Bernard Crane

Cherub Choir: Bonnie Marchesani

Handbell Choir: Cheryl Townsend

## Church Officers

Moderator: Leslie Row

Treasurer: Kelli Hnath

Clerk: Erica Davenport

Collector: Bob Goudey

Auditor: Drew Davenport

## January Deacons

Lisa Gambuzza/Liz McQuillin

### 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

### Buildings & Grounds Committee:

Jeff Kubick

### Christian Education Committee:

Patti Kilcommins

### Church Council Member-at-Large:

Stefanie Lempp

### Diaconate Committee:

Lisa Gambuzza

### Endowment Committee:

Lorrie Morgan

### Missions Committee:

Charlene Kelly

### Music Committee:

Bill Dean

### Pastor Parish Relations Committee:

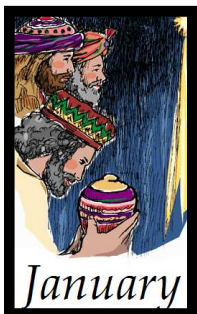
Steve Legge

### Stewardship & Finance Committee:

Liz Smith

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**January 5 - Epiphany** The 12<sup>th</sup> Day of Christmas when the wise men arrive  
with their gifts for Jesus



Holy Communion  
Welcome Christina Williams as our Sabbatical Pastor  
Wishing Pastor Gail a safe trip on her Sabbatical to South  
Africa

*He is the Way.  
Follow Him through the Land of Unlikeness;  
You will see rare beasts, and have unique adventures.*

*He is the Truth.  
Seek Him in the Kingdom of Anxiety;  
You will come to a great city that has expected your return for years.*

*He is the Life.  
Love Him in the World of the Flesh;  
And at your marriage all its occasions shall dance for joy.*

~W.H. Auden, *From the Time Being*