

THE UNION COURIER

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

220 Main Street
Groton, Massachusetts 01450



March 2016



The story goes:

One December afternoon, a group of parents stood in the lobby of a nursery school waiting to pick up their children after the last day before Christmas break. As the youngsters ran from their cubbies, each one carried in his / her hands the "surprise," the brightly wrapped package on which the class had been working for weeks.

One small boy, trying to run, put on his coat and wave to his parents all at the same time, slipped and fell. The "surprise" flew from his grasp and landed on the tile floor with an obvious ceramic crash. The child's first reaction was one of stunned silence. But then he began to wail inconsolably. A friend trying to make him feel better, said, "It's alright — it really doesn't matter." But the boy's mother dropped to her knees, swept the boy into her arms and said, "Oh, but it does matter. It matters a great deal." And she wept with her son.

It matters a great deal indeed. And even more — YOU matter a great deal. In fact, that's probably a truer sentiment for Christians. The thing that goes crash, what makes us weep, matters only in that it is happening to us, or to any human being.

And like the compassionate mother in our story, God too comes to us, sweeps us into His arms and weeps with us. Nowhere in the Bible does it say "God does not give us more than we can handle." Sometimes life IS more than we can handle! Perhaps what is true in that cliché is the "God does not give...." part. Because when the stresses are mounting, and the crash comes, it is NOT God's doing. We are not pieces in a grand monopoly game that God is playing with the angels.

Jesus — God Himself — came to Earth — became human — so that we can know the outpouring of God's heart in love toward us and all people. What's going on in the world matters to God. What's going on in our families matters to God. What's going on in our schools and where we work matters to God. What's going on in politics matters to God. You matter to God, and you, and you, and you, and him, and her, and them, and.... everyone.

As we approach Holy Week and Easter, have an honest moment (or two or three) with God; put words to your fears and then consider that Christ didn't just die, but died and was raised in order to provide hope and a way forward for you and for us all. Seek HIS heart and mind and spirit in all situations, and see if you don't experience your own resurrection!

With you on the journey,





Our Church Family



Ongoing Prayer List

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

Beverly
Harold Gould
Alex Haas

G. Keith
Holly Norton

Karen Sands
Rudi Schmid

The Vincent Family
Liz Waggoner
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.

Thank You from Erica Davenport

I would like to thank everyone for their warm thoughts, prayers, cards, calls, and flowers. It warmed my heart to know that so many of you were thinking of me. Recovery is going very well, and I hope to be back in church soon.

Peace,
Erica



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.



- The Cahill Family, in the suicidal death of their nephew/cousin Dexter Desrosiers
- Erica Davenport, recovering from knee replacement surgery
- Peg Lloyd, recovering from knee replacement surgery
- Nevan and Rylan Rosenfeld, health issues

March Birthdays

Jim Brennan	03/03
Jim Daly	03/03
Christina Daly	03/06
Timothy Dumont	03/07
Mike Fortier	03/07
Janet Goudey	03/09
Kaleb Larsen	03/11
Sophia Smith	03/12
Leslie Row	03/13
Alyssa Hecht	03/13
Emma Nickerson	03/14

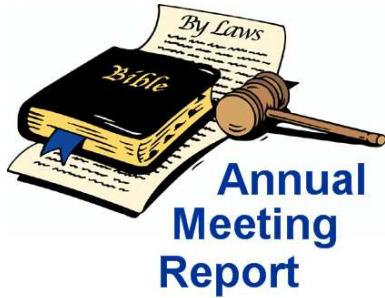


Craig Smith	03/18
Bridget Fortier	03/19
Tyler Milner	03/19
Sheila Mitchell	03/21
Dominique Larkin	03/25
Jackson Fraser	03/26
John Brooks, Jr.	03/26
Bob Huguenin	03/26
Bonnie Biocchi	03/28
Dana Bresnahan	03/28

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

Church News



Annual Meeting February 7, 2016

The 2016 budget was approved. It is basically the same as the 2015 budget with the following exceptions:

- Salaries went up as we endeavor to raise them to where they should be
- B&G's budget is lower due to lower liability insurance costs
- Missions and our giving to the UCC are % driven so they are up
- The Harvest Fair is a pass-through account and not needed to balance the budget

The Flower Ministry has been dissolved. The duties have been taken over by the church secretary, the Diaconate and the sexton.

Endowments have a net annual return of 5.32% since 2013. There will be a 2% distribution this year which, when combined with unspent distributions from prior years, comes to about \$23K.

The GPS (God's Purpose Seekers) have assembled the FaST Team (see next paragraph). They feel that their work is nearly complete and expect to go to Church Council in the spring with final recommendations and next steps.

The FaST Team has met with architects and realtors, toured other churches that have had renovations in the last 3-5 years, and met with the congregation to ask for their thoughts and ideas in the Dream Big conversation. Accessibility is the big primary issue. The FaST Team is still open to comments, so please email them. In the weekly email from the church office there is a button that gives the latest progress of the team.

Church Council Meeting Summary February 24

Online giving is up and running (see below); information will also be in the Sunday bulletin and weekly email.

FaST has met with three architects and will be choosing one; the architect will help produce a Master Plan (which may cost over \$10K). FaST will be meeting with all the groups inside the church to hear their needs. Everyone is encouraged to contact FaST members with questions and concerns. Once the Master Plan is approved by the congregation, we will move into the Capital Campaign phase.

GPS will be morphing from a task force into a permanent group. The conversation and visioning of God's purpose for our church should and will be ongoing.

The new stove and hood will be installed as soon as installation experts can be scheduled.



Online Giving

This is a simple way for you to arrange for the direct deduction of your offering and special gifts from your checking, savings, credit or debit card accounts, in one simple session via any device with an Internet connection. **For more information go to our website (www.uccgroton.org) and click on the "Giving" box on the left side.** You can donate to the church, the 4 UCC Special Mission Offerings (*One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen The Church, Neighbors in Need* and the *Christmas Fund*), Youth Mission Trip and the Birthday Fund. *Contact: Bob Goudey (*

April Courier Please email all submissions for the April Courier by Tuesday, March 15 (unioncc@uccgroton.org). Thank you.

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

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

Acts of Worship, the current unit of study, explores the topic of worship as it pertains of the human response to God. The topic is broken down into three parts: "In Awe of God," "Learning to Pray," and "Stewardship for Life." In March we'll read scripture from Hebrews, Psalms, Luke, and Matthew, which explore the awesomeness of God. God's people respond with worship to the true miracle of Jesus and the gift of salvation. God is the rock of our salvation and is worthy of praise and worship. *Contact: Janet Kennedy*

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 (*

Sunday School Schedule



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

—Kelli Hnath

—Krista Kubick

Stephen Ministry / Wedding / Christiana Williams



Stephen Ministry Mental Illness

*Nothing you can see.
No cast or crutches, no injections.
But he is still sick...her behavior is strange and unpredictable.
Sometimes you worry if he/she might hurt himself/herself or someone else.
The constant tension is hard to live with.*



When one family member is mentally ill, the whole family suffers. By listening and helping you sort through your feelings, a Stephen Minister can provide the caring support to keep YOU going while you're keeping your family going.

To find out more about Stephen Ministry or to receive a Stephen Minister's care, call Pastor Gail or Andrea McDonough, the Stephen Leader for our church ()

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

A note from Charlene and Steve:

*No gifts necessary—your presence is your gift to us
as we celebrate our special day.*

An Ordination Invitation



First Parish Church United of Westford
cordially invites you to the

*Ordination of
Christina Rutter Williams*

Sunday, April 17, 2016 at 3PM

*A Celebration will follow in Fellowship Hall
Clergy are encouraged to robe*

**First Parish Church United
48 Main Street, Westford, MA**

RSVP by April 9, 2016 to crwilliams444@hotmail.com

Spring Craft Fair

11th Spring Artisan/Craft Fair
Saturday, April 30
10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.



Needed:

Kitchen: Joel Hughes (

as some folk to make muffins and soups.

Bake Table: Snacks and yummy desserts. All donations will be greatly appreciated! Please wrap and label for nuts.

Craft Table: Lois Berge (

) needs a kitchen crew and cashier, as well

) — always looking for new items!

Set-up Help Needed:

Sunday, April 24: After church, break-down the Nursery.

Wednesday, April 27, at 6:00 p.m.: Set-up the Fellowship Hall

Saturday, April 30, starting at 2:30 p.m.: Break-down the fair and rebuild the nursery

Come shop for Mother's Day, birthdays, weddings, yourself! All "Made in America"!

Contact: Bonnie Martin (

)

Fall Harvest Fair



Mark Your Calendar!

Harvest Fair

October 1, 10:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

This year we will once again be donating all the profits to charity! How wonderful to be able to share the blessings in our lives with others. And because this is all for charity, we can have a more joyful day knowing that we are living our faith and sharing Christ with our community!

Help make the fair a memorable day again this year. We hope to have books, children's clothing, the kids fair, the moon bounce, the grill outside and inside we'll have the bake table, craft tables, and the kitchen.

But we're also looking for ideas to freshen up the fair this year. Perhaps some live entertainment? Perhaps a best in town chili competition? Let's hear those ideas!! Contact: Mary Hanson (

) with any ideas you might have to make this the best fair ever!

Missions

One Great Hour of Sharing Offering **March 6 and 13**

This is one of four special mission offerings of the United Church of Christ that we collect, providing hope to people in more than 80 countries. The UCC works with international partners to provide support for health, education, refugee, agricultural and emergency relief initiatives. Look for the inserts in your Sunday bulletins or the special offering envelope in your Weekly Offering packet.



Youth Mission Trip Fundraiser

Church Supper

Sunday Evening, March 20

5:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall

Menu: Pasta and Sauce, Garlic Bread, Salad, Dessert

Free-will Donations in support of the Youth Mission Trip will be received.

This June, 22 youth and 6 adults will travel to Queens, New York. They will serve the community in a variety of ways: working with children, the elderly, and painting/repairing local homes, while getting to know the people they are serving. Please, come support our teens as they grow in faith and in service.

Middle School Youth Group

All 5th—8th graders are invited to fun and fellowship — held in the Fellowship Hall at church.



Sunday, April 10

4:00 p.m. Youth Group Meeting

5:30 p.m. Family Dinner

Sunday, May 15

4:00 p.m. Youth Group Meeting

5:30 p.m. Family Dinner

Contacts: Jean Armstrong (), Janet Carey (), Mary Hanson (), or Pastor Miller (978-448-2091)

Adult Education—Sticky Faith



Parenting Discussion Night

Sunday, March 6, 4:30—6:00 p.m.

Hnath House (155 Indian Hill Road, Groton)

This is an opportunity for those who attended the fall *Sticky Faith* class to get together again — and for anyone else who is interested — to gather for an evening of support, conversation and prayer. We will also discuss a format and schedule for future gatherings - bring your calendars. Please feel free to join us! **RSVP/Questions:** Kelly Hnath ().



Daylight Savings Starts Sunday, March 13

Remember to set your clocks ahead one hour Saturday night!

Easter Plant Order Form

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



2016 Easter Plants Order Form

Easter Sunday is March 27!

An assortment of Lilies, Daffodils, Hyacinths and Tulips
will be placed in the Sanctuary

FORM DUE BY: Sunday, March 20

Please return this form and a check made out to UCC (memo: Easter Flowers) to the Church Office:

Carol Zaiatz
Union Congregational Church
220 Main Street
Groton, MA 01450

You are welcome to take your plant(s) home after worship Easter Sunday (March 27 or plants will be delivered 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) _____

Qty. Ordered	Flower	Cost	Total
_____	Double Stem Lily	\$15.00	\$ _____
_____	6" Potted Daffodils, Hyacinths or Tulips	\$ 8.00	\$ _____
Total Order			\$ _____

For the bulletin insert:

Plant is Given by: _____

In Loving Memory of: _____

In Honor/Celebration of: _____



If you have any further questions, please contact Carol Zaiatz (978-448-2091 or unioncc@uccgroton.org). We appreciate your help decorating the Sanctuary! Thank you very much and may you have a Blessed Easter!



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

March Deacons

Greg Balligan/Holly Haase

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 and give dates/times to Carol so she can input them into the calendar.

Sermons: Copies of Pastor Miller's sermons are available on the website.

Weekly News Email: We now send this email through MailChimp.

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 Contacts

Buildings & Grounds Committee:

John Brooks

Barb Lefebvre

Christian Education Committee:

Anne Cahill

Church Council Member-at-Large:

Pat Woods

Diaconate Committee:

Greg Balligan

Steve Legge

Endowment Committee:

Mary Hanson

Missions Committee:

Julie Platt

Pastor Parish Relations Committee:

Bebe Goudey

Stewardship & Finance Committee:

Liz McQuillin

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

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March Highlights

Sunday, March 13 at 10:00 a.m.

Worship and Sunday School

2:00 p.m.—Charlene Kelly and Steve Legge's Wedding! (see p. 5)



Palm Sunday

Sunday, March 20 at 10:00 a.m.

Palm Sunday Worship

Palms will be handed out
Senior and Junior Choirs



"Given for you..."

Thursday, March 24 at 7:30 p.m.

Maundy Thursday/Tenebrae Worship

Holy Communion and the Extinguishing of the Light



Holy Week

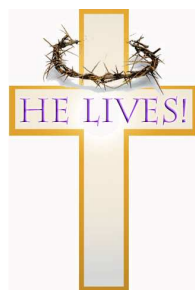
March 25 at 12:30 p.m.

Good Friday

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



GOOD FRIDAY



HE LIVES!



Easter Sunday

Sunday, March 27 at 10:00 a.m.

Easter Worship

Senior, Junior, and Cherub Choirs sing
Handbell Choir and Trumpet
Holy Communion will be served.