

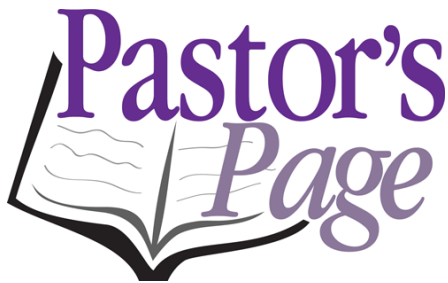
THE UNION COURIER

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

220 Main Street
Groton, Massachusetts 01450



May 2015



This month we will be celebrating one of my favorite Sundays of the year — Confirmation! (May 10)

Sometimes it is called "Affirmation of Baptism" because this is the time when young people confirm for themselves the promises that were made on their behalf at their baptism. When babies are brought for baptism, they have no say in it — and I love the symbolism of this. That they are carried by loving arms and, through the water and the words, God claims them as His own — and there's nothing they can do about it! Cry and scream maybe — but that water and those words are declared!

Confirmation, on the other hand, is entirely the decision of the person being confirmed. After a "school year" of conversations learning about the Christian faith in general and our church in particular, we ask our young people to make a decision to be confirmed and join our church — or not.

And, as the kids make their decisions, I always remind them of the three things that are NOT required in order to be confirmed. We do NOT require:

- 1) **That you have all the answers.** That's why all six of the vows the kids will make include the phrase: "With the Help of God." Confirming your identity as a Christian is a commitment to asking questions, knowing that no one can fully know even a fraction of the depth and breadth of the Christian faith.
- 2) **That you be a good person.** There are plenty of "bad" people who are faithful followers of Christ. Besides, who decides who is "good" or "good enough" this side of the grave? Being a Christian is following Christ and continuing to follow Christ no matter how many mistakes we make! Our "goodness" resides in our identity in Him and our good works flow from that identity.
- 3) **That you have an emotional experience of the Holy Spirit.** Usually this is talked about in terms of "feelings," which is not where we should be "measuring" our relationship with the Lord. How we "feel" is not necessarily a reliable indicator of our relationship with God; He is real and present probably most especially when we DON'T FEEL His presence. It is remaining in His love at these times that is so hard, and so important. While some Christians are blessed with an emotional experience of the Holy Spirit, I know many faithful Christians who have never had one.

Years ago a colleague of mine quipped that we need to make sure we're teaching conFIRMation, not conFORMation; making the point that we want kids to discover for themselves the FIRM foundation of the Christian faith, not just conform to what we tell them the faith is.

But the more I thought about this play on words, the more I disagreed with it. While I do agree with the distinction that my friend articulates, I don't want to abandon the word *conform* as it applies to our faith. Because we absolutely are asking the kids to conform — that is, to conform their lives to Christ. To know him, and to see in him God's love in its most obvious and generous; and then to conform their lives to this love, living out of it every minute of every day.

If this is what Confirmation is — then maybe we should all be "confirmed" every week when we come to worship! Wait!....We are!....

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.)

Margaret & Bob Batchelor
Marvin Bernstein
John Biocchi
Jim Breault
Marlene Byron
Mike Charles
Kristen Collins

Cathleen Currie
Robert Daigle
Emma Deering
John Edger
Betty Goulet
Carol B. Hess
Sean Koller

Doris Lewis
Michael Lannon
Lavon McMurrian
Leigh Mezzetti
Holly Norton
Karen Sands
Rudi Schmid

Priscilla Simmons
Opal Smith
Betty Sowkin
Joe Swales
Erin Tucker
Liz Waggoner
Gerry Westendorp

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.



- John Biocchi, recovering from heart surgery.
- Bonnie Marchesani, recovering from surgery.

Thank You!

Thank you so much for your kindness, support, and prayers during my Dad's illness and passing. It was truly comforting to know that our UCC family was thinking of us. Thank you!

—*The Gervais Family*

Thank you for all the prayers, cards, and meals after my recent surgery. I feel so blessed to be a member of this church family.

—*Bonnie Marchesani*

We would like to thank all the families who purchased Easter flowers to help decorate the Sanctuary for Easter Sunday. The Sanctuary looked glorious in celebration of the resurrection of Our Lord!



Happy Anniversary!

Congratulations on these Milestone Anniversaries!

Dick and Eleanor Ferraro celebrating **60 years** on April 30. Wow!

Barbara and Bruce Wyman celebrating **25 years** on May 12.

Lorrie and Jon Morgan celebrating **25 years** on May 13.

May Birthdays

Anne Cahill	05/03	Deb Shields	05/08	Ginny Fraser	05/21
Chris Hecht	05/03	Margaret Sullivan	05/10	Emily Hanson	05/21
Monique Meehan	05/04	Nancy Huguenin	05/12	Katie Milano	05/23
Lila Jean Dooney	05/04	Ariel Dumont	05/14	Drew Davenport	05/24
Jocelyn Byron-Kelly	05/05	Kyle Plausse	05/14	Bill Gale, Jr.	05/24
Charlotte Caiozzo	05/05	Joel Hughes	05/15	Dennis Carey	05/25
Cristina Davy	05/06	Kelly Sullivan	05/16	Caleb Brennan	05/28
Sara Zambuto	05/06	Mike Smith	05/20	John Fortier	05/30
Dena Hance	05/07			John Brooks, Sr.	05/31

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?



April 29 Meeting Summary

Completing the Circle: We welcomed a guest facilitator, Martha Rounds from the South Acton Cong. Church, to lead us in two Feedback / Reflection Circles. Our topics were 1) Our work as a Council, and 2) Worship. The second circle was in a "Fishbowl Style." The PPRC is suggesting we consider holding these Feedback / Reflection Circles, and wanted the Council to experience them.

Individual committees discussed 'Changing lives, sharing Christ' this month and brought their thoughts back to the Church Council.

Summer worship schedule will remain at 10:00 a.m. (see article below).

Important upcoming dates are:

- Confirmation Sunday, May 10
- Music Appreciation Sunday, May 17
- The Stated Meeting, June 14, after worship

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 (617-515-7584, sullivan95@gmail.com). **We appreciate your support.**

June Courier Please submit items for the June Courier by Friday, May 15, in order to be sure they get into this issue. All submissions to the Courier should be emailed to Carol Zaiatz at unioncc@uccgroton.org. Thank you.

Summer Worship



Worship will Remain at 10:00 a.m.

The Deacons have noticed that some of our older parishioners do not worship in the summer; and they have shared that they simply cannot get to church by 9:00 a.m. So we asked young families if keeping worship at 10:00 a.m. would cause them to skip church; and they shared that with the longer summer days, keeping worship at 10:00 a.m. would make them more likely to come. They also spoke about the more relaxed pace to the summer and how hurrying out to an earlier worship time was hard for

them. Others have asked about the heat of the sanctuary. In the summer, the sanctuary is too warm in the morning because it has retained the heat of the night. The difference between 10:00 a.m. heat and 9:00 a.m. heat may not be as significant as we think. And remember, summer worship is 45 minutes long. At the end of the summer, the Deacons will have more discussions about how it went.

Diaconate

- | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|
| —Tim Dumont, Chair | —Greg Balligan | —Erica Davenport | —Martha Dean |
| —Steve Legge | —Andrea McDonough | —Cassie Sampas | —Brenda Semienko |
| —Ed Stratton | | | |
-



Weaving Project: A Gift for Hasi

Hasi (and her parents Liz and Evan) are moving to Swampscott at the end of the school year. And so the children (assisted by the weaving skills of Lisa Gambuzza) will create, with Hasi, two identical small weavings/wall hangings: one for us to keep and one for Hasi to take, as a memory of our seven years together.

On May 3 (during Sunday School), in their Sunday School classes, the children will write memories and messages on strips of sari cloth. Then on May 10 and 17 they will join Lisa and her loom in the Fellowship Hall for part of their class time to weave their messages together.

We will present the final weavings in worship in June when we say good-bye to Hasi, Liz and Evan.

Christian Education Committee

—Anne Cahill, Chair
—Diane Landry

—Jean Armstrong
—Anne Larsen

—Dena Hance

—Kelli Hnath

Bible Study



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

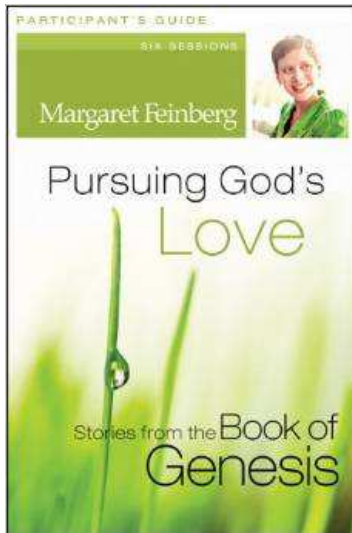
We continue with the *Old Testament* to understand the connections made between David's reign and the lord-ship of Christ; beginning with the promise of David in line and ending with scripture from *Revelation* concerning John's vision in the heavenly court. Everyone is welcome! Join us as we read the scripture and the lesson from *The Present Word* together. Contact: Janet Kennedy

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

Marvin will be away on May 14, and the Bible Study will meet in the Church Parlor on that day.
Contact: Marvin Caldwell (978-448-5496)

Faith Fridays / GPS / Middle School Youth

Faith Fridays



Faith Fridays

May 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29

9:30 - 11:15 a.m.

Parish House

God's Love in the Stories of Genesis: a video series featuring Margaret Feinberg. **Contact/Questions?** Kelli Hnath (978-272-1223, kbhnath@yahoo.com) or Gail at church. Bring a friend!

A GPS Conversation

Sharing Christ — Changing Lives:

A GPS Conversation

Sunday, May 3, after Worship

Fellowship Hall

As we explore God's call for us to be *a welcoming Christ-centered church sharing His life-changing message of love, joy and forgiveness in service to all people for the glory of God*, we invite you to a conversation to consider how this statement can shape what we do and how we do it. Come to share your ideas, thoughts and opinions, and to hear what others think as well.

Middle School Youth Activities



Local Hike

Williams Barn Conservation Area (Chicopee Row)

Sunday, May 31, 1:00—3:00 p.m. (changed from June 14)

Meet at Church at 1:00 p.m. After a short hike (walk!), we'll enjoy a big open field for running around/playing before heading back. This event is weather permitting of course. (Rainy day option: Indoor scavenger hunt at the church!)

Note: The Adventure Ropes Course (Jordan's Furniture in Reading) original scheduled for May 3 is being rescheduled to a later date. Stay tuned!

Fall Harvest Fair

Harvest Fair Planning Meeting Sunday, May 17, after Coffee Hour Parish House Front Room

If you have any ideas or are interested in a particular area, please join us. Thank you to those who have already volunteered in the following areas:

Barbara Wyman and Liz McQuillin - Attic Treasures
Mark Rzeznikiewicz - Bake Table
Martha Dean - Books
Krista Kubick - Children's Clothing
Charlene Kelly - Children's Toys
Lois Berg, Lori McElroy - Christmas Table
Drew & Erica Davenport - Church Craft Table
Tom Hanson - Clean-up Crew: Fellowship Hall and Nursery
Bonnie Martin - Setting up eating area and decorations
Jon Sjoberg - Grill
Mary Hanson - Jewelry Table
Joel Hughes - Kitchen
Lorrie Morgan - Publicity, including being Carol's primary contact
Liz Brennan - Silent Auction
John Biocchi - Yard Sale



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!



Strengthen the Church Offering

This is one of four special mission offerings we take to support the United Church of Christ.

- Funding new church starts and invigorating existing congregations
- Nurturing lay and pastoral leadership
- Building youth and young adult ministries
- Supporting the *God is Still Speaking Ministry* and its extravagant welcome for all within the United Church of Christ

The collection will take place in worship on May 17 and 24. Your gifts are directed to activities and programs of the Massachusetts Conference, as well as the UCC's national ministries.



Teen Challenge

Sunday, June 7, during Worship

On Sunday, June 7, we will welcome men from *Teen Challenge* Manchester to lead in worship. They will discuss the impact that *Teen Challenge* has made in their lives and the lives of women and men who have struggled with drug and alcohol dependencies. The mission of *Teen Challenge* is "to provide youth, adults, and families with an effective and comprehensive Christian faith-based solution to

life-controlling drug and alcohol problems in order to become productive members of society." Programs include Bible study, work projects, social, educational, and recreational opportunities. Following graduation from the program, members are encouraged to join educational and religious organizations. Please join us after worship for a light lunch and an opportunity to talk with our guests.

Missions Committee

—Janet Kennedy, Chair
—Julie Platt

—Brenda Barker
—Pete Hnath

—Halsey Platt

Community



Grandparent Camp Oceanwood (Maine) June 28 - July 4

During the past few summers, members of our church have attended this camp at Oceanwood, located in Ocean Park, Maine (right next door to Old Orchard Beach). Activities include: horseback riding, rock wall climbing, archery, swimming in pool or at ocean, etc. This is a great opportunity for grandparent(s) and grandchild(ren) (ages 6-13) to come together for six days to eat, sleep, play and pray together. Counselors take the children to these activities, but grandparents are welcome to observe. **There**

are brochures on the tables at the back of the Sanctuary. Also included in this brochure is information on Family Vacation Camp (July 19-25), Single Parent Camp (July 26 - August 1), and Family Work Camp (July 26 - August 1). For more information and to register, visit www.oceanwood.org. If you have any questions, contact Ellen Hargraves (repboh1@verizon.net).

Music



Music Appreciation Day Sunday, May 17

Special plans for music are in the works, including pieces presented by the Handbell, Adult, Junior, and Cherub Choirs, as well as a string quartet.

The Adult Choir will be singing a LOVELY piece of music, *The Ground*, by Ola Gjeilo (a young composer based out of

NYC), with Bernard Crane at the piano and a string quartet. The music is not hard to learn; and as is the case with music, it is difficult to say in words how lovely this piece is. So come and find out for yourselves by joining the choir for this one piece/one performance on May 17th. Rehearsals are in the Sanctuary, two Thursdays, 7:30 - 8:00 p.m., May 7 & 14. Contact Bernard Crane, 617-768-7166, sibelius415@gmail.com; or just show up.

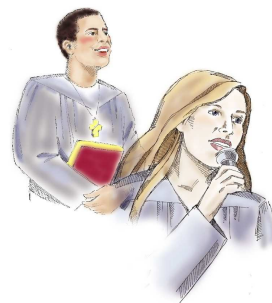


“Our Piano Experience” has been chronicled for the church records by our Music Director, Bernard Crane. The acquisition of the Pramberger grand piano for our church in 2014 was a miraculous adventure that bore witness to the power of the Holy Spirit and Divine providence; and showed what His people can do when they are of one mind and heart. Bernard has put together a booklet containing the timeline, narrative background on the instrument and the search, plus photographs of the piano and some of the people who made it happen. This is a fun, fascinating, fast-paced read, and anyone who is interested is invited to check out one of the (3) copies from either the Parlor Library, Church Office, or Piano Bench.



Summer Musicians Needed!

Spring is finally here, and summer is just around the corner. In fact, we go to our Summer Worship Music Schedule on June 21, and so we are looking for musicians from the congregation to provide music in Worship. Do you sing or play an instrument (piano, organ, or other)? Please contact Pastor Gail or Bernard Crane if you wish to schedule a date. Let us know soon so you can get the date that you want; and watch for an invitation to sing in a men's or women's group.



A Message to the Cherub Choir from Ms. Bonnie

Hello to all of you! I hope you are enjoying Spring and a chance to finally play outside! Music Appreciation Day is coming soon — May 17 — I'd love to have all the Cherubs join me on that Sunday to sing, "I've Got the Joy, Joy, Joy!" I know past and present Cherubs all know this song! See you soon!

—Bonnie Marchesani

Music Committee:

—Sheila Mitchell, Chair
—Bonnie Marchesani

—Paul Brown
—Barbara Wyman

—Susan Davenport

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**
sibelius415@gmail.com
617-768-7166

Cherub Choir: **Bonnie Marchesani**
978-448-5335
bonnie.marchesani@gmail.com

Handbell Choir: **Cheryl Townsend**
978-448-8147
cheryl_townsend@verizon.net

Church Officers

Moderator: **Stefanie Lempp**
978-448-3275 stefanie.lempp@msn.com

Treasurer: **Dennis Carey**
978-449-0461 dcareyucc@yahoo.com

Clerk: **Lori McElroy**
978-448-2841 lori@grotoncenterfarms.com

Collector: **Bob Goudey**
978-448-0121 bebebob.goudey@gmail.com

Internal Auditor: **Bruce Wyman**
978-897-6065 brwyman2308@gmail.com

May Deacons

Tim Dumont/Erica Davenport

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 617-515-7584
sullivan95@gmail.com

Christian Education:

Anne Cahill 978-448-4053
anniebob29@yahoo.com

Church Council Member-at-Large:

Pat Woods 978-448-6624
woodsds@aol.com

Diaconate:

Tim Dumont 978-448-6748
tdumont@groton.org

Endowment:

Mary Hanson 978-448-3713
mary.hanson@monotypeimaging.com

Missions:

Janet Kennedy 978-448-3419
dkennedy@neiwpcc.org

Music:

Sheila Mitchell
gypsyhart@live.com

Pastor Parish Relations:

Bebe Goudey 978-448-0121
bebe.goudey@gmail.com

Stewardship & Finance:

Don Kennedy 978-448-3419
dkennedy@neiwpcc.org

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May Sunday Highlights

Sunday, May 3

Holy Communion

Sunday School: *Philip and the Ethiopians, Acts 8:26-40*
(Weaving Project —see p. 4)

Sunday, May 10 (Mother's Day)—Confirmation

Sunday School: *The Holy Spirit Comes Down, Acts 10:44-48* (Weaving Project)

Sunday, May 17—Music Appreciation Sunday (see p. 8)

Senior, Junior, Cherub, and Handbell Choirs, as well as a string quartet

Sunday School: *Mathias the Apostle, Acts 1:15-17, 21-26* (Weaving Project)

Harvest Fair Planning Meeting after Coffee Hour in the Parish House Front Room
(see p. 6)

Sunday, May 24—Pentecost Sunday—Wear Red!

Sunday School: *The Holy Spirit, Acts 2:1-21*

Sunday, May 31—Trinity Sunday—New Members Join & Baptism

Sunday School: *Isaiah's Call, Isaiah 6:1-8*

Middle School Youth Hike 1:00-3:00 p.m. (see p. 5)