

THE UNION COURIER

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

220 Main Street
Groton, Massachusetts 01450



September 2016

FROM THE



PASTOR

This week, I went to the big white board in our kitchen where we keep a weekly schedule of Sophia's schedule on one half, and our family to-do list on the other half. The family side contains items like the BJ's shopping list, reminders to pick up meds at CVS or mow the lawn; as well as longer range things like "finish rebuilding the porch" and "clean up the basement." We've been known to have items linger there for years even! And then there are times when we are inspired (motivated?) to get to it and we are erasing items regularly.

All three of us in our family are list-makers, and so the kitchen white board is an important feature in our house and our daily lives!

Well, this week, I decided to "wipe the slate clean"! A couple of items had been there since spring of 2014, so I declared them to have "expired," and the rest of it was for the most part specific to the summer, so I got out the Clorox wipe (a dry erase eraser won't do it for this kind of cleaning...) and with great satisfaction.... back and forth, up and down... and voila! Then I declared to Mike, "Look! We have a blank slate!"



How true this is — in more ways than one! Every day, we have a blank slate with God. He doesn't remember the snippy way we spoke to our kids yesterday, or the secret desire we hold for our co-worker to not do so well so we can rise in the eyes of the boss, or the little piece of information we passed along that we "heard" from someone else, or the resentment we hold onto from years ago that has grown into a wedge, or.....

God doesn't wait until we get our act together or our white boards empty to declare his unconditional love for us in Christ. No! It is yours to claim and receive no matter how messy your kitchen white board. You do not earn this kind of love, but you do have to receive it. So take a few minutes to stop, look at where you are and where you need to go, and recommit to walking in the love of Christ each step of the way. And if you need a visual reminder of this powerful truth, go ahead and clean off the white board too.

Gail



Your FaST team has slowed to a more manageable pace over the summer, as we continue to refine the size and scope of the proposed building addition. We have also stretched the timeline

out such that we will not be ready for formal Congregational approval in October (as initially suggested). We do plan to begin sharing the details of the project in one-on-one conversations and small groups over the next weeks. If you would like a personal visit from a couple members of the FaST team, do not hesitate to contact one of us. (*Bernard Crane, Tim Dumont, Pete Hnath, Stefanie Lempp, Julie Platt, Gail Miller*)



Our Church Family/Church News



Ongoing Prayer List

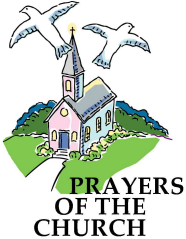
Anna Bicchì
Norm Boucher
Rosemarie Bradley

Vic Bunish
Sally Mayo DeWinkleer
Eva Facchini

Harold Gould
Liz Lienhard
Joe Swales

The Vincent Family
Shirley Wishart
Zachery & Family

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.



- Shirley Wishart, undergoing extensive treatment for cancer (wishart40@aol.com; mailing address: 1917 Pinionwood, NW, Albuquerque, NM 87120).
- The victims of the Louisiana flooding, the recent earthquake in Italy, and all those affected by natural disasters throughout the world.
- Families transitioning to a new school year.

September Birthdays

Charles Elwood	9/1	Christine Brooks	9/8	Jillian Coviello	9/26
Julie Sutherland-Platt	9/1	Cheryl Townsend	9/9	Caroline Poser	9/26
Gianna Hitsos	9/2	Corissa Robinson	9/17	Jacob Gervais	9/29
Billy Zhao	9/2	Russell Byron-Kelly	9/19	Cathy Fuller	9/30
Marin Colbert	9/3	Daniel Flynn	9/20	Nathan Townsend	9/30
Paul Meehan, Jr.	9/5	Alyssa Hughes	9/21		
Karen Sherwin	9/6	Emily Townsend	9/21		

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



Crafts for a Cause!

This summer, Taryn Emerle (entering 9th grade) organized a special craft project as part of her Girl Scout Silver Award. She created six binders of craft ideas for the Birthday Wishes Organization (birthdaywishes.org), which throws birthday parties for children in family shelters around New England. Volunteers organize a craft for each party, but didn't have a resource for ideas in each office.

Taryn credits her experiences with our church Mission Trips and the *City Reach* overnight in November as inspiration for her focus on the homeless for this project.



Feedback Circle: Stewardship

Sunday, September 25

After Worship in the Parish House

The Stewardship Team is excited to get your thoughts and feedback on Stewardship. What does Stewardship mean to you? Is there one Stewardship message or theme from the last few years that you found to be inspirational or memorable? There is a signup sheet in the downstairs hallway at church, or call Carol (978-448-2091) if you would like to join us. *Leaders: Halsey Platt and Andrea McDonough*



Budget Reminder

Committee Chairs are reminded that the initial 2017 Budget request is due by **September 9**. If you haven't already, please

send your initial budget to Church Treasurer, Dennis Carey at DCareyUCC@yahoo.com. Thank you.



Knitting Group

Wednesdays

10:00 a.m.

Church Parlor

Do you knit, crochet, needlepoint—come join us! All are welcome! We

meet every Wednesday, but you don't have to come every week.

October Courier

Please submit items for the October Courier by Thursday, September 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.

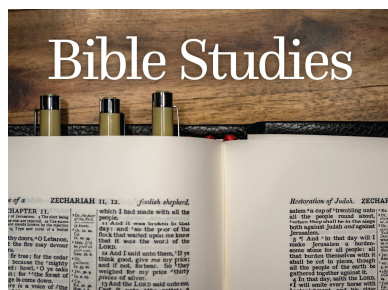


Super Saturday (Registration Open!)

Saturday, October 15, 8:00 a.m.—3:45 p.m.

Keefe Regional Technical High School, Framingham

A full day of workshops, forums, networking, a marketplace and worship featuring Rev. Laura Everett, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Council of Churches, and Angie Thurston and Casper ter Kuile of Harvard Divinity School. **Register at MACUCC.org**



Wednesday Evening Bible Study

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

We are back to our Wednesday schedule starting September 7. "Fullness of Faith" is our final unit on faith. We'll read scripture from Luke that presents Jesus' teachings on increasing one's faith, the faith of a leper, and the value of humility. The fourth session shows Jesus welcoming children and elevating the faith of people viewed as non-persons. A new look at Zacchaeus concludes our study of faith. Joins us on Wednesday evenings.

Contact: Janet Kennedy

Thursday Morning Bible Study

Begins September 15

10:00 a.m.

Welcome back to the delightful routines of fall after the splendid serendipity of summer. We shall plan to resume our studies and conversations on Thursday, September 15, with the Gospel of Matthew. I am happy to entertain other suggestions. We will gather to read, probe, and discuss what Matthew told his audience and what he has to say to us for our faithful living. Come for cookies, tea, and stimulating conversation.

Contact: Marvin Caldwell

Christian Education

Sunday School

Begins September 11

Sunday School packets will be available at church and Registration Forms will be available through our website so you can easily register online. Even if your child only attends occasionally, we ask parents of new students to complete this form so that we have accurate allergy and contact information. If you have any questions, please contact Carol (978-448-2091 or unioncc@uccgroton.org).

Sunday School Teacher Meeting

Sunday, September 11 — 4:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall



Third Graders to Receive Bibles

Sunday, September 25, during Worship

This is a gift from the church, and we hope all families of third graders who consider this their church will be in worship on September 25 for this special day. As of mid-August, our records show the following kids from our church in the third grade:

Reaghan Carleton
Finley Clinton
Mary Kubick
Henry Richardson-Irvin

Also, if you are new to the church and have children in the upper elementary grades who don't have a Bible and would like one geared toward children (3rd—8th graders), please let us know. It is important to us that we not miss anyone, so if your son or daughter is not listed, please call the church office (978-448-2091) so that we can make sure they receive a Bible.

—Pastor Miller and the Christian Education Committee



Confirmation Class (for kids 9th and 10th grade)

Sunday, Sept. 25, 5:00—6:30 p.m. Informational Meeting
(Fellowship Hall)

Sunday, Oct. 16 Students receive Bibles during Worship
5:00—6:30 p.m. First Class (Parish House)

This is an opportunity for our teenagers to learn more about the Christian faith, and how it gets lived out in our daily lives and in our church. The Confirmation experience runs through mid-June and involves faithful attendance at worship, engaging with an adult mentor in the church, 14 "class" sessions at the church, and a variety of other activities to give our teens a full and fun year together. ***Be sure to attend the Informational Meeting on the 25th — Parents and Kids. Even if you're not sure if Confirmation is right for your family, come to learn about it and then decide. Contact Gail if you have questions.***

Christian Education Committee

—Anne Cahill, Chair
—Krista Kubick

—Jean Armstrong
—Diane Landry

—Kelli Hnath
—Anne Larsen

Harvest Fair



Harvest Fair Saturday, October 1 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

There are lots of **NEW** things for this year's Harvest Fair and some things that are **NOT** going to be happening.

NEW this year! Chili Cook-off!

Calling all chili chefs! Test your recipe against other church contestants. Win a prize and bragging rights! Look for details and entry form shortly. Contact Bebe or Bob Goudey for more details ().



NOT this year: *Yard Sale*

NEW this year! Expanded cafe seating

NOT this year: Woodworking Table

We would like to give a special thanks to Leon Avey, who made the church a HUGE Jenga set for the Children's Games and Activities outside. It will offer many hours of play over many years. Thank you Leon!

NEW this year! Harvest and Produce Table

NOT this year: Book Sale



NEW this year! Children's Clothes in the Parlor

NOT this year: Paying for Children's Games

NEW this year! Different Children's Games!

NOT this year: Outside Grill

NEW this year! Pizza oven on the front lawn

NOT this year: Full breakdown of the Nursery

NEW this year! Children's Toys sold in the Nursery area

NEW this year! Harvest Fair Music



This year's Harvest Fair will be featuring musical talent in the Sanctuary for part of day. As many of you know, there is a great pool of musical gifts in our congregation. We invite you to share your gifts with others — all talent abilities and music types are welcome! We are hoping to have a "mini-recital" with offerings from our various choirs, as well as soloists and small group ensembles. The music need not be Christian, but should be appropriate for performing in a church setting. Please let us know as soon as possible if you would like to sing, play an instrument, whether you will be performing alone or with others, and how much time you need. If you need vocal and/or instrumental accompaniment, we will try to make those arrangements. We look forward to hearing from you! Contact Stefanie Lempp () or Carl Prestia () for more information.

Most importantly, please do **NOT** drop off yard sale items or books. Dropping off these items just costs the church money because we have to get rid of them. We will be still be collecting children's clothes, children's games and Attic Treasures.



SAME this year — Profits to support *Common Cathedral!*

AND we will still have...

- **Gourmet Cafe** lunch (kitchen help needed—contact Joel Hughes)
- **Silent Auction** (Liz Brennan or com) The Silent Auction is a long-standing (and fun) tradition at our annual Harvest Fair. Do you have an item or service to donate? Examples:
 - Service such as yard work, painting, window washing
 - Gift certificates to your (local) business
 - A week at your vacation home
 - A one-of-a-kind treasure
- **Crafts and Christmas crafts**
- **Bake Sale with pies** (Mark Rzeznikiewicz) ; Pie Baking: Mary Hanson
- **Attic Treasures** (Liz McQuillin)
- **Children's Clothing** (church parlor) (Krista Kubick)
- **Children's toys** (moved to our nursery area)
- **Children's games** still outside but with some **NEW** additions!
- **Bouncy House** in the back yard

Help needed in the following areas:

- **Selling Toys and Games:** This will be inside Fellowship Hall this year so that parents can access the Kid's clothes and the toys in roughly the same location. This person or persons would be in charge of setting up the space and coming up with the donation amounts that we will charge for the toys and games.
- **Overseeing the games:** This area has changed significantly from the past. All activities are free. They should be fairly easy to put out and oversee. We need an adult or adults to supervise the kids and younger volunteers.

Our focus as a church is families and these are important areas to promote!

Please contact Mary Hanson (), if you are interested in helping out. We always appreciate **NEW** faces and hands.

Grotonfest—September 24 (rain date September 25)

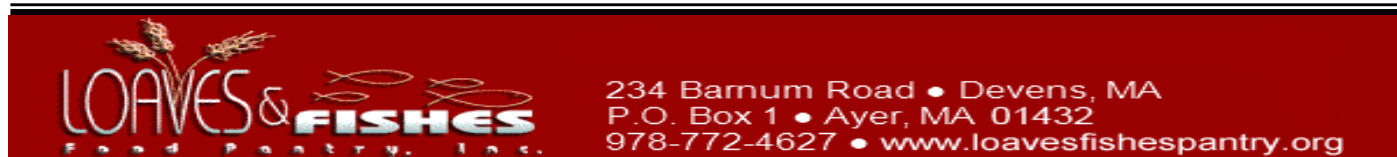


UCC Grotonfest Booth Your Help Is Needed!

We invite you to take a time slot to cover the booth at this important community event. Grotonfest provides our church the opportunity to be visible in the community and to answer any questions visitors might have about our congregation. If you would like to be one of those

smiling, welcoming people, please put your name down for a time slot. We need two people for each time slot (teenagers welcome). Event and booth specifics will be communicated by email closer to the date. We appreciate any time you can give to this important community event.

You can signup online through the *Signup Genius* (link provided in the Friday email); or contact Carol Zaiatz at unioncc@uccgroton.org or 978-448-2091 and she can sign you up. Thank you!



Backpack Drive

Donate supplies for area children in need!

Please pick up a few extra items to donate when you are shopping for back to school supplies and donate them to the Backpack Drive.

The most needed items are:

- black or blue pens (10 pack)
- pencils (12 count)
- thin Crayola markers
- colored pencils
- single subject notebooks, college ruled
- hand sanitizer, small bottles
- pocket folders
- gender neutral backpacks (LARGE ones for Middle School and High School)



The above are needed in large quantities. There will be a collection bin in the Fellowship Hall for the items being donated to the Backpack Drive. Thank you!



Common Cathedral Visit

Common Cathedral will join us on Sunday, September 25, during worship to share their ministry with us. They will also be joining us the following Saturday, October 1, at the Harvest Fair!

We will be donating all the profits from the Harvest Fair to *Common Cathedral* again this year. As 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!

Missions Committee

—Julie Platt, Chair
—Lynn Manalo

—Brenda Barker
—Halsey Platt

—Pete Hnath

Help the Homeless—Invitation to Serve this Fall

Outdoor Church (Cambridge)

Monday, October 10 (Columbus Day Holiday)
10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. (approx. times)

Children in upper elementary grades and their families are welcome to join Pastor Miller and Sophia. Meet at church, make sandwiches and assemble sack lunches; then head to Alewife and to Central Square. We walk a route organized by the Outdoor Church (a homeless ministry in Cambridge), handing out lunches, and extending the warmth of God's love. Questions: Gail (978-448-2091)

City Reach

Friday-Saturday, November 18-19
5:00 p.m. Friday—5:00 p.m. Saturday

Reserve your spot via email to Gail Miller (gail@uccgroton.org). The trip will cost \$100/person—\$65 is a required donation to City Reach to fund their program and \$35 is for transportation, food, etc.



Senior Choir

Senior Choir (Bernard Crane, Director)

9th grade and Older

Rehearsals start Thursday, September 8

7:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary

Senior Choir is open to anyone 9th grade and beyond. We are always looking for new members. We meet every Thursday evening at 7:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary. If you are interested in joining us, please contact Bernard Crane ()



Junior Choir

Junior Choir (Bernard Crane, Director)

3rd through 8th Grade

First Rehearsal: September 11

After Worship in the Parlor

Junior Choir is a wonderful way for young people to participate regularly in worship. We have many new songs and old favorites scheduled. Come join us! Contact Bernard with any question ()

Cherub Choir (Bonnie Marchesani, Director)

Children ages 3 through 2nd Grade

First Rehearsal: September 11

Parish House—during Sunday School



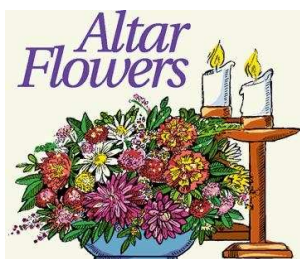
Ooooh! I don't want summer to be over! I do hope all the Cherubs and their families had a wonderful one!

Cherubs will begin rehearsing on the 11th when Sunday School begins. Meeting for about 15 minutes before you go to your Sunday School class worked really well last year — so we will continue to do this. (We will meet in the front room of the Parish House.)

Congratulations to those moving up to Junior Choir—Mr. Crane is going to be blessed to have you in his choir! Feel free to contact me with any questions ()

—Ms. Bonnie

Altar Flowers



After a break this summer to allow people to bring their own flowers, we will startup our “standing order” with Country Florist on September 11. If you would like to dedicate flowers on a particular Sunday, please: 1) Fill in your name and dedication on the Flower Chart in the downstairs hall at church; 2) send a check for \$25 (made out to the UCC; memo: Altar Flowers) to the church office (220 Main Street, Groton, MA 01450). The church will pay the bill to Country Florist. After worship, the Deacons will deliver the flowers to someone in the church who could use a gift of love. Call Carol in the office if you have any questions (978-448-2091).

Contacts

Looking Ahead to Christmas!

Committee/Ministry Contacts	
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—Friday 9:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m. Carol Zaiatz—Office Administrator unioncc@uccgroton.org Tuesday—Friday 8:30 a.m.—3:30 p.m. <i>(Church Office is closed Saturday—Monday)</i> Music Director: Bernard Crane Cherub Choir: Bonnie Marchesani Handbell Choir: Cheryl Townsend	Buildings & Grounds: John Brooks Barb Lefebvre Christian Education: Anne Cahill Church Council Member-at-Large: Pat Woods Diaconate: Greg Balligan Steve Legge Endowment: Mary Hanson FaST: Tim Dumont Kitchen Ministry: Joel Hughes GPS: Stefanie Lempp Missions: Julie Platt Pastor Parish Relations: Bebe Goudey Stewardship & Finance: Liz McQuillin Technology Ministry Mike Smith Mary Hanson (webmaster)
Church Officers	
Moderator: Stefanie Lempp	
Treasurer: Dennis Carey	
Clerk: Lori McElroy	
Collector: Bob Goudey	
Internal Auditor: Bruce Wyman	

Something New for Christmas This Year!



Christmas Pageant on Christmas Eve

This year we will expand our Christmas Eve "drama" into more of a traditional "pageant." Our own Kathleen MacKenzie has written a short play for our Sunday School kids to perform at the 5:00pm service. It will be put together in two rehearsals in December, and will involve as many kids as want to participate! Sign-ups will occur in November, but we wanted to let you know now so you can plan accordingly.

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Welcome to Church!

September 4 (Labor Day Weekend): Worship at 10:00 a.m. with Communion

September 11: Worship at 10:00 a.m.

Start of Sunday School: (Pre-K through 8th graders)

Lesson: *The Lost Sheep and Lost Coin (Luke 15:1-10)*

Cherub Choir Rehearsal—first 15 minutes of Sunday School (see p. 8)

Junior Choir Rehearsal in the Parlor after Worship

Joyful Fellowship after worship on the front lawn (weather permitting)

Saturday, September 24

UCC Booth at Grotonfest—Helpers Needed (see p. 6)

Sunday, September 25

Common Cathedral during worship (see p. 7)

Stewardship Feedback Circle (see p. 3)

Confirmation Information Meeting (see p. 4)

Saturday, October 1

43th Annual Harvest Fair, 10:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m. (see p. 5-6)