

THE UNION COURIER

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

220 Main Street
Groton, Massachusetts 01450



May 2018

FROM THE



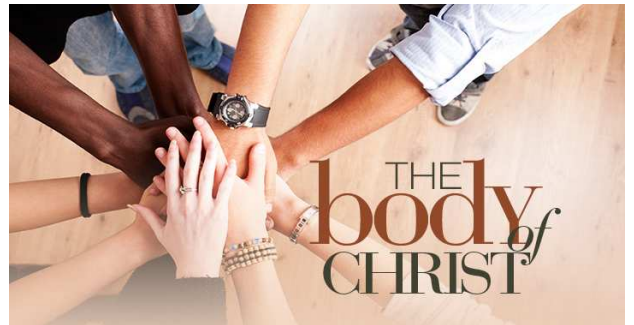
PASTOR

These days it seems as if BUSY-NESS is held up as both a burden and a badge of honor. We are a people on the move, almost nomadic in our running here and running there, whether in a given day or week or year even. This pace of life has created what writer Henri Nouwen calls "a world of strangers, estranged from their own past, culture, and country, from their neighbors, friends and family, from their deepest self and their God." In such a "world of strangers," it's a short step to a world where fear, anger, and hostility build walls between people and chip away at communal life. And so now, more than ever, Christian hospitality is needed. Nouwen describes this hospitality as the "creation of a free space" where strangers become friends. "Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place."

I love that! And I want our church to be that place more and more — a free space where change can take place. When we are that, the Holy Spirit will change not just individual lives, but our life together as the Body of Christ.

With you on the journey,

Gail



Improving Our Space: The Church Hallway

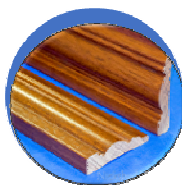
Remember the fun, unity, and sense of accomplishment we enjoyed with the Stewardship Team's *Winter Carnival 2017* (a.k.a *The Women's Bathroom Makeover*)?

We (your Stewardship Team) believe we can pull that energy together again in Summer 2018 (beginning mid-June) with a renovation of the hallway in the church building leading to the Fellowship Hall. As before, there will be many ways you can get involved:

- **Skills/Time**—at first reckoning, we'll need roughly 30 volunteers, not counting the people providing the workers with (always much appreciated) food and beverages at regular intervals
- **Financial Contributions**—general or toward a specific part of the project (no Home Depot registry this time, though)
- **Prayers**—that we are as successful as we were last time, when we were able to raise enough money, find enough workers, keep everyone safe and unbruised, and form new bonds of friendship



Flooring: \$1,500



Trim: \$970



Ceiling: \$900



Lighting: \$1,950



Stunning hallway:
\$5,300

And, who knows? With an extra \$2,100, we can get new carpeting for the parlor!

Watch for opportunities to sign up in future emails and announcements.



Our Church Family/News



Ongoing Prayer List

This list will be refreshed in June. If there is a name you would like to remain on the list or add to the list, please contact Gail Miller or Carol Zaiatz (978-448-2091 or unioncc@uccgroton.org).

Megan Bettison
Joel Eaton
Charlie Elwood
Scott Joyce

Chris Laursen
Joe Marchesani
Bill Moeller
Myrtle Murphy

Luelle Ross
Debbie Sampson
Rudi Schmid

Edie Tompkins
Laurie Wade
Liz Waggoner



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 Carol or Gail in the Church Office (978-448-2091) and they 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.

- Peg Elwood, recovering from pneumonia.

May Birthdays

Anne Cahill	05/03	Kyle Plausse	05/14	Katie Milano	05/23
Monique Meehan	05/04	Joel Hughes	05/15	Drew Davenport	05/24
Jocelyn Byron-Kelly	05/05	Kelly Sullivan	05/16	Bill Gale, Jr.	05/24
Sara Zambuto	05/06	Mike Smith	05/20	Dennis Carey	05/25
Deb Shields	05/08	Ginny Fraser	05/21	Caleb Brennan	05/28
Margaret Sullivan	05/10	Emily Hanson	05/21	John Brooks	05/31
Nancy Huguenin	05/12	Raquel Majeski	05/23	Tyler York	05/31

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!



Nursery News

Nursery Attendant Position Available

Lauren Prestia will be leaving to prepare for college this fall. If you know someone who might be interested in this job, direct them to Gail or Carol (978-448-2091; unioncc@uccgroton.org) in the office for details/job description. Thank you.



Ladies' Lunch

Friday, May 4 (Meet at the church at 11:30 a.m. to carpool)

The Longhorn (227 N. Main Street, Leominster)

All women of the church are invited! If you need a ride, contact Janice Owen Brenda Semienko, or Peg Lloyd.



Church Council

April 25 Meeting Summary

The major discussion this month centered around the opportunity for our church to take ownership of the established Backpack Drive Program from *Loaves & Fishes*, which is refocusing on its original mission of feeding the hungry. We discussed the many benefits this program provides to local families, as well as the excellent opportunity to involve our own youth in supporting the program. We also brainstormed any potential challenges that could arise, but were in agreement that the program is a worthy mission for us to pursue as it furthers our mission of *Sharing Christ ~ Changing Lives* as we live our faith beyond our walls.

We will be hosting a New England Ringers concert in our church on Sunday afternoon, June 10. They are a regional bell choir that draws people from all over New England.

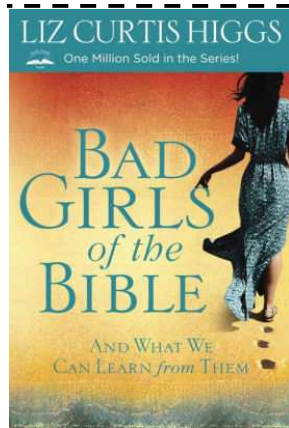
The Stewardship Committee is spearheading another improvement project for the entry hallway to the Fellowship Hall. This will follow the same model that was so successful in the renovation of the Ladies bathroom last year. **The first phase of the work will take place the weekend of June 15-16.**

We set the date for the **Stated Meeting for Sunday, June 3**, after worship. We will discuss and decide on the Backpack Drive and hear a finance report.



Upcoming Graduates

Are you or someone in your family graduating this spring? We would like to honor our graduates in the June Courier. Please let us know who is graduating and from where, and any significant next steps in their lives. **Please email your information to Carol in the Church Office (unioncc@uccgroton.org) by May 26** so we can be sure to get your information in our newsletter! Thank you.



Bad Girls of the Bible

Wednesdays, 6:30-8:00 p.m.

(through May 30)

Meet at Raquel Majeski's home to continue reading and discussing the *Bad Girls* book (ending on May 30). **May 2 — Chapter 3: Pillar of the Community, Lot's Wife**

We will meet once a month during the summer for some fun activities:

June: Prayer journal activity

July: Women of the Bible bingo/ scavenger hunt

August: A service activity to be determined.

Sunday School



May 5

The Holy Spirit comes Down
Acts 10:44-48

May 13

Matthias the Apostle
Acts 1:15-17, 21-26

May 20

The Holy Spirit, Acts 2:1-21

May 27

All Together Time
Fellowship Hall

Christian Education Committee

—Krista Kubick, Chair
—Carl Prestia

—Jean Armstrong
—Amy Nickerson

—Bonnie Marchesani



13th Spring Artisan/Craft Fair Saturday, May 5, 10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

Kitchen: Janet Carey needs kitchen help on Friday afternoon and Saturday, as well as donations. Look for a Signup Genius link in the Friday email or contact Janet if you can help.

Church Craft Table: Erica Davenport is looking for sewing, crochet, and knitted items.

Bake Table: Thank you to Brenda Semienko and Mark Rzeznikiewicz for volunteering for this table; and to all those who have already offered to bake. More donations would be great!

Help Needed

Sunday, April 29: breakdown of nursery after Fellowship Hour

Wed., May 2: Set up of the hall at 5:30 p.m.

Drop Off Times

Hand Made Items: Sun. (4/29) or Wed. (5/2) evening during set up

Baked Goods: Fri., May 4, between 10:00 a.m.— 12:00 p.m. or Sat. by 9:30 a.m. (so we have time to price the items). Please wrap items and label for nuts.

Saturday at 2:00 p.m.: Begin break down of hall and rebuild the nursery.

Profits for the church come from table rentals, the kitchen, craft items, and the bake table.

Contact: Bonnie Martin

Music



"Pick Up" Choir — You Are Invited! Thursdays at 7:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary (April 26 through May 17)

At least once a year we like to have a "pick up" choir for a particular season or piece of music. This makes it easier for folks who'd like to sing, but can't commit to joining up for a long period of time. **If you missed the first practice (4/26), there's still time to join as long as you can make the remainder.** We will sing in worship on May 20 (Music Appreciation Sunday!). This year, Bernard has chosen a beautiful piece (*I Hear The Words of Love* by Josh Sparkman). A link to the piece is available in the Friday email, if you would like to listen to it. Contact Bernard if you have questions or want to know more.



Summer Musicians Needed!

Spring is finally here, and summer is just around the corner. In fact, we go to our Summer Worship Music Schedule on June 17, and so we are looking for musicians from the congregation to provide music in Worship. 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.



Missions / Youth Ministry / Community

Missions



Special
Offering

Strengthen the Church Offering

This is one of four special mission offerings we take to support the *United Church of Christ*, which funds new church starts; nurtures lay and pastoral leadership; and builds youth and young adult ministries.

Envelopes will be available in worship on May 20 and 27.



Hagar's Sisters is a Christian Ministry that provides domestic violence education and support within the context of a woman's spiritual beliefs.

The Missions Team will be supporting two upcoming Hagar's Sisters events: *Spring Refresh* on May 2 and *Filled with Laughter*, a Comedy Benefit on May 5.

- For ***Spring Refresh***, we will provide beautiful white geraniums.
- ***Filled with Laughter*** on **Saturday, May 5, at 7:00 p.m.** at Mount Hope Christian Center (3 McGinnis Drive, Burlington, MA). **We are looking for four more people to join us** at this event (at no cost to you). Please consider joining us in supporting and learning more about Hagar's Sisters, now in their tenth year. ***If you are interested in attending, please contact either Brenda Barker or Julie Platt.***

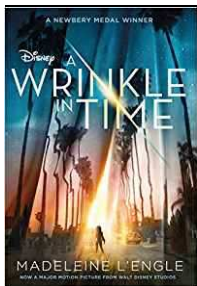
Missions Committee

—Julie Platt, Chair
—Lynn Manalo

—Brenda Barker
—Halsey Platt

—Ellen Hargraves

Youth Ministry



Youth Book Group (7th and 8th Graders)

Sunday, May 6, after Worship (Church Parlor)

7th and 8th graders are invited to a book group to talk about *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle. We will meet on **May 6, right after Worship (11:30—12:30)** for an hour and pizza will be served.

Questions: Contact any member of the Christian Education Committee (Krista Kubick, Jean Armstrong, Bonnie Marchesani, Carl Prestia, or Amy Nickerson).

Middle School Ministry (4th—6th Graders)

Sunday, May 20, 12:00—1:30 p.m. (right after church)

To get a jump on next year's Middle School Ministry, you are invited to a gathering on May 20 at the church for games and pizza.

Community—Grandparent Camp



Oceanwood (Maine) 7/29 – 8/4

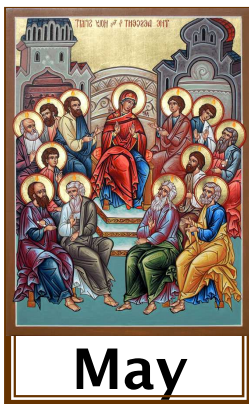
\$240 (ages 5+); \$120 (ages 3 & 4); \$50 (under age 3)

Spend precious time with your grandkids at the beach! Observe or join in on all your grandkids' favorite camp activities. Participate in daily chapel and live entertainment as a family. Counselors take the children to their activities, and grandparents are welcome to observe. For more information and to register, visit

www.oceanwood.org Some people from our church who have attended in the past are: Ellen Hargraves, Sophia Smith, Taylor Ansted, and Ginny Frazer, Bonnie Marchesani and Destiny Bou.

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May Highlights

Saturday, May 5—Spring Artisan/Craft Fair

10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m. (see p. 4)

Sunday, May 6

Holy Communion

Fellowship Hour: Sit Down Sunday — *Tables will be set with refreshments and coffee/condiments encouraging folks to sit and stay a bit. Of course, if you are in a rush, there is no pressure to remain, but please stop by for as long as you can stay.*

Sunday, May 13 (Mother's Day)

Sunday, May 20—Music Appreciation Sunday

Pentecost Sunday (wear red)

Lots of music from all of our choirs!

Sunday, May 27—Trinity Sunday

Harvest Fair Date

Saturday, September 22

10:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.