# THE UNION COURIER

Union Congregational Church United Church of Christ The Reverend Gail L. Miller, Pastor 220 Main Street Groton, Massachusetts 01450



## Mid-Summer 2014

## A Message from the Pastor Parish Relations Committee

Now that Pastor Gail has returned to us from Sabbatical, it occurs to me that the first full chapter of our life together as Pastor & Parish has passed. Gail has been our leader for just over eight years now and she has helped us to grow and change. As we take a moment to pause and reflect, we see evidences of positive happenings all around us. It feels to me as if Gail has led us, and we have followed her out of the wilderness.

I believe that we now need to look forward, think about what is next, and prepare ourselves and our church for the next chapter of God's work here in the center of Groton. The GPS team has been working for almost a year now to discern where we are headed next, what we are called to focus on as a congregation of God's people. As we await their guidance and discernment, I am mindful of our responsibility to prepare the way for what the future might hold.

This past year, the Pastor Parish Relations Committee (PPRC) has been doing just this. We have been looking at how we are organized and how our committee members are selected. We have been looking at our charge and our duties under the current By-Laws. We have also been reading, going to seminars, and talking with other members of the wider church to understand what the current thinking is (current "industry standards" and best practices, so to speak) regarding PPRCs in general. We have shared this learning with the Church Council over the last six months and held an open meeting in the Fellowship Hall on June 1<sup>st</sup>. We have received wonderful feedback — feedback that has shaped, molded, and improved our thinking. Therefore, we are proposing a couple shifts in our defining documents to create a PPRC for the next chapter of our church's life.

First, we have articulated the primary purpose of the PPRC as "fostering healthy relationships to enhance the effectiveness of the church's mission," leaving behind the expectation of the PPRC as the "complaint department." Secondly, we want the committee members to be selected through a process that is inherently collaborative and transparent, through the Church Council nominations committee with input from the Pastor. (Currently, the committee is formed with a "pastor's choice," a "congregation's choice," and a Deacon, which seems inherently segmented.) Our new understanding of our PPRC also has a clear directive to provide the Pastor with consistent "advice, counsel, and support" while also "facilitating constructive conflict resolution" if the need arises.

This learning process has been a wonderful study of the subtlety of language, and our desire has been to provide clear and transparent wording and thinking so that we can lay the groundwork for positive things ahead in our shared life together.

Please keep your eye out for the new language in the proposed By-Law changes that will come before the Congregational meeting on September 14.

Please speak with any member of the Church Council or any member of the PPRC if you have questions, thoughts, or prayers that you would like to share.

Continued blessings on us all,

Halsey Platt,

for the Pastor Parish Relations Committee (Bebe Goudey, Erica Davenport & Halsey Platt)



## **Our Church Family**



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

Marvin Bernstein Kathi Bond Vinnie Gambuzza Nicole Irvin Walter Kelleher Corbin Kinkade Suzanne Lampognana Janet Luttrell Middlemiss Family and baby Jack Myrtle Murphy Lynn O'Brien and Family Adriana Piacentini Brent Peters Betsy Pielocik Rudi Schmid Betty Sowkin Liz Waggoner

This list has been refreshed (and will be refreshed twice a year). Feel free to contact Gail Miller or Carol Zaiatz (978-448-2091 or unioncc@uccgroton.org) to add a name to this list.

#### **Prayers of the Church**

- Brent Peters, after a radiation treatment.
- Family and friends of Kristen Beyer, who died after a battle with cancer (friend of Liz Smith).
- Ray Wheeler, recovering from surgery.
- The Sidmore Family, in the death of Frank Merrill Sidmore, a long-time member of our church prior to moving to Delaware.
- Nicole Irvin, Kevin and Henry Richardson Nicole was in a motorcycle accident and is recovering at home.
- Cathy Rimkus, recovering from surgery to remove cancer.
- Larry Robinson, who departed July 3 for two weeks in the slums of Nairobi serving with Missions of Hope.



#### Summer Anniversaries! Congratulations to All!

- Bill and Martha Dean—50 years on June 6!
- Tim and Nancy Dumont—35 years on August 4!
- Cathy and Brian Keese—30 years on August 18!
- **Ken and Barb Lefebvre**—30 years September 1!

July Birthdays				August Birthdays			
Charlie Bridge	7/1	Cloe Bridge	7/13	Kevin Bresnahan	8/2	Macie Bridge	8/25
Harper Willow	7/1	Finley Clinton	7/14	Erika Delandy	8/5	Steve Legge	8/26
Eleanor Ferrero	7/2	Ryan Bresnahan	7/14	Ellen Hargraves	8/8	Kristina Hnath	8/26
Reaghan Carleton	7/3	Mary Kubick	7/15	Meghan Byron-Kelly	8/8	Jennifer Boucher	8/27
Margaret Lloyd	7/3	Rylan Rosenfeld	7/16	Diane Landry	8/8	Martha Dean	8/27
Sara Clinton	7/3	Brent Emerle	7/18	Kristin Ansted	8/9	Makaila Meehan	8/28
Jennifer Gervais	7/4	Leslie Howard	7/18	Nathan Manalo	8/11	Beth Hughes	8/29
Bob Goudey	7/4	Cassie Sampas	7/19	Leo Biocchi	8/13	Nancy Bugbee	8/30
James Edmunds	7/6	Caroline Clinton	7/19	Janice Flynn	8/16	Alex Platt	8/31
Lisa Gambuzza	7/7	Betsy Bridge	7/22	Patrick Daly	8/16	Jason Zambuto	8/31
Paige Carleton	7/8	Amy Sjoberg	7/24	Bebe Goudey	8/17		
Haley Delandy	7/9	Olivia Larkin	7/25	Jenna Plausse	8/20		
Molly Delandy	7/9	Destiny Bou	7/26	Peter Hnath	8/21		
Lynn Manalo	7/9	Hasi Gedara	7/26				
Robert Houde	7/10	Caden Rosenfeld	7/27				
Eleanor Kubick	7/10	Brey Robinson	7/28				
Abigail Howard	7/10	Sarah Flynn	7/30				

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?

### **Church News**



# Gail's Summer Vacation

McDonough. Guest Preacher will be Noah Van Niel.

Pastor Miller will be away beginning Monday, July 21; and will return to worship on Sunday, August 10. The Reverend Marvin Caldwell (

or Skip Lloyd (

Skip Lloyd ( or ) will be available for pastoral emergencies in her absence. The Deacons of the month for July are Brenda Semienko, Kim Peters and Martha Dean. August's Deacons are Steve Legge and Andrea

) and the Reverend



#### Church Office — Summer Hours

Carol Zaiatz' hours are: Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 9:30 a.m.—5:30 p.m. **The office will be closed on Mondays.** Carol will return to her four-day/week schedule after Labor Day.

#### Carol Zaiatz will be on vacation

starting Wednesday, August 6, through Friday, August 15 (returning to the office Tuesday, August 19). Erica Davenport will come in to help with the bulletin and Gail will check the office email and voicemail.



#### June 18—Meeting Summary

Andrea McDonough spoke about the Stephen Ministry which is a caring ministry for lay people; Andrea is a trainer and will be holding classes in the fall.

Grotonfest is September 20 and we have had an informational booth the last few years; there is a need for members to volunteer for two-hour shifts.

Harvest Fair 2014 planning is going well. However, there will not be a Children's Fair or outside Grill unless someone volunteers to organize these. If someone wants to chair a pared down version or has a completely new vision for the Children's Fair, that would be welcomed.

Buildings and Grounds will be contracting the repair of the Fellowship Hall ceiling this summer which includes demolition, electrical work and a new ceiling. There is also tree work that needs to be done.

Christian Education is still looking for another member.



#### **New Nursery Caregiver**

On Sunday, July 6, we welcomed Danielle Lehan as our new Nursery Attendant. Danielle lives in Westford and will be a senior at Southern New Hampshire University this fall, majoring in Elementary and Special Education. She is very experienced with children of all ages and has a real gift for caregiving. Please introduce yourselves to her and give her a warm welcome to our church.



The Knitting Group won't be meeting during the summer; they will resume in mid-September.

## **Church News (cont.)**

## Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ Annual Meeting June 13 – 14

On Friday, June 13, Rev. Marvin Caldwell and Erica Davenport represented our church at the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ. Rev. Gail Miller joined them on Saturday. The theme of the conference this year was based on John 14: 11-12: Jesus promised we will know him by his works, and we will do greater works than he ever did.

Friday's business began with a worship service, appointments and elections. There was also a presentation of the budget and explanation of the United Church Mission proposal. This proposal would base the church's financial obligation to the Conference on a percentage of income in general expenses, rather than the dues and OCWM contributions. The monetary amount would be the same, but it would no longer be based on membership numbers. Four "Come and Hear" forums were offered. Rev. Marvin attended "Works of Prayer" and Erica attended "Works of Generosity". Rev. Yvette Flunder gave the keynote address. Rev. Kelly Gallagher was installed as Associate Conference Minister.

Saturday began with a choice of four worship options. We attended an inspiring Taize worship service. Following that, there were hearings and forums. Rev. Marvin and Erica attended the forum with Friday's keynote speaker, Rev. Yvette Flunder. The Plenary session included the Minister and President's Address, budget actions, and approval of the United Church Mission proposal.



## Summer "Coffee" Hour!

Please consider hosting a Sunday coffee hour during the summer months (through August 31). It's very easy and relaxed. We usually serve iced tea and lemonade in addition to the usual coffee and treats. Please sign up to help out! It's beyond easy!

Go to http://tinyurl.com/UCCFellowshipHosting

Questions? See Joel Hughes, Mark Rzeznikiewicz, Gordon Row or Irene Katrouba

## Next Steps for Christina Williams (Sabbatical Pastor) You are Invited - September 10, 7:00 — 9:00 p.m. First Parish Church, Westford (48 Main Street)

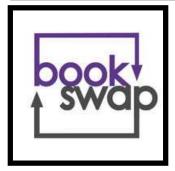
Our Sabbatical Pastor, Christina, is on the path to ordination and seeking a call to serve as a pastor in a UCC church. There are many steps along this journey and the next step for her is quite significant. She will have an Ecclesiastical Council — a gathering of pastors and churches from the local area to hear her present her theology and faith journey, after which she will answer questions from anyone present. Then we will vote to approve her for ordination, which gives her the ability to actively seek a church. This is the last big "requirement" and an important moment for her and those who have supported her along the way.



### Newsletter September Courier

The next Courier will be the September issue. **Please submit items by Monday, August 18, in order to ensure they get into this issue.** *All submissions to the Courier should be emailed to Carol Zaiatz at unioncc@uccgroton.org. Thank you.* 

## Stewardship / Sunday School / Bible Study



## Inspiration – Joy – Book Swap? September 14 and 21 during Coffee Hour

On a recent Stewardship Team Retreat, Gail asked a question: "What things in your life spark spiritual growth?" There were a variety of answers, but one of the consistent ones was: 'from various books that we have read'. As we each told our story of the book that came to mind, we wondered, together, how did those books arrive in our hands? We were also eager to share what we found inspiring in that particular book and the connection we felt to the person or experience that lead us to it.

As we reflected on the discussion we realized that we wanted to share this joy with more of our congregation! And so, on **September 14 and 21** the Stewardship Team will be facilitating a book swap at coffee hour. The idea is simple: bring to coffee hour any book that you have found to be spiritually inspirational, supportive, centering, or thought provoking and find another person to give that book to. Share with them what you liked about it, what you found challenging, what you found inspiring. Make the connection — share the joy. If you would like your book back, write your name inside the front cover. If this goes well, it could become a part of the regular life of our congregation – another way for the Holy Spirit to move among us.

### **Sunday School Update**



In September the Christian Ed Committee will be hosting an informational session on teaching Sunday School for anyone interested in learning about what it takes to teach a class or for anyone who has taught before but would like to learn more about resources available to teachers. We'll provide information on the curriculum we started using in the Fall of 2013, provide additional tips and guidelines, and point out additional resources for preparing to teach a class.

#### **Christian Education Committee**

—Pete Hnath, Acting Chair

- —Jean Armstrong
  - O

-Dena Hance

—Diane Landry

—Anne Cahill

### **Bible Study**

# Wednesday Evening Bible Study switches to Thursdays (July and August only) 7:30 p.m. in the Pastor's Office

We'll read from the first two chapters of Haggai as we learn about key aspects to living in a right relationship to God as the people set about rebuilding God's house. Join us on Thursday nights at 7:30; no preparation necessary as we read the selection aloud together. *Contact: Janet Kennedy* 

#### Thursday Morning Bible Study has the Summer Off

Bible Study is on recess for the summer. We will reconvene in September with a series inspired by our study of Hebrews: *Christian Disciplines*. Discipline is part of discipleship. It's not a punishment for bad behavior, rather it is practice for good behavior now and to come. Disciplines such as prayer, fasting, generosity and thanksgiving set our lives on a path of good living. Christian disciplines help us live the abundant and abundantly joyful life Jesus promised. Come and explore with us.

Contact: Marvin Caldwell ( )

#### **Harvest Fair**



## Harvest Fair Saturday, October 4 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

The Harvest Fair is a great way to work together, have fun and help the church. Please contact the appropriate chairperson directly if you are interested in being a part of this amazing day. This year the fair doesn't have a chair with central oversight. Each area

will stand on its own and have its own person in charge/responsible for setup, staffing, cleanup. New areas could be generated, subdivided, limited in time or scope. If you have an idea for a new area or wish to chair an area not listed, please feel free to contact Lorrie Morgan (978-448-6898 or <a href="mailto:lorrie13@aol.com">lorrie13@aol.com</a>) and she will add your name to the list.

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Bake Sale: Mark Rzeznikiewicz (
                                            )
Book Sale: Martha Dean (
Bounce House: Skip Lloyd and Drew Davenport (
Children's Clothing: Krista Kubick (
Children's Toys: Charlene Kelly (
Church Crafts: Erica Davenport (
Craft Table: Bonnie Martin (
Jewelry Table: Mary Hanson (
Kitchen: Joel Hughes (
Pie Baking: Mary Hanson (
                                      )
Christmas Table: Lois Berge (
                                         ), Lori McElroy (
                 Barbara Wyman (
Silent Auction: Kristin Ansted (
Woodworking: Leon Avey (
                                       )
Yard Sale: John Biocchi (
Publicity: Lorrie Morgan (
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*Thank you* to everyone! Talk to your neighbors, friends, and families to see if they would like to donate gently used toys, books, children's clothing or whatever!

As you can see there are few areas that have not been listed that we have had in the past, such as Plants, Children's Fair, and Grill. If you have any interest in one of these, please let us know! We have two young ladies who will be offering face painting and cookie decorating for part of the day. I'm sure they would welcome assistance. Please contact Lorrie and she will put you in touch with them.

#### ~~~~Book Sale Reminder~~~

A box is available on the table in the hallway of the church for dropping off books. We welcome adult and children's books in good condition except for textbooks and encyclopedias. Thank you!



Thanks to all the baseball fans for joining Family Ministry for a wonderful evening of baseball on June 14!



## **Family Ministry BBQ**

Family Ministry will be hosting a BBQ at the end of the summer to welcome everyone back from summer vacation. Please stay tuned for the date and additional details coming in August (in the bulletin and emails).

Family Ministry Contacts: Larry and Corissa Robinson (978-433-6868)

#### **Missions Committee**



234 Barnum Road • Devens, MA P.O. Box 1 • Ayer, MA 01432 978-772-4627 • www.loavesfishespantry.org



### **Backpack Drive**

On the last Sunday in June, members of our congregation gathered to help assemble backpacks and supplies for students (pre-school to high school) served by Loaves & Fishes. Thank you to everyone who donated supplies and helped to assemble the backpacks. Thank you to Anne Larsen for organizing this mission and for delivering the backpacks to L&F.

In July and August, look for our tree display in the Fellowship Hall, as we begin our drive for next year.

#### **Groceries**

For the L&F food pantry, summer months tend to be lean on donations as everyone is busy with their numerous summer activities; however the demand is still constant as there are many individuals and families in need year round. Please look in your pantries (check expiration dates!) or consider purchasing a few items for those in need while shopping for your own groceries.



#### **Youth Mission Trip**

The Missions Committee would like to thank our youth missionaries and advisors for serving on our behalf in Queens, New York, June 22—29. We are pleased to support this important trip that deepens our youth's faith, as well as instills in them the joy of serving others.

**Missions Committee** 

—Janet Kennedy, Chair

—Tony DiCenzo

—Janice Flynn

—Larry Robinson

## **Youth Mission Trip**

# Youth Mission Trip to Queens, NY June 22—June 29

High School youth and their adult advisors spent a week in West Virginia serving through YouthWorks, Inc. **Youth:** Will Cullen, Maddi and Nikki Eggiman, Michaela Estes, TJ Fetterolf, Andrew Gingras, Connor Johnson, Eleanor Keydel, Anthony Lovezzola, Danika Manalo, Cary and Martha Peregoy, Leah Pezanowski, Alex Platt, Gordon Platt, Will Premru, Sean Prestia, Kathryn Preston, Amy and Casey Sjoberg, Izzy and Sammi Smith, Olivia Straw, Mitchell Townsend, Tommy Wickham **Advisors:** Pete Hnath, Stefanie Lempp, Gail Miller, Halsey Platt



## Youth Mission Trip (cont.)



# Who Says Nothing Happens at Church in the Summer? (read on....!)

The Music Committee and Church Council have been talking for a few years about replacing the grand piano in the sanctuary. Our current piano is not that good and the space requires a higher quality instrument. Knowing this, Bernard Crane has kept his eyes and ears open, and occasionally searched online for a suitable piano for us.

And then....he found something that sparked his interest.... A *Pramberger* for sale in South Carolina. *Pramberger* is NOT a widely-known piano; and yet Bernard had played one in a showroom years ago and discovered what a fine instrument a *Pramberger* piano is! So, inspired by finding one at a reasonable price, he had a quick email exchange with the piano store owner and immediately flew down to Hilton Head, SC, to check it out. This was the piano for us!

In the meantime, the Finance Committee, Music Committee and Church Council were quickly calling / texting / emailing each other to determine if we could indeed afford it and (more importantly) make it happen so quickly. Jeff (selling the piano) is a Church Music Director, and offered to deliver it to us himself (at a fraction of what a moving company would charge), since he and his family would be driving through on their way to Maine.



We thank the strong backs that got a crash course in how to move a 700 lb. piano last week: John Brooks, Tom Hanson, Greg Balligan, Paul Brown, Drew Davenport, Bob Goudey, Halsey Platt. And the Music Committee and hospitality team: Erica Davenport, Bebe Goudey, Stefanie Lempp, Bob and Ellen Hargrayes, Cheryl Townsend.

Every step of the way, the Lord was opening doors, making the path smooth for this to come about. And so we are blessed with a stunning piano, new friends in Christ (Jeff and family) and an amazing story of how the Lord provides. Find Bernard to hear "the rest of the story" — it's a good one!



Music Committee:

—Sheila Mitchell, Chair

—Jon Morgan

—Paul Brown

—Heather Houde

—Bonnie Marchesani

—Barbara Wyman

## HANDBELLS — You Can Do It!!

**Handbells 101** will officially start **Monday**, **July 21** and run for four sessions thru the month of August. If you would like to join us, please just show up at **6:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary**—we will enjoy bell ringing until 7:15.

Over the weekend of June 6-7-8, the handbell choir had the opportunity to spend some time at the Platt home in West Falmouth. Of course we "talked" handbells, but mostly engaged in fellowship, enjoyed the beach and made seashell angels for the Harvest Fair craft table. One of the highlights of the weekend was doing "Yoga on the Beach". It was so much fun!

Please consider joining us. We would love to have you! If you have questions, contact Cheryl Townsend ( or



).

# New Caring Ministry to Begin September 13

If one part suffers, every part suffers with it... (I Cor. 12:12) This is how the church is described in the Bible. And so, as we seek to be the church that is faithful to Scripture, we are going to offer a way to go deeper in our caring for one another as the Body of Christ. **Beginning September 13, we will offer a 7 week course in Christian care giving** (the formal name of the program is *Stephen Ministry*). Andrea McDonough (a certified trainer in the program, and Deacon) will teach the class. Topics include: *Dealing with Feelings, the Art of Listening, Maintaining Boundaries, Confidentiality, Providing Spiritual Care.* The course will run on Saturdays (10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., except the day of the Harvest Fair). If you are interested or want to know more before deciding, contact Andrea directly (andeamcdonough@verizon.net, 978-692-7859) or seek out any Deacon or Pastor Miller.

#### **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

Tuesday – Friday, 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. or by appointment (please call the church office).

Carol Zaiatz—Office Administrator unioncc@uccgroton.org

**Summer Office Hours** 

Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday 9:30 a.m.—5:30 p.m.

(Church Office is closed on Mondays)

Music Director: Bernard Crane

Cherub Choir: Bonnie Marchesani

Handbell Choir: Cheryl Townsend

#### **July Deacons**

Brenda Semienko/Kim Peters/Martha Dean

#### **August Deacons**

Steve Legge/Andrea McDonough

#### **Committee Chairs**

Buildings & Grounds Committee: Jeff Kubick

**Christian Education Committee: Pete Hnath (Acting Chair)** 

Church Council Member-at-Large: Iohn Gervais

Diaconate Committee: Tim Dumont

**Endowment Committee:** Lorrie Morgan

Missions Committee: Janet Kennedy

#### **Church Officers**

Moderator: Stefanie Lempp

Treasurer: Kelli Hnath

Clerk: Lori McElroy

978-448-2841 lori@grotoncenterfarms.com

Collector: Bob Goudey

Music Committee: Sheila Mitchell

Pastor Parish Relations Committee: Bebe Goudey

Stewardship & Finance Committee: Liz Smith

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

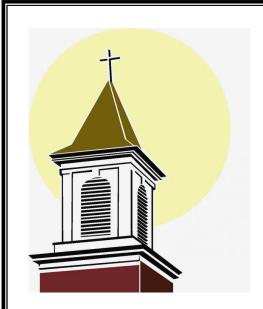
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If you want a love message
to be heard,
it has got to be sent out.
To keep a lamp burning,
we have to keep putting oil in it.
~Mother Teresa

Hope to See You in Worship During These Summer Months!