

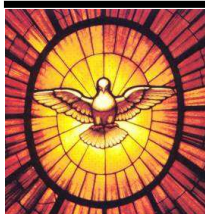
THE UNION COURIER

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

220 Main Street
Groton, Massachusetts 01450



June 2015



Confirmation Sunday

On May 10, we celebrated the Confirmation of eight of our young people. It was a wonderful, joyous day.

At the end of their year, they were asked to write a letter to the Deacons, in which they shared their faith and beliefs. Here are some excerpts from those letters.

(You can also find copies of the Scripture Reflections they shared in worship throughout the winter/spring in a booklet at church.)



In their own words. . .



Cloe Bridge (Mentor: Mary Hanson)

Prayer has helped me through a lot, especially as I continue to get older and my life continues to become more hectic. I've often found myself praying for either guidance and help, or for other people. It's really nice to be able to have that connection with God, and be able to talk to God so personally. I often feel more reassured or less stressed or worried after praying, I think I'd find myself a lot more frazzled if I didn't have God to pray to.

Macie Bridge (Mentor: Bebe Goudey)

My baptism means a lot to me, as I believe with all of my heart in Jesus as our savior, God as our father, and the Holy Spirit. His death and resurrection gives me so much hope and faith in eternal life, and also in the forgiveness of our sins. Through confirmation, my faith in the Trinity has only been strengthened further, which I am surprised was even possible! I don't know how I would make it through some days without my faith in God, as my faith in Him is truly my rock.



Mitchell Townsend (Mentor: Tim Dumont)

To me, Jesus is someone whom I can, in a way, look up to. Often I find myself asking "What would Jesus do?" and by doing so it has influenced me to make good decisions. Jesus' death and resurrection reminds me of how I might make a bad decision, and go forward, recovering from the trust I might have broken.

Confirmation—In their own words(cont.)



Matt Carey (Mentor: Steve Legge)

My baptism shows that I am a Christian, and that I will follow Jesus wherever he leads me. ... The Bible is the greatest book that I read. That is no exaggeration. When I'm bored, and have no books to read, I sometimes turn to the Bible because it allows me to learn more about our faith. ... I see my confirmation as the beginning of my life as a Christian dedicated to the church and God.



Mary Cocossa (Mentor: Janet Kennedy)

Jesus has played an important role in my life. However, I believe he has played such a significant role in my life because he is a part of who God is, and God has played an even greater role in my life. I believe that God is the one who performs miracles, and provides us with love, but I think the way he did that and does that is through Jesus.

Alex Platt (Mentor: Bob Goudey)

In my life, Jesus is a teacher and guide. He is always with me to give me opportunities to learn, which I need to recognize and take advantage of. He is also there to guide and help me make the right decision when I am struggling. The Bible to me is the ultimate source of education. The Bible also helps me to understand how Jesus is teaching and guiding me. ... While I have never personally encountered God, I know that I will someday, and I know that He is still real.



Amy Sjoberg (Mentor: Connie Brown)

My baptism means acceptance into God's kingdom and the church community. ... I think that as a Christian we should love our God, praise him, but most of all do his work to proclaim his greatness to everyone. ... Jesus' death and resurrection mean life to me, and hope, and mostly it means God loves us more than we could ever imagine. ... This church is my "God club." Most people have a religion, but in church we bond over it, and form familial ties through his love. This church has been my safe haven for almost 16 years. It is as much a home to me as our house is.

Sammi Smith (Mentor: Bonnie Biocchi)

Jesus is also a huge comfort to me when I am feeling stressed or unhappy. The fact that Jesus died for all of us means a great deal to me as well, because it makes me feel like I should live and act like he wants me to. I can honestly say that being a Christian has made me a better person. From eye-opening mission trips to Sunday church services, I have been given so much perspective on life by being a Christian. I feel that it has made me a happier and kinder person.





Our Church Family



Ongoing Prayer List—Refreshed as of June 1

In order to keep our prayer list current and relevant, we have refreshed the list for June. Names added in May remain, and any other names requested to remain are here. As always, if you would like other names added, please email Carol Zaiatz (unioncc@uccgroton.org) with the person's name and the prayer request, or contact Gail Miller directly (gail@uccgroton.org). Thank you.

(The names below are prayed out loud at Open Sanctuary Time each Wednesday.)

Jimmy Breault
Emma Deering

Jonathan Greenleaf

Priscilla Simmons

Joe Swales



June Anniversaries

- **Erica and Drew Davenport**, celebrating 45 years on June 7.
- **Peg and The Reverend Skip Lloyd**, celebrating 40 years on June 26.

Congratulations to the Davenports and the Lloyds!

Good-bye Hasi, Liz and Evan

June 14 in Worship

Hasi, Liz and Evan are relocating to Swampscott (job change for Evan) this summer. While we rejoice with them at this new opportunity, we are sad to see them go. We have known Hasi since she was three years old!

As a remembrance for them and for us, we have made two weavings of silk sari fabric with messages from the children of the church in them—one for them to take as they go and one for us to keep. Join us on June 14 when we present them with their gift and say good-bye.

June Birthdays

Bill Gale, Sr.	06/01	Gregory Poser	06/13	Kim Peters	06/25
Liam Clinton	06/01	Kathy Bates	06/14	Ruth Silva	06/25
Gerry Cahill	06/05	Mary Cocossa	06/18	Isabella Meehan	06/27
Barbara Avey	06/07	Daniel De Binder	06/21	Emily Scheve	06/27
Peg Elwood	06/09	Liz Smith	06/21	Bill Semienko	06/28
Conor Bresnahan	06/09	Carol Zaiatz	06/24	Edward Stratton	06/28
Caroline Cocossa	06/09	Jenn Quinn	06/24	Bill Nickerson	06/29
Haley Cahill	06/10	Cailidh Houde	06/24		
Sammi Smith	06/11	Alison Houde	06/24		
Amy Nickerson	06/13	Kim Burgess	06/25		

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?



2015 Graduates

Have you or your son/daughter just graduated from High School/College/Graduate School? If so, we would love to include this in our summer newsletter, which comes out in July. If you would like to be included, please send Carol Zaiatz (unioncc@uccgroton.org) the following information:

- Name of student
- Graduating from (high school or college/university name & degree)
- What's next? (high school grads: college, technical school, military service, work, adventure?) (college grads: work, military service, grad school, adventure?) (graduate school grads: work, military service, more school, adventure?)

We are eager to share this milestone in your life with the whole church. Thank you.

Church News



Summer Worship starts on Sunday, June 21 Worship will Remain at 10:00 a.m.

To make it easier for those who find it difficult to worship at 9:00 a.m. (in past years we've moved summer worship an hour earlier), the Deacons have decided to keep worship at 10:00 a.m. this summer. Many have shared that, with the longer summer days, keeping worship at 10:00 a.m. would make them more likely to come. Others also spoke about the more relaxed pace to the summer and how hurrying out to an earlier worship time was hard for them. Some 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. We hope that keeping worship at 10:00 a.m. will make it easier for more people to worship through the summer months.

Summer Worship — Feedback Reflection Circle Sunday, August 30 after worship

We will be looking for your feedback on summer worship this year. We are interested in your thoughts and suggestions, so we hope you will plan on joining us.

—PPRC (Bebe Goudey, Erica Davenport, Jeff Kubick)



Summer Worship: Something for the Children

This summer our Nursery Attendant, Bitia Reilley, will lead/supervise an activity for children in the Fellowship Hall during worship each week. Bitia is a preschool teacher at the Goddard School in Westford and is looking forward to getting to know our younger elementary aged children.



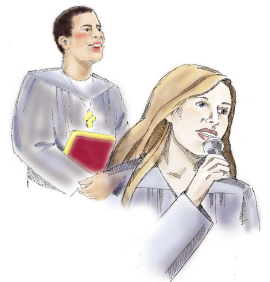
Summer Musicians

Summer Musicians Needed!

We begin our Summer Music Schedule on June 21, and so we are looking for musicians from the congregation to provide music for each of the 12 weeks of summer.

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 at some point.



Summer Coffee Hour

Summer Coffee Hour begins June 21 with an ice cream social!

With the warmer weather, we'll switch to a relaxed mode for Fellowship Hour. Hot coffee will be supplemented by cold beverages and lighter fare. Weather permitting, we'll set up on the front lawn to enjoy fresh air while the children play in the front yard. Join us! Helpers are needed — you can bring fruit, cheese or snacks of any kind. Thank you!

Questions? See Joel Hughes, Mark Rzeznikiewicz, Bonnie Martin, Irene Katrouba, Ruth Silva, Bonnie Biocchi, Janet Carey or Sara Zambuto.

Church News (cont.)



May 26 Meeting Summary

At the end of the summer, there will be a Feedback session on the subject of summer worship, including keeping the time at 10:00 a.m. (see p. 4)

Committees will be planning events for the congregation to be involved. From the church inventory survey, it was found that there is a desire to have more opportunities to serve in missions and learn/study/grow in faith. More details are expected by the fall.

The budget is on target — income and expenses are as expected.

The Stated Meeting will be on June 14.



Annual Stated Meeting of the Congregation Sunday, June 14, after worship

Please join us at this all-church meeting in the sanctuary after worship. While we do not have any pressing business to be acted on at this time, we will hear reports from Finance, Endowment and GPS. All are invited. See or email Stefanie Lempp () if you have any questions.



Mid-Summer Courier The “Mid-Summer Courier” will be mailed the beginning of July and will include information for **July and August**. Please email (unioncc@uccgroton.org) your information by **Monday, June 15**; and remember to include anything that needs to be known for early September.

And a special treat...



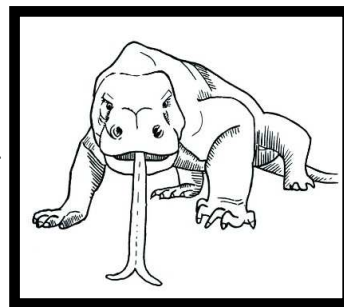
Borobudur

Marvin Caldwell's World Travel Show 'n' Tell Wednesday, June 10

7:00-8:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall

Marvin and her friend Carol Hess will share tales of their *Voyage of a Lifetime*. Come hear about their encounters with people and cultures very different from our own, and how they experienced God's presence everywhere — tropical islands, deadly Komodo dragons, tea and rubber plantations, a mosque, Buddhist

and Hindu temples, and lots of churches. Come hear about their wanderings to the top of Gibraltar, Pompeii, and Rome on Palm Sunday; and their celebration of Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday on board the ship with Father Lou and Pastor Al and a Jewish Seder with the rabbi. We hope you will join us!





Teacher Appreciation Sunday June 14 during Worship

In 2014-2015, 30 people volunteered their time to make our Sunday School classes possible. Some are long-time participants, while others taught or helped for the first time. Together, they taught approximately 130 classes to approximately 40 children during the course of the year! In their honor, we have purchased and inscribed children's Bibles and Christian children's books to go in the Sunday School classrooms. On **June 14** we will acknowledge our Sunday School Teachers in worship. Sharing the Word of God with our children is such a joy!

Christian Education Committee

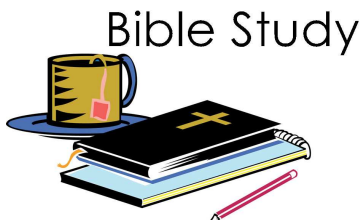
—Anne Cahill, Chair
—Diane Landry

—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

With the celebration of Pentecost Sunday last month, join us for a study of the Holy Spirit. We begin by examining scripture from the gospel of John and the first two chapters of Acts. The focus is on the teachings of Jesus about and the promise of the Holy Spirit. No expertise needed as we read and discuss the lesson together. *Contact: Janet Kennedy*

Thursday Morning Bible Study 10:00 a.m.

Countdown to Summer begins. Bible Study plans to continue our fruitful conversations on lectionary readings for the coming Sundays. After June 18, we will break for the summer. Summer reading will be John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* in preparation for a deeper involvement in this valuable reflection on the Christian life. Contact Erica Davenport (978-597-8918 or erica@dedavenport.net) to let her know if you would like her to order a copy for you. Join us for meaningful conversations, tea and coffee, and cookies too. *Contact: Marvin Caldwell ()*



When We Need God's Love Most

When do we need God's love most? Of course, we need that love every second of our lives. But at times God's love is especially precious to us, times when:

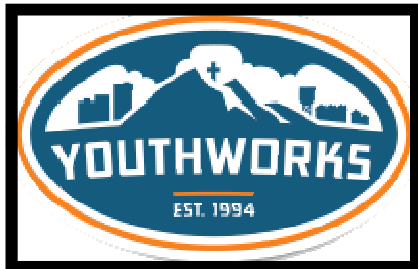
- we lose a loved one;
- life becomes so confusing that we do not know where to turn; or
- life just becomes meaningless and depression sets in.

At times like these it is very important to have someone who cares. Our congregation has trained seven lay people (four women, three men), Stephen Ministers, who offer a confidential ministry of Christian caring at Union Congregational Church. If you have questions, please ask Pastor Gail Miller or Andrea McDonough, Stephen Leader ().

Youth Mission Trip

June 20—June 29

Pine Ridge, South Dakota



Please hold these kids in your prayers and offer your gratitude to the adults who are serving as their advisors. How blessed we are to have this opportunity, and so many who said “yes” to God’s call on their lives to serve in this manner.

Youth

Arianna Barker
Matt Carey
Michaela Estes
Danika Manalo
Alex Platt
Amy Sjoberg
Izzy Smith
Olivia Straw

Arianna Boucher
Mary Cocossa
Ben Gambuzza
Lean Pezanowski
Kathryn Preston
Casey Sjoberg
Sammi Smith

Advisors: Stefanie Lempp, Gail Miller, Halsey Platt

Important Mission Trip dates:

Sunday, June 7	6:30—8:00 p.m. — Parents and Youth Information Meeting
Sunday, June 14	9:00 a.m. Worship—Commissioning Prayer in Church and Departure
Saturday, June 20	12:30 p.m. Departure — All are invited to “pray us off” and wave goodbye

Missions

Teen Challenge

Sunday, June 7, during Worship

We will welcome men from *Teen Challenge* Manchester to lead in worship, as they share in words and song how Christ has impacted their lives in their recovery from 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. Please join us after worship for a light lunch and an opportunity to talk with our guests.



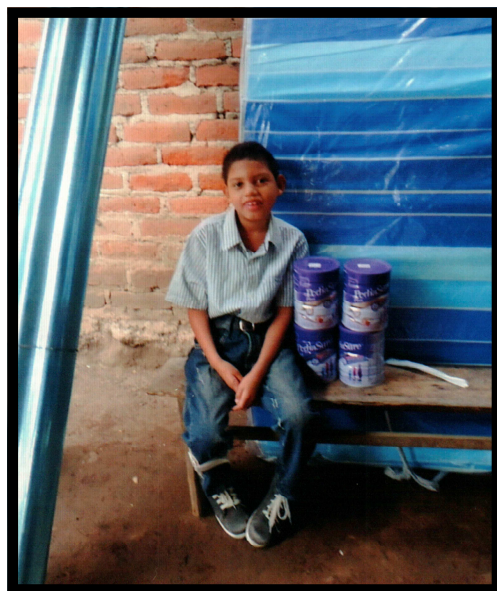
Backpack Assembly

Sunday, June 14

After worship, during the Congregational Meeting, the children are invited to help assemble the supplies into the backpacks for Loaves & Fishes. Many thanks to Anne Larsen for leading this effort.

Youth Mission Trip

The committee wants to wish our Youth Mission Trip missionaries safe travels and a rewarding experience on their Mission Trip to South Dakota to serve people living on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.



Unbound and Carlos

Have you met Carlos? He's nine years old and lives in El Salvador. We sponsor him through *Unbound*, an organization that is dedicated to confronting poverty. As stated on their website, "Poverty isn't just about lack of money—it's about lack of choices. We've found that families make good choices when they have support and encouragement. They invest in the education of their children. They develop livelihoods and become active community participants in the spirit of true sustainability." Sponsorship is \$30 per month with additional contribution to the Birthday and Christmas fund. In 2014 our congregation donated another \$233 through our Christmas Angel Fund, which his family used to cover expenses for a new mattress for his bed, metal sheets to fix the roof of his home, and several cans of PediaSure. To quote from the most recent letter we received from his mother concerning Carlos' progress, as he is disabled, "Thank you for everything you do for my baby. I want you to know that we always pray for you. God bless you." The entire letter and his photo are posted on our bulletin board in the back of Fellowship Hall.



Nepal Earthquake Relief

On behalf of the congregation a donation of \$1,000 was made to the relief effort Church World Service is providing to the earthquake victims in Nepal. If you'd like to contribute visit: <http://www.cwsglobal.org>

Missions Committee

—Janet Kennedy, Chair
—Julie Platt

—Brenda Barker
—Pete Hnath

—Halsey Platt

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

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.

Summer Office Hours (starting 6/22)

Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday

8:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

(Church Office is closed Saturday—Monday)

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

June Deacons

Andrea McDonough/Brenda Semienko

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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June Highlights

Sunday, June 7 — Teen Challenge (see p. 8)

Worship and Holy Communion

Sunday, June 14

Handbells in worship

Sunday School Teacher Appreciation

Goodbye to Hasi, Liz and Evan

Youth Mission Trip Commissioning (see p. 7)

Annual Stated Meeting after worship (see p. 4)

Children assemble backpacks for *Loaves & Fishes* (see p. 8)

Saturday, June 20 — Youth Mission Trip

Departs for Pine Ridge, South Dakota

All are invited to "pray us off" and wave goodbye! (see p. 7)



Sunday, June 21 10:00 a.m. (time remains the same)

Summer Worship Begins!

Children's Activities with Bitá in Fellowship Hall (see p. 4)

Ice Cream Social after Worship