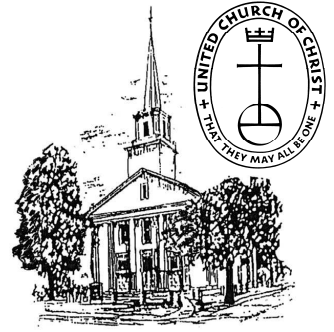


THE UNION COURIER

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

220 Main Street
Groton, Massachusetts 01450



February 2016

A Message from FaST

Your **Facilities Steering Team (FaST)** has accomplished a lot in the few weeks they've been at work. Our purpose is to oversee the different parts and pieces of our potential building project, tending to details while making sure we stay focused on our mission: *Sharing Christ~Changing Lives*.

We began with **visits to three churches** (of similar size to ours) that have been through building projects in recent years. There are a couple more churches we want to get to as well.

We **met with two realtors** to assess the Parish House and learn how it can best serve us should we decide to sell it.

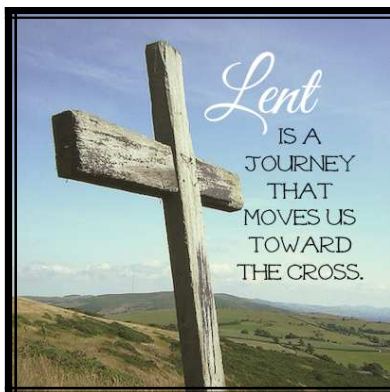
We also **met with two architects** (and are planning to meet with at least one more) who are both enthusiastic about working with us. Eventually we will choose one with which to pursue master planning.

And lastly we **met with about 50 of you** after worship in January in three separate focus groups to "dream big" and to hear your thoughts about what is or is not important to you in a building project. The one thing that was consistent from all three groups was a sense that we are willing to let go of the Parish House in service of a single building on the church building land (and as an income source for funding the project).

Next steps for us are meeting with a third architect and obtaining costs for master planning from all three, visiting a couple more churches (including First Parish up the street), developing a schedule of visits with the different "departments" in the church to continue the conversations around what we will want in a new / renovated building.

If you were unable to attend the January conversation, please contact one of us with your thoughts (even better if you can put it in an email). We are keeping a real-time document with updates after each significant meeting we have. The link is in the weekly email, and we will have printed copies in the back of the Sanctuary.

Your FaST: Stefanie Lempp, Julie Platt, Pete Hnath, Gail Miller, Tim Dumont (with us in spirit for now)



Lenten Preaching Series – Giving Up for Lent...

February 14: Giving up Control
February 21: Giving up Expectations
February 28: Giving up Superiority
March 6: Giving up Enemies
March 13: Giving up Our Lives
March 20: Giving up Popularity (Palm Sunday)
March 27: Giving up Death (Easter Sunday)



Our Church Family



Ongoing Prayer List

Beverly
Harold Gould

Alex Haas
G. Keith

Joe Swales
The Vincent Family

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

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 () 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.



- Erica Davenport, having knee replacement surgery February 9.
- Tim Dumont, facing multiple health issues.
- Izzy Smith, recovering from a medical procedure

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)! If everyone participates, this will add up to a significant amount. The Please participate and watch our gifts grow!



A Wedding Invitation

*You are invited to the
Wedding Ceremony of*

*Charlene Kelly
and
Steve Legge*

*Sunday, March 13, 2:00 p.m.
in our Sanctuary
Social Gathering to follow
in the Fellowship Hall*



February Birthdays

Tony DiCenzo	02/01	Charlene Kelly	02/14	Lily Burgess	02/23
Ryan Carey	02/02	Brian Milner	02/17	Dylan Hughes	02/24
Mark DeBinder, Jr.	02/04	Arianna Boucher	02/19	Arianna Barker	02/25
Carl Haas	02/04	Steve Flynn	02/21	Tommy Wickham	02/27
Rebecca Brennan	02/06	Tom Wickham	02/22	Matt Hecht	02/27
Henry Richardson-Irvin	02/07	Charlotte LaGasse	02/22		
Jon Morgan	02/07	Clarissa LaGasse	02/22		
Ben Gambuzza	02/13	Chloe York	02/22		

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



Annual Meeting

Sunday, February 7, After Worship

All are encouraged to attend (especially church members)! We will approve nominations for Committees and Ministries (including formally removing the Flower Ministry as its functions have been assumed by the Deacons, Carol, Tom and other volunteers in the church), and approve the Final 2016 Operating Budget. We will also hear reports from the Endowment Committee, GPS, and discuss any other business that may come before us.

—Stefanie Lempp, Moderator

Church Council Meeting Summary January 13

The FaST (Facilities Steering Team) has contacted realtors (to assess our property values), architects (preliminary discussions), visited other churches (to discuss their building renovation journey) and scheduled an open meeting in January. If you did not attend the meeting or you have more thoughts and ideas, please contact a member of FaST (Tim Dumont, Pete Hnath, Stefanie Lempp, Gail Miller, Julie Platt)

The Harvest Fair proceeds will benefit a mission that the Mission Committee will choose.



Coming later in February...

A New Way of Making Regular Offerings

Union Congregational Church is pleased to announce the introduction of an electronic option for making regular offerings. Contributions will be able to be debited automatically from your checking/savings account or processed using your debit/credit card. Our new electronic giving program will offer convenience for you and donation consistency for our congregation. Stay tuned! More details to follow in the February bulletin announcements and emails!

Sunday Worship in the Event of a Storm

If weather should impede your ability to get to church, know that you are freely released from any responsibilities you had — whether for Sunday School, Choir, worship leading, Fellowship Hour. We will worship as we can with whomever we've got — adjusting the service accordingly and making decisions in real time. If church is cancelled, it will be posted on our website by 8:00 a.m. that morning.

Christina Williams

Christina Williams, who was our Sabbatical Pastor while Gail was away in 2014, has received her first call to serve as the settled pastor at First Congregational Church of Hadley, MA. Her ordination date is April 17 at 3:00 p.m. at First Parish Church United in Westford.

March Courier Please submit items for the March Courier by Wednesday, February 17, 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.

Ash Wednesday

Sunday School

Ash Wednesday



Begins...

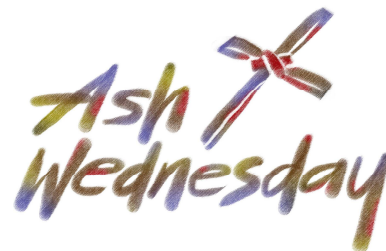
Ash Wednesday, February 10

Dinner and Worship

6:30 p.m.: Simple Soup Supper

7:15 p.m.: Brief Worship Service/Communion

Let's begin our Lenten journey together. If you can't make it for dinner, come at 7:15 p.m. for worship. Families with children are encouraged to attend. (You'll be home by 8:00 p.m.) **If you are coming for dinner, please R.S.V.P.** to the church office (978-448-2091 or unioncc@uccgroton.org) or on the sign-up sheet by the coffee on Sunday mornings.



Sunday School



Teachers Needed

Please consider helping to teach our children about God's love. There are a number of Sundays available. Please sign up on the white-board in the hallway downstairs or email Carol Zaiatz in the Church Office (unioncc@uccgroton.org) and she will put you on the list. Thank you for helping to teach our children about the Christian faith.

Christian Education Committee

—Anne Cahill, Chair
—Diane Landry

—Jean Armstrong
—Krista Kubick

—Kelli Hnath
—Anne Larsen

Bible Study / Super Saturday / Craft Fair / GPS



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

The Christian Community Comes Alive is a study on the *Acts of the Apostles*. The second unit, "Giving Bold Testimony," continues the theme that the church is called to be a community of witnesses through Saul and Peter. They shared the good news with Gentiles and believers, growing and broadening the community among those who followed "the Way." *Contact Janet Kennedy if you are interested in attending.*

Thursday Morning Bible Study 10:00 a.m.

We continue with the Gospel of Mark. Mark has been described as a passionate Passion story with a long introduction. Mark crafts his stories so they inform and augment each other adding layers of meaning. Join us for spirited discussions leavened with laughter and profound insights, and for tea, coffee and cookies. *Contact Marvin Caldwell ()*

UCC Conference Super Saturday



Super Saturday!

March 12, 2016

Killingly High School (266 Putnam Pike, Killingly, CT)

8:00 a.m.—3:30 p.m.

Each spring and fall since 2010, our sister Conference in Massachusetts has held a Super Saturday event — a day for leadership development. Workshops for skill building, opportunities to network and share best practices are offered in this popular event. This year, The Reverend Traci Blackmon — Community Leader, Civil Rights Activist and Pastor of Christ the King UCC in Florissant, Missouri — is the Keynote Speaker for this day of worship, workshops, and networking for lay and clergy leaders from across Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. Join us for a great day of learning and leadership. **Cost:** \$54.00 Per Person or \$44.00 Per Person in Groups of five or more from a church.

For more information or to register: <http://www.ctucc.org/supersaturday/>

Annual Spring Artisan Craft Fair

Saturday, April 30
10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

Our Spring Artisan Craft Fair is later than usual this year due to the church being used. Joel Hughes will be looking for a kitchen crew.

Look for more information in the March Courier.

Contact Bonnie Martin if you can help

GPS—God's Purpose Seekers

Sharing Christ~Changing Lives

Creating a Christian foundation for families
Learning more about Jesus
Living our faith beyond our walls

Having identified these three primary ways we live out our mission and purpose, and having recommended the launch of the Facilities Steering Team (FaST), the GPS Task Force is considering any further recommendations that will continue the movement and momentum we are experiencing these days. They are meeting less frequently, as they are all serving on other committees at this point! We anticipate that they will conclude their official work in the months to come.
(Bonnie Biocchi, Tim Dumont, Mary Hanson, Pete Hnath, Stefanie Lempp, Gail Miller, Halsey Platt, Larry Robinson)

Missions

Groton Community Dinner *at the First Parish Church*

Friday, February 26 — Our Turn to Serve

The menu is Chicken Pot Pie...filling only, Tofu Pot Pie...filling only, and Gingerbread. If you are interested in helping with set-up, clean-up, serving, or cooking sign-up at the Missions table in Fellowship Hall. (This dinner is the only one that our Church will be responsible for organizing this year.) If you have any questions, contact anyone from the Missions Committee.

Hagar's Sisters

A member of the staff from *Hagar's Sisters*, which provides domestic violence education and support within the context of a woman's spiritual beliefs, has been invited to attend an upcoming Missions Committee meeting to explore ways to deepen our relationship. In addition to the financial support we've given to Hagar's Sisters, we purchased and donated groceries for their annual Christmas Party.

Thank you from *CityReach/Common Cathedral*

...an outdoor church for people experiencing homelessness, and their friends

We received a warm thank you from the staff at *Common Cathedral* that included some snapshots from their Christmas Party, which was funded in part by the monies raised and donated from our Harvest Fair. Over 100 people attended the event that included eating, singing Christmas carols, and making snowflakes. One of the highlights was a gift table that included hats, mittens, reading glasses, duct tape, and crossword puzzles. Each guest chose two gifts. The staff was also able to purchase more cross necklaces that are given to members of the homeless community and volunteers.



More Thanks

Stop by the Missions Bulletin Board in Fellowship Hall to read the "Thank You" notes we've received from *Common Cathedral*, *Loaves & Fishes*, *Teen Challenge*, and *PACH*. Please lift up the work of these organizations and the people they serve in your prayers.

Missions Committee

—Janet Kennedy, Chair
—Julie Platt

—Brenda Barker
—Pete Hnath

—Halsey Platt

Middle School Ministry

Winter Retreat

February 26-28

North Conway, NH

Meet at church 5:00 p.m. Friday

Return by 3:00 p.m. Sunday



Lodging: A Retreat House in North Conway, NH

Cost: \$125/person (covers food and lodging)

Activities at Mt. Cranmore: Extra - though most are approx. \$50

Saturday activity choices include: Skiing, Tubing, Mountain Coaster, Zipline...

(Visit the Mt. Cranmore website to see choices/costs)

We have room for 15 kids. Your check for \$125 (to UCCG, memo: Winter Retreat) reserves your son/daughter's spot.

Questions: Contact Gail at church

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 and Thursday: 9:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.

Wednesday: 2:00—5:00 p.m.

Friday: 9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

Carol Zaiatz—Office Administrator

unioncc@uccgroton.org

Tuesday—Friday

8:30 a.m.—3:00 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

February Deacons

Steve Legge/Paul Brown

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

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February Highlights

- ♦ **Sunday, February 7**
Annual Meeting of the Congregation after worship (see p. 3)
- ♦ **Wednesday, February 10—Lent Begins!**
Simple Soup Supper and Ash Wednesday Worship (see p. 4)
- ♦ **Sunday, February 21—New Members Class**
After worship (11:30—1:00) in the Parlor
As soon as coffee hour winds down, we will gather with Pastor Miller and a couple of Deacons to talk about the Christian faith, the church, and our church. Attending this in no way obligates you to become a formal member. Please RSVP to the church office (978-448-2091 or unioncc@uccgroton.org).