

THE UNION COURIER

Union Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

The Reverend Gail L. Miller, Pastor (on Sabbatical until April 5, 2014)

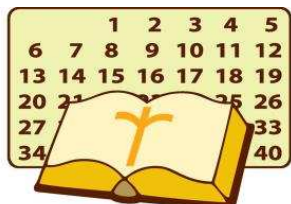
Christina Williams, Sabbatical Pastor

220 Main Street

Groton, Massachusetts 01450



March 2014



Sabbatical Pastor's Message for Lent

Dear Friends,

When I was growing up, Ash Wednesday and Lent were complete mysteries to me. When my Catholic friends showed up at school with ashes on their forehead, I was curious. When they gave up chocolate or their favorite TV shows for Lent, I asked why. My go-to resource for all things Catholic was my friend Nancy. "Why do you have dirt on your forehead?" I asked. After telling me they were ashes and not dirt, she explained that's just what her family did on Ash Wednesday.

When I asked why she gave up something for Lent, she said, "That's what you're supposed to do for Lent." My friend Nancy didn't really satisfy my curiosity—so much for my go-to resource. Nonetheless, I was intrigued and sensed there was something I was missing.

It wasn't until many years later that Ash Wednesday and Lent came to take on a much deeper significance in my life. The first Ash Wednesday service I attended was at the chapel at seminary. I was so moved by the service that by the time the ashes were imposed on my forehead, tears were rolling down my cheeks. As I reflected on my human frailty and the things I needed to repent, I felt bathed in Christ's love—I felt held by a loving community. That Ash Wednesday ushered me into my first Lenten journey. It was the first time I took up a practice to reflect more deeply on Jesus' journey to the cross and the resurrection.

As brothers and sisters in Christ, we travel this Lenten journey together. For 40 days we can mindfully commit ourselves to a practice of diving more deeply into our faith as a community. Together we can find ways to be more grateful, to pray more deeply, and to love our neighbors in more radical ways. When we do, we embrace the fullness of Easter and carry it with us into the rest of the year. We are "Easter people" living in the hope for the resurrection—living in hope for new life, not just for ourselves and our loved ones, but for all God's people and creation.

May the richness and blessings of the Lenten season open our hearts to new ways of living as God's faithful people.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Christina'.





Our Church Family



Ongoing Prayer List

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

Ruth Allen	Charlie Elwood	Janet Luttrell	Family of Nicholas Palanchak
Marvin Bernstein	Anne Ford	Liz Macarilla	Todd Penniman
Sue Bisceglia	Paul Fountain	Diane Mahon	Brent Peters
Kristen Beyer	Chuck Grey Family	Beth McMinn	Betsy Pielocik
Tony Biegler	Pat Hoggard	Rita McNally	Betsy Pollack
Sam Bisson	Jackie Huggins	The Meyer Family	Lib Pollack
M. E. Bluestone	Kayla	Marge Meyer	Betty Sampas
Kathi Bond	Hannah Keenan	Kathy Miller	Karen Sands
Dorothy Campbell	Walter Kelleher	Maddy Grace Milot	Rudi Schmid
Carolyn Cassidy	Emma Kennehan	Linda Morey	Betty Sowkin
Lucy Chartrand	Barbara King	Myrtle Murphy	Spurling Family
Sue Coulson	Scarlett Kostun	Shelby Murphy	Gayle Tapscott
Doug Dowen	Suzanne Lampognana	Lavon McMurrian	Bert Tompkins
Will & JC Dinyes	Doris Lewis	Holly Norton	Eloise Van Niel
Joslyn Edmunds	Lough Family	Lynn O'Brien & Family	Sharon Vincent
Bruce Elder	Susan Lucier	Margrit & John Oldenburg	Liz Waggoner
			Margaret Watson



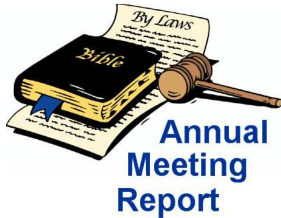
- Corissa Robinson and family, in the recent death of her grandfather, Simon Houlihan.
- Edie Tompkins, recovering at home after a fall during vacation.
- Janet Thompson and family, in the recent death of her husband and former member of our church, Ken Thompson.
- Ben Black and family, in the recent death of his wife, Millie.
- Karen Collins, a member of Janet Kennedy's family, recovering at home from a mild cardiac condition.
- For continued health and safety for Gail and Sophia while they are in South Africa.

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
Erin Kilcommins	03/05	Heather Mischel	03/19
Christina Daly	03/06	Sheila Mitchell	03/21
Timothy Dumont	03/07	Dominique Larkin	03/25
Mike Fortier	03/07	Jackson Fraser	03/26
Janet Goudey	03/09	John Brooks, Jr.	03/26
Kaleb Larsen	03/11	Bob Huguenin	03/26
Sophia Smith	03/12	Bonnie Biocchi	03/28
Leslie Row	03/13	Dana Bresnahan	03/28
Molly Loverin	03/14	James Wolanyk	03/31



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?



Report of the Annual Meeting (February 2)

Moderator Leslie Row called the meeting to order with 52 members present.

The minutes for the June 16th Stated Meeting and the November 24th Budget Meeting were approved as published.

Treasurer Kelli Hnath reviewed the variances that occurred in the 2013 budget. She reported that the pass through funds will be reported differently next year.

Liz Smith from the Stewardship and Finance Committee discussed the revisions that were made to the 2014 budget. She also explained the rationale for accruing funds for long-range planning expenses. A motion to accept the revised budget was approved unanimously.

Lorrie Morgan from the Endowment Committee reported that \$4,680 was distributed from Endowments. These funds are outside the normal operating expenses. She also reported that the committee would be exploring planned giving during 2014, and a representative from the Stewardship and Finance Committee would be attending Endowment Committee meetings.

Leslie discussed the thoughtful and prayerful consideration that went into filling committee and ministry openings by the Nominations Task Force. She also explained that there would be an open meeting for those wishing to contribute to the 2014 fair. New ideas and a fresh outlook are being sought.

Clerk Erica Davenport made motions to approve the Officers and Committee persons nominated by the Church Council. The positions were approved unanimously. The appointments to ministries were ratified unanimously.

Bonnie spoke on behalf of God's Purpose Seekers (GPS). This task force is working on discerning the future direction of the Church. During March a church wide spiritual assessment survey will be distributed. They ask that people prayerfully consider and answer all the questions.

There was a motion to adjourn. Pastor Christina Williams closed with a prayer and the hymn "Blessed Be the Ties That Bind".

—Erica Davenport, Clerk (through Feb. 2014)

Church Council Meeting Summary

February 26

Pete Hnath reported that CE has openings on the Sunday School teaching schedule and also on the CE Committee. Paul Brown reported that one of the organs is in need of repair; also, the New England Ringers and our church will co-sponsor a concert on May 17th. There is an opening for the church's public relations. On March 7 (9:00 a.m.) and March 9 (after coffee hour) there is an open meeting to discuss the direction and future of the Harvest Fair.

—Lori McElroy, Clerk

April Courier Please email all submissions for the April Courier by Friday, March 14 (unioncc@uccgroton.org). Thank you.

A Note from the Sabbatical Team

Can you believe our Pastor Gail Miller's Sabbatical has only one month remaining? Pastor Gail and her daughter Sophia will be returning to UCC Groton on Sunday, April 6. We also feel fortunate to have the time to get to know our Sabbatical Pastor, Christina Williams, and are very grateful for her guidance during the Sabbatical time.

The Sabbatical Team is planning an All Church Pot-Luck Luncheon celebration on **Sunday, April 6** after church in Fellowship Hall to welcome home Gail and Sophia, and to thank Christina. More details will follow later in the month, however, please mark your calendars.

If you would like to participate or bring food to share there will be sign-ups beginning after church on Sunday, March 23, or you can see any one of the Sabbatical Team members for more information on what is needed: Greg Balligan, Don Kennedy, Liz McQuillin, Julie Platt.

Comments from the Collector

Welcome to 2014 everyone. Enjoying the snow??

If you have not yet pledged for 2014 and desire to do so, please contact me so that I can get a pledge card into your hand. Once your pledge card is received, I will add you to the system and have weekly envelopes prepared for you.

If you have chosen not to pledge, but still would like weekly envelopes, please send me an email and I will prepare them for you.

2014 PLEDGE ENVELOPES ARE IN THE HALLWAY LEADING TO FELLOWSHIP HALL. PLEASE PICK YOURS UP ASAP!!!! THEY WILL BE REMOVED ON 3/16/14.

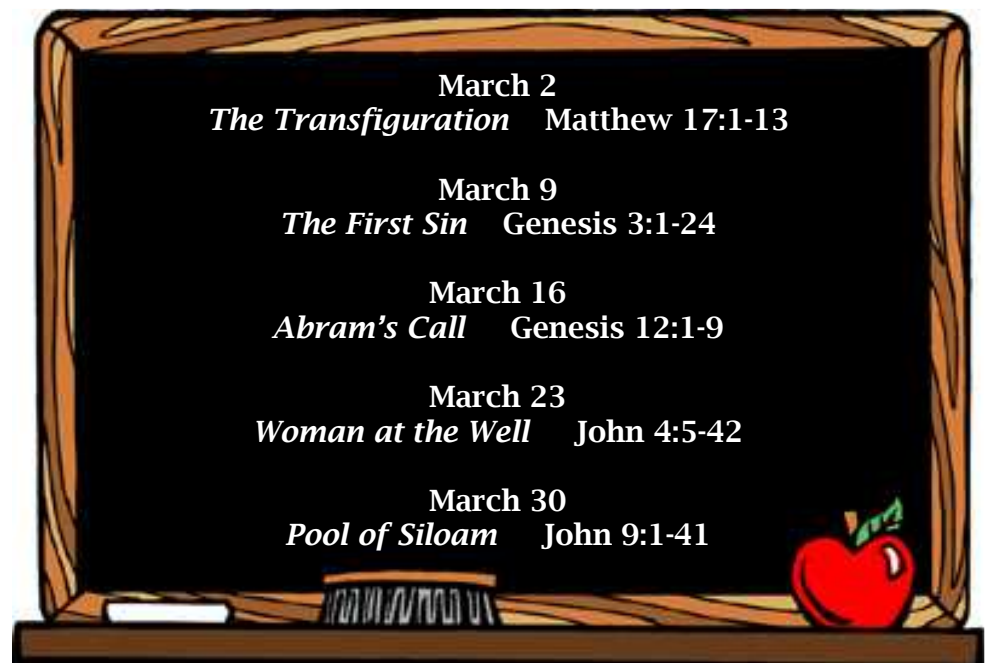
Many folks have asked about making an electronic payment of their weekly offering. My recommendation is to work with your bank's bill paying service and set the church up as a payee/vendor. Please use the following address to make sure your payment is received in a timely manner:

Union Congregational Church
220 Main Street
Groton, MA 01450

Should you have any questions about pledging, envelopes, statements, etc, please call me at 978-496-0973 or send me an email at robert_e_goudey@raytheon.com

—Bob Goudey, Collector

Christian Education



Christian Education Committee

—Patti Kilcommins
—Diane Landry

—Anne Cahill

—Den Hancea

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

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

Our study moves from *Luke* to a four session study of *James* focusing on justice. James exhorts us to take action after hearing the word to help others, not to show preference for some at the expense of others, and to think about the effect our words have on other people. These ideas help us to practice justice. *Contact: Janet Kennedy*

Thursday Morning Bible Study

10:00 a.m. at 26 Court Street

Many of the shorter Epistles in the New Testament often get overlooked. We're trying to remedy that as they were considered important enough to be included in the established Canon. Already we've discovered valuable insights in Jude and now we're looking at I & II Peter, then heading into Hebrews. Come join us for scintillating conversation, tea & coffee, and cookies. *Contact: Marvin Caldwell ()*

Spring Fair/Harvest Fair Updates



9th Spring Artisan/Craft Fair

Saturday, April 12

10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

- All tables' spaces have been rented!!
- Members of the Wednesday morning knitting group have volunteered to take over the church's craft table — THANK YOU!!
- They would appreciate some new items...think spring and 'gifts'.
- Remember to speak to Joel Hughes if you can join his kitchen crew
- Will have a set-up/rebuild schedule closer to the date.
- And of course we'll have the bake table!!

Contact: Bonnie Martin () or () t)

Harvest Fair



Fall Harvest Fair Planning Meetings

Friday, March 7 at 9:00 a.m. and

Sunday, March 9, after coffee hour

Fellowship Hall

These meetings will be to plan a fair based on what people would like to see and are interested in heading up. We need your input in order to decide what direction this fair should go and who might be interested in helping to lead it. Anyone interested in this event, please join us at these meetings. Contact Carol Zaiatz in the Church Office (unioncc@uccgroton.org or 978-448-2091) if you have any questions. Thank you.

Missions

Big House Youth Group



Heifer Quarter Drive and Pancake Breakfast

We are excited to kick-off our fifth annual **Heifer Quarter Drive** that will take place during the month of March. 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.

The Heifer Quarter Drive begins the day after our sponsored trip to **Overlook Farm's Pancake Breakfast** scheduled at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, March 8, in Rutland, MA.



One Great Hour of Sharing Offering

March 2 and 9

This is one of the 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 and together provide support to health, education, refugee, agricultural and emergency relief initiatives. Look for the inserts in your Sunday bulletins or the special offering envelope in your pledge envelopes.

Thank You!

Church World Service

Blanket Drive

Thank you to those who bought Valentines to support the Church World Service Blanket Drive. We received \$405 in donations this year. The proceeds will go to the Church World Service Blanket program, which assists families around the world with disaster relief and funds to help build their lives and communities. Thank you to Cassie Sampass for her lovely photographic images on the valentine's cards, and for organizing this event.

Groton Community Dinner

Thank you to everyone who volunteered at the January dinner by cooking, donating food items, or helping with serving and clean-up.

Missions Committee

- Tony DiCenzo
- Larry Robinson

—Janice Flynn

—Janet Kennedy

Big House Youth Group

Join Us!



Open to Students in Grades 8-12

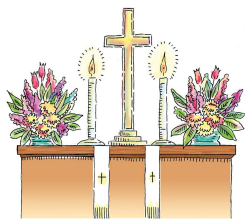
Sunday, March 9 (SOV—The Grange)

7:00-8:30 p.m. *The Case for Faith*

Sunday, March 23 (UCC)

7:00-8:30 p.m. *Prayer*

Contact: Pete Hnath () or



Altar Flowers

Update on Donating Altar Flowers

As you may be aware, Country Florist is now delivering altar flowers each week. You may dedicate altar flowers by writing a name and dedication on the Flower Chart in the downstairs hallway, or you may call Carol Zaiatz in the office (978-448-2091) or email her at unioncc@uccgroton.org and let her know you wish to dedicate a particular week's flowers in memory or honor of someone or for a particular occasion. Please inform Carol if you will be taking the flowers home after worship. Flowers left behind will be delivered to a church member or family to lift their spirit.

Stephen Ministry Introductory Workshop

Saturday, March 29

9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (check-in and on-site registration begin at 8:00 a.m.)

Acton Congregational Church (12 Concord Road, Acton)

Acton Congregational Church is offering an introductory workshop to lay people who are interested in ministering to people in the congregation who are in need of pastoral care. While our congregation isn't large enough to have a full-blown Stephen Ministry, this workshop is offering some beneficial care-giving skills and an introduction to what Stephen Ministry is all about.

The half-day workshop will feature:

Session 1: *Ministering to Those Experiencing Grief*

Session 2: *An Introduction to Stephen Ministry*

Session 3: *How to Care in a Distinctively Christian Way*

Cost: \$15.00/person

To Register:

Visit www.stephenministry.org/workshop
or call Stephen Ministries at 314-428-2600

Upcoming Habitat for Humanity Event

Self-Care as a Path to Service

Tuesday, March 25

5:00—7:00 p.m.

Knights Function Hall (484 Lancaster St., Leominster)

Cheryl Richardson, world renown speaker and best-selling author, is volunteering her time to talk at this fundraising event. This program is free to the public, but we will be requesting donations to help get our project in Fitchburg off the ground. To register for the event, go to www.ncmhabitat.org. Registrations are required. More information on Cheryl is available on her website at www.cherylrichardson.com.



REMINDER

Daylight Savings Starts Sunday, March 9

Remember to set your clocks ahead 1 hour
Saturday night!

Just for Fun

Ash Wednesday - Word Search

How many vocabulary words can you find in this puzzle

using the word bank below? Words go in only three directions. → ↘ ↓

L	Y	F	C	A	L	P	V	H	S	Q
H	F	O	R	K	P	E	A	J	C	A
E	A	R	O	F	E	H	N	L	R	M
A	S	E	S	B	N	K	C	T	M	C
S	T	H	S	L	A	S	H	E	S	S
T	R	E	P	E	N	T	A	N	C	E
E	X	A	J	S	C	R	M	E	A	T
R	J	D	N	S	E	F	I	R	S	T

ASHES	EASTER	FOREHEAD	PALMS
BLESS	FAST	LENT	PENANCE
CROSS	FIRST	MEAT	REPENTANCE

Just So You Know

Union Congregational Church United Church of Christ

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

Christina Williams—Sabbatical Pastor
Cell phone: 978-877-2177
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

Office Hours

Tuesday - Friday, 9:30 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

(Church Office is closed on Mondays)

unioncc@uccgroton.org

Music Director: Bernard Crane

Cherub Choir: Bonnie Marchesani

Handbell Choir: Cheryl Townsend

Church Officers

Moderator: Stefanie Lempp

Treasurer: Kelli Hnath

Clerk: Lori McElroy

Collector: Bob Goudey

March Deacons

Tim Dumont/Andrea McDonough

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 in the wooden rack in the downstairs hallway.

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:

John Gervais

Diaconate Committee:

Tim Dumont

Endowment Committee:

Lorrie Morgan

Missions Committee:

Janet Kennedy

Music Committee:

Sheila Mitchell

Pastor Parish Relations Committee:

Halsey Platt

Stewardship & Finance Committee:

Liz Smith

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220 Main Street
Groton, MA 01450

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Tuesday Evenings, March 11*—April 1
7:00—8:30 p.m. in the Parish House
(Hosted by Christina Williams)

A Lenten Devotional Series *Correction to previous notices — NOT March 4

Ash Wednesday, March 5
Dinner and Worship
6:30 p.m.: Simple Soup Supper
7:15 p.m.: Brief Worship Service/Communion

Let's begin our Lenten journey together. If you can't make it for dinner, come at 7:15 p.m. for worship. Families with children are encouraged to attend. (You'll be home by 8:00 p.m.) **If you are coming for dinner, please R.S.V.P.** to the church office (978-448-2091 or unioncc@uccgroton.org) or on the sign-up sheet by the coffee on Sunday mornings.