

THE UNION COURIER

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

220 Main Street
Groton, Massachusetts 01450



April 2015

FROM THE



PASTOR

When I first read these words, I was both challenged and encouraged all at the same time!

On my morning run one day, I accidentally ran into a triathlon race. I could not get out of the race as I was overtaken by athletes from every side. Up until that moment, I thought I was running at a fast pace. It was only when I found myself in the middle of a pack of runners that I realized I was not running as fast or as smoothly as I thought. While in my own little world, I was doing great, but when I stepped into a bigger, faster, fitter world, I discovered that I had lots of room for improvement and development.

As Christians, it is crucial that we do not become lulled into a false sense of comfort, security or achievement. We must constantly ensure that we are pushing ahead, determined to lay hold of all Jesus has prepared for us. We must keep enlarging, placing ourselves in a world that is bigger than our own, so we can keep God's perspective. We may think we are doing great, but let's keep the Word as our mirror and measure to ensure we are always allowing ourselves to be transformed to the image of Jesus. (~Christine Caine)

This is a great word for the church — for OUR church. I wonder how much we (our church) have become *lulled into a false sense of comfort, security or achievement*. And I wonder this because one of the messages that came through loud and clear in the Congregational Inventory that the GPS Task Force conducted last year was that we are overwhelmingly satisfied with the church the way it is now.

Now, I know that that speaks to a measure of congregational health and stability that is good for us. But I also hope we won't be SO SATISFIED that we resist growing in new directions. Just as Christians should NEVER be satisfied with where they're at in their faith; so also the church should never become so comfortable with the way it is that we are not seeking out new ways of doing what we've always done, as well as looking for new opportunities to share Christ and change lives along the way. Including our own! We should always be moving, growing, learning, stretching...

We must keep enlarging, placing ourselves in a world that is bigger than our own, so we can keep God's perspective.

YES! Let's endeavor to do this! Let's keep God's perspective as the lens through which we see ourselves, our church, and the world. Let's hear God's word of blessing, "You are my beloved," and Christ's words of how to live faithful lives, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself."

Let's hear these words, take them to heart, and live them out each and every day.

With you on the journey,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gail".





Our Church Family



Ongoing Prayer List

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

Marvin Bernstein	Sean Koller	Karen Sands	Erin Tucker
Jim Breault	Doris Lewis	Rudi Schmid	Liz Waggoner
Marlene Byron	Lavon McMurrian	Opal Smith	Gerry Westendorp
Betty Goulet	Leigh Mezzetti	Betty Sowkin	
Carol B. Hess	Holly Norton	Joe Swales	

This list is refreshed twice a year (January and June). Please contact Gail Miller or Carol Zaiatz (978-448-2091 or unioncc@uccgroton.org) to add or remove a name.

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.

Kim and Brent Peters

Kim and Brent Peters' new address in Utah is:
15467 Winged Trace Center
Draper, UT 83020
Cell #978-430-6771
Email: kmpeterstx@gmail.com



- Christians being persecuted and killed for their faith.
- Ali Rosenfeld, home recovering after a hospitalization.
- Susan Davenport, seeking answers to health issues.
- John Biocchi, recovering from heart surgery.
- The Black family in the death of Ben Black. (There will be a reception in celebration of Ben's life at the McNeil Lounge in the Fred Gray Building at Lawrence Academy, April 4, from 2-6 p.m.)
- Lynn Plausse in the death of her sister, Karen Perry.

Birthday Fund Update

An idea started by Helen Misselhorn on her 90th birthday, our Birthday Fund continues to grow! A fun way to contribute above and beyond your regular giving to the church; 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! The Church Council and the Finance people will work out the details around deciding what the Birthday Fund Gift will be each year. **Birthday Fund as of 3/31/15: \$1,241!**

April Birthdays



Stefanie Lempp	04/01	Georgia Row	04/09
Devin Goudey	04/03	Julia Zambuto	04/12
John Hitsos	04/04	Chris Clinton	04/17
Jason Hnath	04/04	Larry Robinson	04/21
Georgia Brooks	04/06	John Gervais	04/23
Liz Brennan	04/07	Danika Manalo	04/23
Michelle Emerle	04/07	Irene Koutrouba	04/29
Griffin Caiozzo	04/07	Grace Nickerson	04/29

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 the significant anniversaries in your life — would you share that information with us?

Church News



March 25 Meeting Summary

Committees and ministries have been contemplating what the GPS Mission Statement Means to them. Next month they will be concentrating on “changing lives, sharing Christ.” On May 3, GPS will host a conversation after church.

The Youth Mission Trip Spaghetti Dinner raised approximately \$1,300 and provided fellowship for all.

The PPRC is continuing their work on exploring a new review process based upon the book *Completing the Circle*.

On Tuesday, May 26, the entire congregation is invited to the Church Council Meeting; it will be an open forum on a topic to be determined at the April Church Council meeting.

If you, or someone you know, could benefit from the Stephen Ministry, please see Rev. Gail or Andrea McDonough.



Sunday, April 12 After Worship

Fellowship Hour is a wonderful time for everyone to have a chance to catch up with each other, including the children who love seeing their friends and making new ones. It's an important element in the life of our church.

On April 12, after worship, the Church Council, on behalf of the Congregation, will be sponsoring a special Fellowship Hour Brunch in honor of those who have served on the Kitchen Ministry over the past five years. We are also including in this special group four people who have organized buffets for Christmas Eve Services and Memorial Services. All of these people make us feel welcome and warm us up with hot coffee and treats week after week. For this we are very thankful.

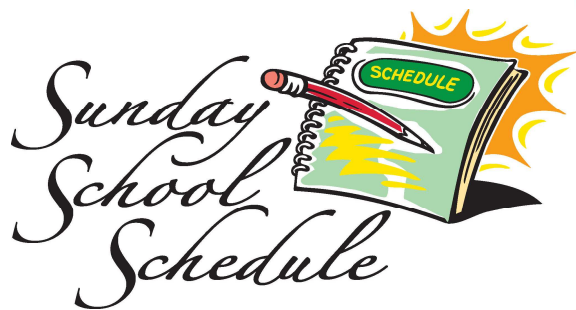
Everyone is invited to this celebration — we hope you can join us! If you would like to assist in any way, please contact Bebe Goudey at _____ or by calling _____.

“I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ.”
First Corinthians 1:4



Church Spring Clean-up Day Saturday, May 9 (Rain Date May 16) 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

You are invited! Outdoor cleanup and raking will be our primary job. More hands make the work fun and go faster. Please bring a rake and tarp if you can—and show up anytime for whatever time you can give! If you have any questions, contact any member of the Buildings & Grounds Committee or Chris Sullivan (_____ , _____). **We appreciate your support.**



Teachers Needed—Can You Help?

We need volunteers to spend one hour doing some of the most fulfilling work of the church—teaching our children about God's love. We still have openings on the calendar. Please sign up on the white-board in the hallway downstairs at church or email Carol Zaiatz in the Church Office (unioncc@uccgroton.org). Once signed up, Carol will send out an email the week before your class that gives instructions for the online system and how to access the curriculum for activities, etc.

Christian Education Committee

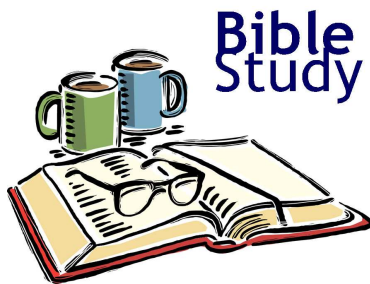
—Anne Cahill, Chair
—Diane Landry

—Jean Armstrong
—Anne Larsen

—Dena Hance

—Kelli Hnath

Bible Study



**Bible
Study**

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

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

Learning to Pray, the upcoming unit of study, looks at prayer as found in the New Testament books of Luke, John, Hebrews, and James. We'll explore Jesus's teachings about prayer, his role as intercessor, and our need to pray for each other. Join us. No preparation or expertise required as we read the scripture and the lesson together, followed by discussion of the study guide questions. *Contact: Janet Kennedy*

Thursday Morning Bible Study

10:00 a.m. in the Church Parlor through April 9

We are following the Sunday Lectionary readings through April 9. **April 16, Marvin Caldwell will be back and Bible Study will meet at her home (26 Court Street).** Hope you can join us!

Have You Read



the
GOOD BOOK
Lately?

Family Ministry / Harvest Fair / Stephen Ministry



Family Ministry is going to a Spinners baseball game this spring! Please stay tuned for additional details about dates and prices.
Contact: Corissa Robinson ()

Fall Harvest Fair

Next Harvest Fair Planning Meeting

Sunday, May 4, after worship

Please join us at this important meeting—we could use your ideas!



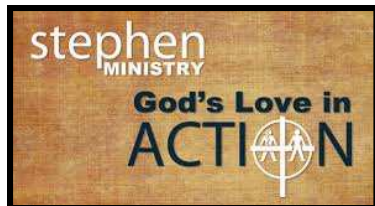
Harvest Fair

Saturday, October 3

- **Spring Cleaning?** Do you have children's clothing in clean and good condition? Do you have any books, CDs, DVDs, or VHS you would like to "clean out" and donate to the church for the fall fair? Boxes are available for you to bring them in now and clear up that space; there's no need to wait. Just put them in the boxes under the bulletin boards outside of Fellowship Hall.

- **Children's Clothing:** Clean and in good condition
- **Books:** All kinds, we need a new supply (no textbooks please)
- **Silent Auction:** It's never too early to start thinking about this year's Silent Auction — that masterpiece painting, the throw blanket, the doll house, baby clothes etc. Whatever your talent or hobby, please consider making an item for the auction. The following items are always crowd pleasers... tickets to sporting events, concerts, performances and vacation house weekends. The Silent Auction is always a great success and we can make it even better this year with your generous contributions! (Contact Liz Brennan, liz.corcoran@bain.com)
- **Handmade Items/Woodworking:** Keep us in mind this summer as you are busy creating new things!

Stephen Ministry



We all know someone...

- Someone in crisis who doesn't know where to turn.
- Someone who is tense, upset, worn out — needing someone to talk with, someone to care.

You'd like to help. So would the Stephen Ministers here at our church. Here's what to do:

1. Listen and care for your friend in your own relationship together.
2. Ask your friend for permission to share his or her need with someone who can help. Be sure to tell your friend that all information will be kept confidential.
3. Once permission is given, talk to Pastor Gail Miller or Andrea McDonough (), leader of our Stephen Ministry.

We will take it from there! Let Stephen Ministry help during this trying time.

We all know someone...or maybe that “someone” is you.

Missions

Heifer International Annual Pancake Breakfast at Overlook Farm

March 14 was a cold, rainy morning, but 16 people ventured out to Overlook Farm in Rutland to enjoy a hearty breakfast followed by a guided tour of the farm to visit and ask questions about the animals and tour the Global Village. It was an opportunity to learn about Heifer International's efforts helping people obtain sustainable sources of food and income. *(Thanks to Chip and Carly Detwiler for the great pictures!)*



Thank You!

One Great Hour of Sharing and Church World Service

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the special collection for One Great Hour of Sharing — we received \$660. This is one of four special mission offerings of the United Church of Christ, 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. We also donated \$317 to the Church World Service Blanket Drive in February. Thank you for your generosity!

Missions (cont.)

Youth Mission Trip Fundraiser

Youth Mission Trip

An Opportunity for All of Us to Serve

In late June, 19 missionaries (16 youths and 3 adults) from our congregation will travel to South Dakota to serve people living on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Not able to go with them? Here's a way to feel a part of the trip without leaving Groton. Be a sponsor! Responsibilities include (*not financial*) meeting with one of the missionaries during coffee hour, writing a prayer and giving it to them before departure, and praying for that individual while they are on the mission trip. Interested? Contact Rev. Miller or Halsey Platt to set up a sponsorship.

Missions Committee

—Janet Kennedy, Chair
—Halsey Platt

—Brenda Barker
—Julie Platt

—Tony DiCenzo
—Pete Hnath

Youth Mission Trip Fundraiser—Thank You!

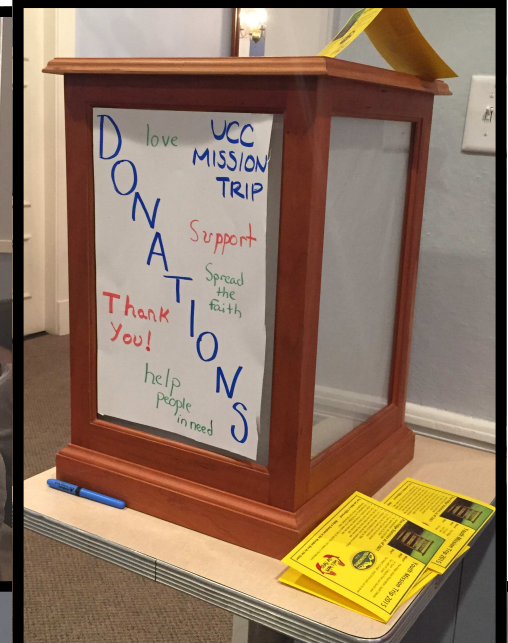


Our Spaghetti Supper on March 22 was a huge success, with more than 100 people attending and raising approximately \$1,300 toward their trip this summer! We thank everyone who participated in this event — what a great way of supporting these young adults!

(Thanks to Janet Carey and Halsey Platt for the great photos!)



More Mission Trip Fundraiser Pictures!



Mission Trip Youth cleaning up after the Spaghetti Supper last month.

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: Dennis Carey

Clerk: Lori McElroy

Collector: Bob Goudey

Internal Auditor: Bruce Wyman

April Deacons

Steve Legge/Ed Stratton

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:

Chris Sullivan

Christian Education:

Anne Cahill

Church Council Member-at-Large:

Pat Woods

Diaconate:

Tim Dumont

Endowment:

Mary Hanson

Missions:

Janet Kennedy

Music:

Sheila Mitchell

Pastor Parish Relations:

Bebe Goudey

Stewardship & Finance:

Don Kennedy

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April Highlights

April 2 at 7:30 p.m.

Maundy Thursday/Tenebrae Worship

Holy Communion and the Extinguishing of the Light

Good
FRIDAY



April 3 at 12:30 p.m.

Good Friday

We gather to read the biblical account and reflect on Jesus' death.



Sunday, April 5 at 10:00 a.m.

Easter Worship

Senior, Junior, and Cherub Choirs sing

Handbell Choir and Trumpet

Holy Communion will be served.

No Sunday School: Childcare is provided for infants and toddlers.

Sunday, April 12 at 10:00 a.m.

Preacher: Jay Stanton (*Teen Challenge* "graduate" who will share what the resurrection and new life means to him.)

After Worship, join us for our Kitchen Ministry Appreciation Brunch (see p. 3)