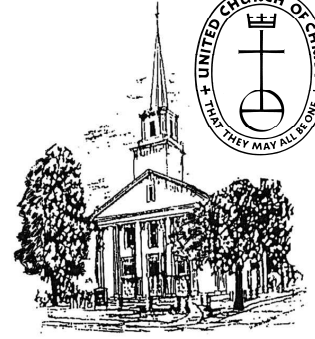


THE UNION COURIER

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

220 Main Street
Groton, Massachusetts 01450



September 2017

FROM THE



PASTOR

Getting Away and Coming Home

Many of us have the privilege of "getting away from it all" from time-to-time. We typically do this in the summer, when kids and grandkids are not in school. I enjoy seeing photos of your travels and weekends away on Facebook and hearing of your reconnecting with family and friends at Fellowship Hour after church.

I too have been fortunate to visit some beautiful places, not just this summer, but over a lifetime of travel to places that are truly stunning — some remote and some as close as the next town over. And I think I'm not alone in feeling or renewing a conviction that God is real and in this place, when looking up at the deep blue of the sky, or across a vast plain to a far off horizon, or down in the tangle and colors of a blossoming garden.

And what is wonderful about these moments and places is not only what is there, but what is NOT there — the demands of living in community with others. The trees don't disagree with each other. The babbling brook and lapping waves offer comfort and peace. There is no need to raise money for a better building, because look around...what could be better than this? It is no surprise that many testify that their surest encounters with God are in the natural world.

Nevertheless, the affirmation that God can be found outside the church has never seemed like much of a claim. The true wonder is that God can be found inside the church, among quirky, flawed and broken people who may have little in common and yet are bound to one another. What an unlikely setting in which to encounter God. But the Christian God seems to like to surprise us by showing up in the most unpromising places, like a Jew from Nazareth and in a motley gathering of people known as church.

God throws us together in the church and says, in essence, "Here is where you get a chance to learn how to live with other people, to forgive, and even come to see God in one another. After all, if you can find God here, you can find God anywhere."

The church, like the family, is the place where we learn to live with people we are stuck with. And when we stick with those we are stuck with, it is a living reminder of the God who is stuck with us all. (Martin Copenhaver, UCC Daily Devotional, 8-18-17)

I love this about the church — and OUR church. Many of my pastor friends / colleagues serve churches filled with people of one political stripe. Not us! We are all over the map; and yet we gather around one table to worship one Lord. We bring our whole selves to worship, including our particular and differing views, and the Holy Spirit makes us ONE body.

To my mind this is the church at its best — a people with diverse and (even) conflicting views on you-name-the-topic, gathering regularly not to have our own positions affirmed, but to discover God's will for us as individuals and as a body, to listen (really listen) to each other, and to be changed in the process. Christians believe that we are to be "conformed to the image of Christ," (Romans 8:29) and this can only be done TOGETHER!

So take this moment to recommit yourself to your church: to coming on Sundays as much as you can, to making and deepening friendships with people here, to participating in a study group or service opportunity. Experience the power of God's love like no where else!

I look forward to the months ahead as we discern what God wants for and from us.

With you on the journey!



Our Church Family/Church News



Ongoing Prayer List

This prayer list is refreshed twice a year (June and January). If you would like other names added (or any name removed), 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.

Diane Black
Kathi Bond
Megan Bettison
Jack Cornforth

Scott Joyce
Ellie Kennedy
Jack Lyons
Nevan Rosenfeld

Debbie Sampson
Donna Sattler
Rudi Schmid
Liz Waggoner



- The Ward family, in the death of Nancy Ward in July.
- Charlie Elwood, at Apple Valley Rehab following a stroke.
- Protection, comfort, and courage for victims of racism, bigotry, and hatred; and for those standing against hatred in all its forms.
- Peace among all people.
- The people in Texas suffering the effects of Hurricane Harvey.

September Birthdays

Charles Elwood	09/01	Cheryl Townsend	09/09	Emily Townsend	09/21
Julie Sutherland-Platt	09/01	Hannah Van Pelt	09/17	Jillian Coviello	09/26
Gianna Hitsos	09/02	Russell Byron-Kelly	09/19	Caroline Poser	09/26
Marin Colbert	09/03	Daniel Flynn	09/20	Jacob Gervais	09/29
Paul Meehan, Jr.	09/05	Ryan Kingsborough	09/20	Cathy Fuller	09/30
Karen Sherwin	09/06	Alyssa Hughes	09/21	Nathan Townsend	09/30
Christine Brooks	09/08	Kathryn Kingsborough	09/21		

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!

Ladies' Lunch

First Friday of Each Month

Meet at the church at 11:45 a.m. to carpool.

Join your friends from church for lunch at a local area restaurant. The restaurant varies — September 1 we will be at Piccolino's in Shirley. All women of the church are invited! If you need a ride, contact Janice Owen ().

Welcome Back BBQ and Picnic Feed Your Soul AND Your Stomach! Sunday, September 10, after Worship

Please be sure to RSVP and let us know if you would like to help and/or provide any food items. Signup through the link in the weekly email, by going to our website at www.uccgroton.org, or on the signup sheet downstairs at church. Plan to stay for good food (sandwiches and BBQ hotdogs/sausages provided), good friends, and good fun!

Contact: Janet Carey ()



Church News



Budget Reminder

Committee Chairs are reminded that the initial **2018 Budget** request is due by **September 15**. If you haven't already, please send your initial budget to Dennis Carey (). Thank you.



Knitting Group

Resumes Wednesdays (starting September 13)

10:00 a.m. in the Church Parlor

Do you knit, crochet, needlepoint? Come join us—all are welcome! We meet every Wednesday (come when you can).

Monthly Newsletter Update

We would like to try a new approach to getting our newsletter to you. Our current system of using "bulk mail" through the Post Office delays people receiving information by as much as two weeks. At the same time, the newsletter is readily available on our website, with a link provided in the weekly Friday email.

Going forward, we would like to send the newsletter by first-class mail so that it arrives within a couple days of mailing. In order to remain within our budget, we need to reduce the number of pieces being mailed. In addition to saving mail time, this reduction will also cut the hours of production time needed in the office (for both Carol and the volunteers who help her get the newsletter in the mail each month).

And so, we would like to know from you:

- Who prefers to access the newsletter online (where you can print a copy or read it on your computer).
- Who prefers to pick-up a paper copy at church on Sundays.
- Who prefers to continue to receive a paper copy in the mail.

You can email Carol (unioncc@uccgroton.org) your preference, fill out a form provided in worship (beginning Sept. 10) or use the link in the weekly email. Be sure to include your name so that our paper mailing list remains accurate.

We hope to be able to start this new process for the November newsletter. We appreciate your cooperation in helping us determine the best way to get information to you in a timely manner. Thank you!

October Courier

Please submit articles for the October Courier by Friday, September 15. All submissions to the Courier should be emailed to Carol Zaiatz at unioncc@uccgroton.org. Thank you.

Super Saturday



Saturday, October 21, 8:00 a.m.—3:45 p.m.

Keefe Technical Regional High School, Framingham

A full day of workshops, forums, networking, a marketplace and worship, featuring Rev. Noel Andersen (Pastor, Activist, Immigration Rights Organizer).

Register online: MACUCC.org/SS-October2017

Registration Deadline 10/7

Sunday School

Begins September 10

Sunday School packets will be available at church on September 10 and Registration Forms are available on our website and in the Friday email. Even if your child only attends occasionally, we ask you 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).

September 10—*Welcome Back!*
Decorate Classrooms

September 17—*Joseph Helps His Family*
Genesis 45:1-15; 50:15-21

September 24
Music All Morning! (see p. 6)

October 1—Communion Lesson
World Communion Sunday

Sunday School Teachers—Can You Help!

We will again teach in teams (3-4 teachers per team per grade). Each team divides up the Sundays as fits their schedules and coordinate directly with each other. This provides consistency for the kids and ready support for the teachers, while simplifying communication regarding the kids and the classes. ***We are still seeking a couple of teachers at each grade level (PreK-1, 2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9).*** Please contact Kelli Hnath () or anyone on the Christian Education Committee if you are interested in helping as a teacher or being on our sub list.

Third Graders to Receive Bibles

Sunday, September 24, 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 24 for this special day. As of mid-August, our records show the following kids from our church in the third grade:

Johnno Brooks
Liam Colbert

Korbin Larsen
Caden Rosenfeld

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

Christian Education Committee

—Kelli Hnath, Chair
—Bonnie Marchesani

—Jean Armstrong
—Carl Prestia

—Krista Kubick

—Anne Larsen



Wednesday Evening Bible Study

Starting September 6

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

Contact: Janet Kennedy

Thursday Morning Bible Study Resumes September 14

10:00 a.m. at 26 Court Street

Welcome back to fall in New England after what I hope has been a lovely summer. The Gospels are the core of the Christian Scriptures. We will pick up our reading of Matthew more or less where we left off. Each of the Gospel writers, the Evangelists, has a special icon that appears in paintings, on crosses, carved in door panels, etc. Mark, an incredible story teller who dashes along, is depicted by a lion. Luke has an ox, friend of humanity. John of the highest Christology has an eagle. Matthew, who has the most human depiction of Jesus, is represented by a human form, an angel. As always, everyone is welcome to participate, enjoy, and be refreshed by in-depth conversation, tea, and cookies.

Contact: Marvin Caldwell ()

Grotonfest—Saturday, September 23



UCC Grotonfest Booth An Opportunity to Serve

We invite you to represent our church at this important community event. *Grotonfest* gives us the opportunity to be visible in the community and to answer any questions people might have about our church. If you would like to be one of those smiling, welcoming people, please sign-up. We would like two people for each time slot.

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



Harvest Fair Saturday, September 30 10:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.



Who are we Fundraising for this year?

Teen Challenge offers Christ-centered, faith-based solutions for youth, adults, and families struggling with life-controlling problems, such as addiction. *Teen Challenge* is holistic:

they are concerned with the body, mind, and spirit of those who come to them for help. They seek to help people become mentally sound, emotionally balanced, socially adjusted, physically well, and spiritually alive.

How can you help NOW?

Leaders Needed!

- Children's Toys
- Pie Baking (Friday, 9/29)

Contact Mary Hanson () if you can help.

Attic Treasures: Do you have suitable items to donate to the Attic Treasures? Not sure? Talk to Liz McQuillin () or Barbara Wyman ().

Bake Table: Bake and freeze things for the bake table (quick breads, muffins, cookies, bars, gluten free). Do you have an extra crop of blueberries? Save them for Blueberry Pies!

Children's Clothing: Save your kids clothes for this part of the fair. Krista Kubick ()

Chili Cook-off: Calling all Chili Chefs! Test your recipe in the contest. Suggested entry fee/donation is \$10. Make one large crock pot of your favorite chili and you could win a prize and champion bragging rights. Entry form (due by 9/25) is available on our website (uccgroton.org); a link is provided in the Friday email. Paper copies are also available at church or through Bebe or Bob Goudey ().

Silent Auction: Do you have an idea for the Silent Auction? It can be a physical thing (tickets to an event, a vacation home, a painting, a handmade blanket, etc.) or you could offer your services (house painting, making dinner, cleaning a yard, etc.) Other ideas: gift certificates to your local business, a weekend at your vacation home. Contact Liz Brennan ()

Want to volunteer to help the day of the Fair — signup on Signup Genius (link provided in the Friday email) or contact Mary Hanson ().

Missions Committee



***Loaves & Fishes* Backpack Drive**

Donate supplies for area children in need!

When you are shopping for back to school supplies, please think about picking up extra items to donate for the Backpack Drive. The most needed items this year are gender neutral backpacks (LARGE ones for Middle School and High School). There will be a collection bin in the Fellowship Hall (starting 9/10) for the items being donated to the Backpack Drive. (Many thanks to Anne Larsen, who has been communicating and coordinating with *Loaves & Fishes* about supplies!)

***Teen Challenge* Visit Sunday, September 17**



Teen Challenge will join us during worship to share their ministry with us. They will also be joining us on September 30 at the Harvest Fair! We will be donating all the profits from the Harvest Fair to *Teen Challenge* 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

—Ellen Hargraves

Music



Senior Choir

Senior Choir (9th grade and Older)

Rehearsals start Thursday, September 7

7:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary

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



UCC Faith Ringers

Rehearsals begin

Monday, September 11

7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary

We are excited to get back to playing. We had a wonderful time at the Area 1 Handbell Festival at the end of June in Amherst, where nearly 400 handbell ringers gathered together and made music under the direction of Ed and Catherine Rollins. They were wonderful directors, each with their own quirky personalities that made our rehearsals very interesting. We look forward to ringing with a renewed energy and spirit. New ringers are always welcome — contact Cheryl Townsend ()

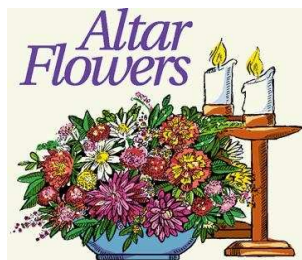


Don't Miss September 24! Music at Sunday School!

On that morning, the entire Sunday School will split into two groups (3rd grade and lower / 4th grade and up) and will each enjoy a morning dedicated to music. Bernard will be with the older kids, and Bonnie Marchesani with the younger kids. They will explore and experience fun and lively music. There is a whole world of Christian music that sounds just like the music the kids listen to on the radio and elsewhere. We're eager for them to discover the wide world of popular Christian music. Plan to be at church on Sept. 24!

Altar Flowers

Just So You Know



After a break this summer to allow people to bring their own flowers, we will startup our "standing order" with Country Florist on September 10. 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). 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).

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
Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 9:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.
Wednesday: 2:00—5:00 p.m.

Carol Zaiatz—Office Administrator
unioncc@uccgroton.org

Tuesday—Friday: 8:30 a.m.—4:00 p.m.
(Church Office is closed Saturday—Monday)

Bernard Crane, Music Director

Bonnie Marchesani, Cherub Choir

Cheryl Townsend, Handbell Choir

Church Officers

Moderator: Stefanie Lempp

Treasurer: Dennis Carey

Clerk: Lori McElroy

Collector: Bob Goudey

Internal Auditor: Bruce Wyman

Committee/Ministry Contacts

Buildings & Grounds:

John Brooks

Christian Education:

Kelli Hnath

Church Council Member-at-Large:

Pat Woods

Diaconate:

Greg Balligan

Steve Legge

Endowment:

Mary Hanson

Kitchen Ministry:

Joel Hughes

Missions:

Julie Platt

Pastor Parish Relations Committee:

Andrea McDonough

Stewardship & Finance:

Jon Sjoberg

Technology Ministry:

Mike Smith

Mary Hanson (webmaster)

Union Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
220 Main Street
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Welcome to Church!

Sunday, September 3 (Labor Day Weekend)

10:00 a.m. Worship with Holy Communion

Sunday, September 10

Start of Sunday School: (Pre-K through 9th graders)—Decorate Rooms in Parish House
Welcome Back BBQ and Picnic after Worship (on our front lawn—weather permitting)

Sunday, September 17

Teen Challenge will be with us during Worship (see p. 6)

Saturday, September 23

UCC Booth at Grotonfest—Volunteer Opportunities! (see p. 5)

Sunday, September 24

Third Graders receive Bibles during Worship (see p. 4)
Music at Sunday School (see p. 6)

Saturday, September 30

44th Annual Harvest Fair, 10:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m. —Volunteer Opportunities! (see p. 5)