

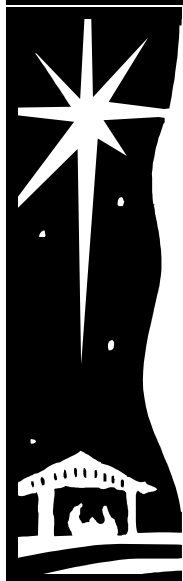
THE UNION COURIER

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

220 Main Street
Groton, Massachusetts 01450



December 2014



Tis the Season?

Did you know that *Jingle Bells* actually has nothing to do with the Christmas season? (<mind blown>) It was originally written (1850) as a Thanksgiving song by a Unitarian Church music director in Medford (Mass.). It has more to do with drinking and conjuring up opportunities for young couples in love to sneak away for some "privacy." Check it out on Wikipedia...

Did you also know that *Joy to the World* has nothing to do with the Christmas season as well? It will always be found in hymnals in the Advent section, NOT in the Christmas section; and if you look closely you'll notice that it never mentions Jesus or his birth or any of the images/characters we expect to find in our Christmas carols. And the words, you'll see when you do look closely, are a more generic hymn of praise than related to a particular season.

Its theme, while definitely NOT referencing our Lord's first coming, which we celebrate at Christmas, is actually about the Lord's second coming at the end of the age, and is based on Psalm 98.

And yet, *Joy to the World* has its place firmly in the Christmas Carol canon! (Though we don't know why.) And so, this year, we will sing it verse-by-verse as we light each of the four Advent candles every week in church; and I will preach on the theme of each verse each week as well.

I love this carol and am eager to go more deeply into what it means, and thereby discover how we can be encouraged and moved to a more joyful Advent season.

Journeying with you to Bethlehem with Joy!

Gail

Celebrate Advent

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

Joy to the Word!

(text: Isaac Watts, 1719)

Joy to the world! The Lord is come
Let earth receive her King!
Let every heart prepare Him room
And heaven and nature sing
And heaven and nature sing
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing

Joy to the world! the Savior reigns
Let men their songs employ
While fields and floods
Rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy
Repeat the sounding joy
Repeat, repeat the sound joy

No more let sins and sorrows grow
Nor thorns infest the ground
He comes to make
His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found
Far as the curse is found
Far as, far as the curse is found

He rules the world with truth and grace
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His love
And wonders of His love
And wonders and wonders of His love.



Our Church Family



Ongoing Prayer List

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

Elizabeth Berndt	Brenda Grant	Leigh Mezzetti	Rudi Schmid
Marvin Bernstein	Nicole Irvin	Middlemiss Family and baby Jack	Opal Smith
Tony Biegler	Walter Kelleher	Myrtle Murphy	Betty Sowkin
Kathi Bond	Sean Koller	Holly Norton	Joe Swales
Gerry Elliott	Bob Latvalla	Lynn O'Brien and Family	Lucille Temple
Vinnie Gambuzza	Doris Lewis	Adriana Piacentini	Liz Waggoner
Stephen Gervais	Janet Luttrell	Brent Peters	Karen Weiss
Charles Girard	Lavon McMurrian		

This list will be refreshed January 1, 2015. If you would like any of these names to remain on the list, or wish to add new names, please notify Gail Miller or Carol Zaiatz (978-448-2091 or unioncc@uccgroton.org).



Confidential Prayer Chain

Need prayer and need it now?
Simply email prayer@uccgroton.org and your request will go to the

confidential pray-ers; or call Lori McElroy (978-448-2841) and she will put your prayer request in motion for you. Prayer requests are held in confidence among those who are praying for you, and you may request that your name be withheld.



- Amy Leonard, home recovering from a serious head injury.
- Howard, Laura and the Hecht family in the death of Howard's grandfather in Minnesota.
- Carol Hess (a friend of Marvin Caldwell), recovering from surgery for breast cancer.

December Birthdays

Ashlynn Hance	12/01		Dave Woods	12/16
Brenda Semienko	12/02		Donald Landry	12/17
Meredith Dooney	12/03		Darrion Slade	12/17
William Nickerson	12/03		Myrtle Murphy	12/18
Cameron Robinson	12/04		Korbin Larsen	12/18
Gail Miller	12/08		Tristan Row	12/19
Scott Burgess	12/12		Taylor Ansted	12/27
Joslyn Robinson	12/14		Carolyn DiCenzo	12/29
Alyssa Slade	12/15			



**BLESSINGS
ON YOUR
BIRTHDAY**

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)! Did your kids receive birthday money from Grandma and Grandpa? Consider having them share with the church \$5 or \$10 or \$15! If everyone participates, this will add up to a significant amount. The Church Council and the Finance people will work out the details around deciding what the Birthday Fund Gift will be each year. We are grateful to Helen Misselhorn for planting the seed of this idea at her 90th birthday celebration at church in October. Let's join her and watch our gifts grow!

Birthday Fund to date: \$454.

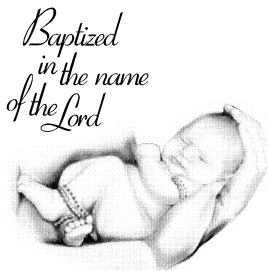
Church News (continued)



Annual Report

Deadline December 19

It's that time of year again! In order to have the Annual Report finished by mid-January, we need to collect committee and ministry reports now. If you have already sent your information to Carol, thank you! If you have not, please email your report as a word document attachment to Carol (unioncc@uccgroton.org) by Friday, December 19. 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 — there should be 12 separate documents for those who meet every month.



Colin Grasso was baptized on November 9. Congratulations to the Grasso family!

January Courier

Please submit items for the January Courier by Friday, December 12, 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. Thank you.

Fall Clean-up

Thank You!

Thanks to all the volunteers who helped with the yard clean up. This made the fall clean up a breeze!

Thank You!

I would like to thank all of you for your cards and prayers. It is wonderful to hear from you. I feel like I'm well on my way to a good recovery.

—Peg DeBruyn

(Peg is recovering from cancer treatments and living in Maine.)



Church Council November 19 Meeting Summary

The GPS (God's Purpose Seekers) gave an update; they will be meeting more often in December and will have an all-day planning retreat in January.

The 2014 budget is on track with expected income/expenses.

On Pledge Sunday, 65 pledges came in, which is similar to last year. We expect the remaining 40 pledges to come in over the next few weeks..

The Nominations Task Force has been formed with Rev. Gail, Erica Davenport, Kelli Hnath and Stefanie Lempp as members.

The Flower Ministry will not be filled next year, as their duties have been taken up by other groups/staff members.

The Congregational Meeting on November 23 will not be using Robert's Rules; feedback to Church Council members is encouraged.

The PPRC reports that Rev. Gail's review has taken place; a new review process may be used next year following a process outlined in the book, *Completing the Circle*, which the PPRC and Deacons area considering.

Congregational Budget Meeting Summary Sunday, November 23



CONGREGATIONAL
MEETING

This was the first church meeting not using Robert's Rules. Comments are encouraged and should be directed to Rev. Gail, Moderator Stefanie Lempp or any Church Council member.

The budget presentation highlighted the outsourcing of payroll and hiring a clerk to assist with bookkeeping. Also, all committees will be informed how to access the contingency fund, if needed.

The Missions Committee made a report of their 2014 giving and expectations around their 2015 giving.

The final budget will be presented at the Annual Meeting on February 1.

Serving on Committees and Ministries

As we prepare for the Annual Meeting on Feb. 1, 2015 (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 blue 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.



Stephen Ministry Christ Caring for People Through People



On Sunday, November 23, we commissioned our first class of Stephen Ministers:

Greg Balligan
Paul Brown
Erica Davenport
Susan Davenport
Steve Legge
Sheila Mitchell
Karen Sherwin

These lay ministers have been trained to provide care for people in and around our congregation who are grieving, need long-term care, or are going through other crises in their lives. If you'd like to know more about Stephen Ministry for yourself, a family member or a friend, neighbor or co-worker or someone else you know — inside or outside our congregation — speak with Gail or with Andrea McDonough, our Stephen Leader (978-692-7859; andreamcdonough@verizon.net).



Confirmation for Grown Ups!

Four Fridays = Faith Fridays!

Four Fridays in January: 9, 16, 23, 30

9:30 - 11:15 am

At church (Fellowship Hall)

Child care provided

Pastor Miller will teach this session, reviewing the basics of the faith (without the stress of adolescence!) as we teach it to teenagers today (specific topics will be announced in the January Courier). This series is for people of all ages and

stages in the faith. Don't know much/where to begin? Familiar with the language, but not sure what it means? Want to hear about the faith you know and love in a new a fresh way? Want to go deeper? Join us!

How we spend our time:

We'll begin with **fellowship, refreshments and conversation** (9:30 - 10:00 a.m.). Then we'll move to the topic at hand: hear some **teaching** and have time for **questions/discussion**. We'll conclude with **prayer** time to pray for and with each other as the spirit moves, finishing by 11:15.

Feel free to invite a friend - everyone/anyone is welcome!

Questions? Contact Kelli Hnath (,) or Gail at church.

Accounts Payable Clerk

Job Description

This position has overall responsibility for processing all payables for the Church.

Anticipated Hours: approximately three per week

Duties:

- Work closely with and report to Church Treasurer
- Record contributions in financial system
- Receive, stamp and review the accuracy and validity of invoices
- Gather backup for and ensure proper approval of payments
- Post payments to correct expense accounts
- Follow up with the appropriate person on any discrepancies
- Handle vendor inquiries
- Approve and submit time for bi-weekly hourly employees to payroll service
- Post bi-weekly payroll journal entries as provided by payroll service
- Perform monthly bank account reconciliations
- Maintain Accounts Payable files
- Assist with preparation of financial reports, including Annual Report and Annual Budget, as requested
- Pull invoices/documentation as required for any internal and external audits
- Other duties, as requested and appropriate

Qualifications:

- Must be familiar with Quickbooks
- Must have good communication skills
- Must have accounting experience

Stewardship & Finance

—Liz Smith, Chair
—Don Kennedy

—Scott Burgess
—Liz McQuillin

—Drew Davenport
—Bruce Wyman

The First Noel



Each Sunday in December, the children will spend the **first 10 minutes of Sunday School** learning a Christmas Carol—*The First Noel*. 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.



Can You Help?

There are still a number of Sundays going forward where we need volunteers to spend one hour doing some of the most fulfilling work of the church—teaching our children about God's love. Please sign up on the white-board in the hallway downstairs or by email to Carol Zaiatz in the Church Office unioncc@uccgroton.org. Thank you for helping to teach our children about the Christian faith.

Christian Education Committee

—Anne Cahill, Chair
—Diane Landry

—Jean Armstrong

—Dena Hance

Bible Study

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

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

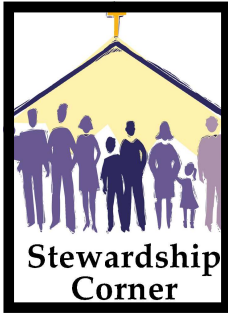
Continuing with the theme of hope, we'll read messages from Habakkuk, Job, and the psalmist as they seek God's help during troubled times. As W. Eugene March, Professor Emeritus of Old Testament at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and author of our study guide wrote, "Regardless of what happens, God will provide hope, which satisfies the soul." *Contact Janet Kennedy if you are interested in joining.*

Thursday Morning Bible Study

10:00 a.m. at 26 Court Street

Advent is here, that beautiful season of quiet contemplation and restful activity. If it were only that smoothly gentle. We will spend Advent with the Prophet Isaiah contemplating his thoughts on the redemption of God's people. Isaiah was thinking of Israel, but we are also God's people, the work of God's hands and dwellers in God's pasture. Come, join us for lively and thoughtful conversation spiced with tea, coffee and cookies. *Contact Marvin Caldwell ()*

Stewardship



Enter Into the Joy

In Sunday School a couple of weeks ago, our children studied the *Parable of the Talents* (Matthew 25:14-30). In this Scripture, Jesus tells of the master who entrusts three of his servants with different amounts of money (“talents”) before he goes away. Two of the servants employ that with which they have been given to create a greater return, doubling the money. The third servant takes his talent and buries it in the ground. When the master returns, he showers praise on the two servants who employed the talents, and invites them to “enter into the joy of your master.” The third servant receives scorn for not putting the talent he was given to use.

While “talents” in this parable refer to money, the word is the root of what we call talents today: those areas in which we have particular ability. Like all that we have, our talents are God-given. We are entrusted to not only use our talents, but to use them in God-pleasing ways.

We also must recognize that each person has been given different talents by God. In Romans 12:4-8, Paul uses the analogy of how a body’s parts each have different functions, and so to we each “have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us.” As with other gifts from God, we are entrusted to cultivate and employ these talents to serve God and his purposes in our world. Through prayer, study, and practice, we can discover the talents we have and strengthen them.

Think of the talents you may have. Do you have a gift for singing, ministering, sharing, number-crunching, building, writing, caring, or teaching? Are you using those talents to serve God’s kingdom? Do these gifts bring you joy, and bring joy to others? Are you using them in God-pleasing ways, to enter into the joy of God?

These are good questions to ponder as we approach the end of 2014 and prepare for the new year to come.

—Jeff Kubick

Stewardship Update



The Stewardship Team would like to thank all who participated in Pledge Sunday (11/16) and to those who mailed in their pledge for 2015. As of 11/21, we have received 66 pledges for a total amount of \$199,933. While we are still awaiting a number of pledges, the good news is that so far we have seven new first time pledges for 2015! 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 2014 is approaching fast; please make sure all current year pledges are up-to-date no later than Sunday, December 28. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Bob Goudey (). Thank you!



Now That I’ve Pledged — What’s Next?

In December, the Collector will distribute weekly giving envelopes for 2015. They are a handy way to keep track of your weekly giving to the church. Since pledges are made for the upcoming calendar year, we start tracking 2015 pledges in January.

If you would like to begin giving your pledged amount before January 1, 2015, please do, but understand that your gifts will be tracked against your pledges starting in the new year. We keep records of all giving and will provide end-of-year statements to all who give. Please call or email any questions to Bob Goudey ().

The 2015 Stewardship Team

—Bob Goudey

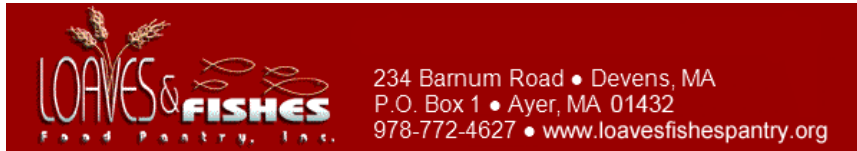
—Liz McQuillin

—Gail Miller

—Halsey Platt

—Craig Smith

Missions



Grocery Donations

Help us meet our yearly goal to deliver 250 bags of groceries to the food pantry by the end of December. Let's provide as much as we can for families in need during the holiday season. On your next trip to the grocery store, please pick up some canned fruits and/or veggies, cereal, boxed potatoes, soup, flour, olive oil, or tuna. With such a high demand for assistance this year, we thank everyone who has donated grocery and personal items.



Tewksbury Hospital Giving Tree

Thank you! Thank you! All 50 ornaments for the patients were taken. **Please return your unwrapped gifts with the ornament attached to the box beneath the Missions bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall no later than Sunday, December 14, so they can be wrapped and distributed on time.** Thank you in advance for your generous support of these patients who are often forgotten during the holidays.

Do you like to wrap?

We'd love to have your help on **Monday, December 22, at 7:00 p.m., when we plan to meet in the Fellowship Hall** to wrap the gifts.

Heifer Farm's Living Gift Market

Heifer International (216 Wachusett Street, Rutland, MA)

December 6, 7, 13 and 14

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. each day

Creating memories, giving thoughtful gifts, and enjoying good food are all part of our holiday seasons. For two weekends in December, Heifer International hosts their annual Living Gift Market celebration where the public is invited into the barns to meet the animals and learn about how Heifer International uses livestock and training around the globe to help families in poverty to become self-reliant.

Purchase Alternative Gifts and take home a special gift card or photo to share. Take a wintery trip to China or Poland by hopping on Heifer's Global Village hay wagon where crackling woodstoves and old-fashioned craft-making await your family. Warm yourself with hot chestnuts at the bonfire or come inside for homemade soup and rolls, baked goods and hot cocoa. Before you go, decorate a gingerbread cookie or stop in the Shop@Heifer for fairly-traded gift items, books, jewelry, and Heifer items. No charge—Donation of canned goods requested. All canned goods will be donated to the Worcester County Food Bank. For more information, call 508-886-2221, email heifer.farm@heifer.org.



Missions Committee

—Janet Kennedy, Chair
—Janice Flynn

—Tony DiCenzo
—Larry Robinson

Cookies 'n' Carols

Community Christmas

Cookies 'n' Carols

Sunday, December 7, 12:30—3:30 p.m.

This is a wonderful opportunity to increase the affection and fellowship we enjoy as a church, to thank a neighbor, to lift the spirits of a friend, or to simply say Merry Christmas. There are three main components — feel free to participate in one or all!



Order: THIS SUNDAY November 30, at coffee hour after worship, you will have the opportunity to buy a “telegram” of Cookies and Christmas caroling to be delivered on your behalf to anyone in the Groton area.

Bake: We anticipate needing 100 dozen homemade cookies; so as you bake this season, consider throwing in an extra batch for us. Bring to church labeled, “Cookies 'n' Carols” and we will store/freeze them; or deliver them fresh to the church on Saturday, December 6, 9:30-11:00 a.m.

Sing and Deliver: Sunday, December 7, 12:30-3:30 p.m. No singing experience necessary! Join us for an afternoon of caroling! This is such a fantastic way to spread Christmas joy! Everyone is welcome to join in the fun.



Christmas in the Community



Journey to Bethlehem

Friday, December 5, 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.

Join Pastor Miller and her family on this adventure, which 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. (visit the church's website to learn more and see photos <http://www.faithevfree.org/nativity.html>). This is appropriate for children of all ages.



Sunday, December 7, 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. Entertainment will be provided by the Groton Interfaith Brass. 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*

(12/7). For more information, contact Edie Tompkins at 978-448-2654 or Judy Nauman at 978- 925-9411.



**Sunday, December 14 Monday, December 15
2:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. 7:30 p.m.**

In Our Sanctuary

Blessing, Gifts & Praise! This is the theme of the 40th Annual Groton Community Christmas Concert. There will be wonderful music of the season, sung by children and adults from Groton and nine surrounding communities. This concert is free (though donations will be accepted at the door).

Christmas Eve Worship

Poinsettia Orders



Christmas Eve WORSHIP

5:00 p.m.—Family Worship—Different this year! Especially for the Young

We will present a “readers theater” of the Christmas story with simple costumes (directed by Bonnie Marchesani). The childrens’ choirs will sing as usual; and there will also be a sermon, offering, and passing of the light at the end of the service.

7:00 p.m.—Traditional 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 at church.*

Please use the order form below to order Poinsettias for our Sanctuary — cut out on the dotted line and mail with your check as instructed below. Thank you!



2014 Poinsettia Order Form

Due by Sunday, DECEMBER 14!

An assortment of red and white Poinsettias will be placed in the Sanctuary on **Sunday, December 21**

Plants will be delivered (after worship on December 28th) 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

The Reverend Gail Miller

Cell phone: 978-877-2177

gail@uccgroton.org

Fall Office Hours

Tuesday: 9:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.

Wednesday*: 2:00 p.m.—5:00 p.m.

Thursday—Friday: 9:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.

*available by cell phone or email in the morning

Carol Zaiatz—Office Administrator

unioncc@uccgroton.org

Office Hours

Tuesday — Friday

8:00 a.m. — 3:00 p.m.

(Church Office is closed on Mondays)

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

December Deacons

Various/Various

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:

Anne Cahill

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:

Bebe Goudey

Stewardship & Finance Committee:

Liz Smith

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

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PERMIT #23

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PLEASE DO NOT DELAY

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Advent/Christmas Worship Highlights

Nov. 30 – Advent One! Lighting the First Candle

Bonnie Marchesani, Vocalist; Connie Wall-Haas, Harpist
Pick-up Advent Devotions, Calendars, Wreaths/Candles for use at home.

Dec. 7 – Advent Two! Lighting the Second Candle

Senior and Junior Choirs
12:30 p.m.—Caroling (see p. 9)
4:00 p.m.—Community Tree Lighting at our Church (p. 9)

Dec. 14 – Advent Three! Lighting the Third Candles

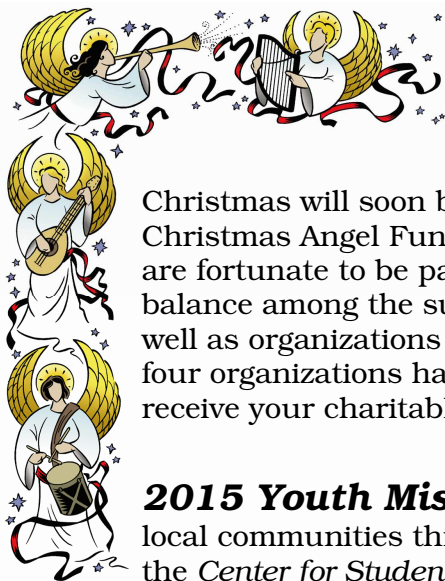
Senior and Cherub Choirs

Dec. 21 – Advent Four! Lighting of All Four Candles

Senior and Handbell Choirs combined
Poinsettias decorate the Sanctuary (p. 10)

Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship (p. 10)

5:00 p.m.—Family Worship
7:00 p.m.—Lessons and Carols



Christmas Angel Giving 2014

Christmas will soon be upon us and each of us can be an angel by contributing to our Christmas Angel Fund. During these trying economic times the needs are so great and we are fortunate to be part of such a generous church community. We strive to reach a balance among the supported organizations; having local, regional and global impacts, as well as organizations promoting Christianity beyond the bounds of our church. This year, four organizations have been selected to receive angel donations. You decide which ones receive your charitable donation, or you may let the Missions Committee decide for you.

2015 Youth Mission Trip Since 2010 our teenagers have connected to God and local communities through life-changing Christ-centered mission trips. (*Youthworks* and the *Center for Student Missions* are the mission agencies which have coordinated our work). We have served in Philadelphia, Washington D.C., Rutland VT, Hamlin WV, and Queens NY. Next summer (June 20-29) we will serve Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, South Dakota.

Unbound (formerly Christian Foundation for Children—CFCA) *Unbound* (formerly CFCA) would value your offering as a Christmas Angel this holiday season. This organization benefits the youth, as well as the elderly, with more than 94% of the donations directly supporting those families in need. The Missions Committee began sponsoring Carlos from El Salvador through CFCA in 2011. The Sunday School classes have been sending/receiving correspondence with Carlos over the past couple of years. This provides a first-hand experience around the generous gift of giving and how it has benefited Carlos and his family.



Heifer International Their mission is to end hunger/poverty and care for the earth. Their animals don't just provide project partners with a reliable source of food, but also a reliable source of income. Extra agricultural products, such as milk from cows or goats, honey from bees or eggs from chickens, can be both shared within the community and sold at market. This new income, coupled with the training in sustainable practices that their partners receive, allows partners to clothe their families, provide them with medical care and send their children to school. For more information, go to www.heifer.org.

Loaves & Fishes is a mission of love and faith that serves the people of Ayer, Devens, Groton, Harvard, Littleton, and Shirley by providing food, emergency shelter, resource referral, and other temporary services, and by advocating for changes by its clients that will promote independence and self-reliance. For more information, go to www.devenspantry.org

2014 Youth Mission Trip	\$ _____	Heifer International	\$ _____
Unbound	\$ _____	Loaves & Fishes	\$ _____
Total		\$ _____	

Make checks payable to Union Congregational Church Groton, with "Christmas Angel" in the memo. Gifts should be received by December 25, 2014. This sheet and attached check may be placed in the offering plate or mailed to the Church Office (220 Main Street, Groton, MA 01450)

