

THE UNION COURIER

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

220 Main Street
Groton, Massachusetts 01450



January 2019



A Message from Gary Gumuchian

Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. (Romans 15:7)

I thank the entire congregation and all the staff for the warm welcome I experience here at Union Congregational Church. I have been welcomed as Paul, and look forward to serving you in the months ahead. I must say that this is an active church undertaking wonderful endeavors to bring about the Kingdom of God in Groton, and the surrounding towns. What a blessed community!

Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth... (Isaiah 43:19)

It being a new year, what is your spiritual New Years resolution? Among my goals in serving in Groton is to offer a couple short-term, possibly to become ongoing, programs. While I have dozens of ideas, I would like to hear if you have a spiritual hunger for something.

For this very reason, you must make every effort to support your faith with goodness, and goodness with knowledge. (2 Peter 1:5)

Are there spiritual practices you wish to explore? There are many spiritual practices such as contemplative prayer, visio divina, spiritual biography, forgiveness, etc. We all seek to grow closer to God; what practice would you like try and possibly add to your habits?

For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life. (Ephesians 2:10)

Do you want to uncover spiritual gifts God has provided you? Do you wonder if there is an untapped skill or blessing and strategize about how to put those gifts to work for God? Is there a need in the community which God is calling you to try to meet?

Please grab me at coffee hour or email me (gary@uccgroton.org) so we can set up a time to talk about what might nourish you, as well as others.

Again, thank you all for the gracious welcome.

Yours in Christ,

Gary Gumuchian - Pastoral Intern

For we are
GOD'S HANDIWORK,
created in
CHRIST JESUS
to do
GOOD WORKS.

EPHESIANS 2:10, NIV





Our Church Family/News



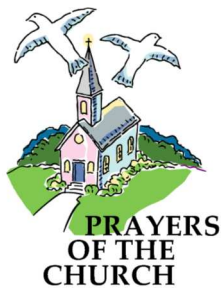
Ongoing Prayer List: This list has been refreshed for January. Contact Gail Miller or Carol Zaiatz (978-448-2091 or unioncc@uccgroton.org) to add a name to or remove a name from this list.

Dottie Bartlett
Megan Bettison
Peg Elwood
Ellen Hargraves
Scott Joyce
Frank Kanour

Julie Kenyon
Chris Laursen
Joe Marchesani
Jan Miller
Helen Misselhorn

Bill Moeller
Myrtle Murphy
Betty Rettig
Karen Sands
Rudi Schmid

Diane Thorne
Edie Tompkins
Karen and Marc Vandenbulcke
Laurie Wade
Liz Waggoner



- Janet Goudey and family, in the death of her husband, Bob Goudey, Sr., on December 8.
- Dennis and Janet Carey and family, in the death of Dennis' sister, Deborah Carey Sampson, on December 9.
- The Smith/Lempp Family, in the death of Craig's mother, Barbara Smith, on December 15.
- Helen Misselhorn, home recovering from colon cancer surgery.
- Betty Rettig, recovering after a fall.
- Ellen Hargraves, home after hospitalization and rehab.
- Cheryl Townsend, recovering from food surgery.

Thank You!

The Goudey family wishes to acknowledge with much gratitude the kind expressions of sympathy following the recent death of Janet's husband, Bob's father, Bebe's father-in-law, and Katie and Devin's grandfather, Robert E. Goudey, Sr.

January Birthdays

Jack Horsman	01/01	Megan Mahony	01/11	Catherine Daly	01/19
Shauna Morrison	01/01	Casey Sjoborg	01/12	Jeff Kubick	01/20
Madeleine Bugbee	01/02	Lauryn Atkins	01/13	Alison Rosenfeld	01/20
Janice Owen	01/03	Abby Burgess	01/14	Bill Shute	01/21
Chris Sullivan	01/03	Andrea McDonough	01/14	Toni Bond	01/24
Marvin Caldwell	01/05	Barbara Wyman	01/15	Taryn Emerle	01/27
Bonnie Marchesani	01/06	John Biocchi	01/17	Gary Emerle	01/30
Emma Milano	01/09	Matthew Plausse	01/17	Wendy Jones	01/30
Gordon Platt	01/09	Reverend Skip Lloyd	01/18	Bruce Wyman	01/30

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?

Thank You!



Thank you to the **Groton Woman's Club** for the beautiful wreaths on the church front doors (donated in appreciation for the use of the church for their meetings and a workshop for the Greens Sale).



Thank you to all who purchased poinsettias for our Sanctuary this Christmas. The Sanctuary looked beautiful — what a wonderful way to add to the celebration of the birth of our Lord!

Church News

Church Council Meeting Summary (December 18)

Pastor Gail reported that the confirmation classes overnight retreat in December went well.

We discussed what a blessing the handbells and Cheryl Townsend are to our church (Cheryl will be having foot surgery soon.)

Pledge update: 15 people had not yet pledged who usually do. They are being contacted personally.

The Nominating team is working on nominations for committees for 2019. We discussed the number of non-members who give financially and actively participate and yet can't sit on committees. Perhaps having non-members sit in on certain committees like CE, Missions and B&G would be a good idea. We then wondered about our By-Laws and if we ought to consider updating them at some point.

Endowment was asked to provide an updated spreadsheet of what each committee balance is currently.

Next meeting is January 8 (if needed); 2019 Budget and the 2018 Annual Report will be published on January 20; the Annual Meeting will be February 3.



Ladies' Lunch

Mariano's (105 Main Street, Pepperell)

Friday, January 4 (Meet at the church at 11:45 a.m. to carpool)

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



Annual Meeting

Sunday, February 3, After Worship

All are encouraged to attend (especially church members)! The two items seeking approval on the agenda are: 1) Nominations for Committees and Ministries; 2) The Final 2019 Operating Budget. **Details/content about these, as well as the 2018 Annual Report, will be available beginning January 20 in worship and at the Church Office.** Contact Stefanie Lempp or Pastor Miller with your questions in advance of the meeting.

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.

Offering Envelopes

Dated weekly offering envelopes are available on the table in the hallway downstairs at church for everyone who pledged. We also have additional envelopes for anyone else who would like them (contact Bob Goudey: bgoudeyucc@gmail.com or the church office: unioncc@uccgroton.org, 978-448-2091).

2019 Altar Flowers

The new 2019 Altar Flower chart is on the bulletin board in the hallway of the church. Country Florist delivers a center arrangement to the altar on Saturday every week. If you would like to dedicate flowers on a particular Sunday, please: 1) fill in your name and dedication on the 2019 Flower Chart (so that Carol can include this in the bulletin); 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. You don't need to call Lisa at Country Florist (978-433-8974) unless you want to change the arrangement design (she'll let you know if there is a cost increase). Call Carol (978-448-2091) if you have any questions.

New Members Joined December 16



WELCOME
to Our Newest Members!

Betsy and Charlie Bridge

Betsy originally comes from Stamford, Connecticut. She and Charlie married in 1996 and in 1997 they moved to Groton. She worked in Human Services for many years, but after the birth of her children she made a career change to be a stay-at-home-mom. Now she enjoys baking and training therapy dogs.

Charlie grew up in Boxboro, Massachusetts. His grandmother grew up in Groton and he and Betsy decided to make their home here. He works in private equities – a business that helps new businesses grow.

Both Charlie and Betsy have been attending our church for about 11 years. Their daughters, Macie and Chloe, were confirmed here and are members. When asked what they liked about our church they both said “it feels like home.”

Gary and Grace Johnson

Grace was born in Brooklyn, New York. She went to graduate school at Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore and has a Masters of Music, with a concentration in flute performance. She taught music at Perkins School for kids with special needs in Lancaster, as well as in the public schools in Leominster and West Boylston. Gary was born in Lancaster, Massachusetts. He is the head custodian in the Lancaster public school system and also works part-time at West Boylston public library and the Congregational Church in West Boylston.

They met each other at the Congregational Church in Lancaster where they sang in the church choir. Eventually Gary became the church’s organist and Grace the choir director. They lived in Fitchburg, then Lancaster for 20 years. Five years ago they decided they wanted to live next to a large body of water and found a home on Hickory Lake in Lunenburg, where they are living happily ever after with kayaks, a pedal boat and a pontoon boat. They also have two dogs (Shih-Tzus). Both Gary and Grace grew up in Lutheran churches. They came to UCC because the people are friendly and welcoming, and they like the style of worship and traditional style of music presented. Also, Pastor Gail’s sermons and messages speak to their hearts.

Grace enjoys reading mystery novels; cooking and baking breads. Gary enjoys working on house improvement projects, decorating for Christmas, and baking. They both enjoy boating and being in and around water, as well as listening to music

Grace looks forward to being a part of the church family. In the past they have moved around a lot among churches and now she would like to feel a sense of belonging. She also likes singing in the church choir. Gary feels the missions and outreach activities and orientation of the church speak to him.

Bob and Myra Lockett

Myra was born and raised in Miami, FL; Bob in Virginia. They met in the Training Department for Commercial Banking in Miami after Myra graduated from the University of Miami. Bob went to Harvard Divinity school, but ended up in corporate banking. He is now the Chief Strategy Officer for Workers Credit Union.

They spent most of their married years in Atlanta, Georgia, where they raised their daughter Lizzi, now 24 and a CPA living in Dallas, TX. Myra and Bob most recently lived in Houston, TX, before deciding to move back east and settling in Groton in 2016.

Myra enjoys photography and travel; Bob enjoys golf, reading science fiction, and also had his private pilot’s license (he would like to get recertified). Myra was baptized Catholic and Bob is Methodist. They joined a Methodist church together when their daughter Lizzie was seven. They first noticed our church at the town Tree Lighting two years ago; and met Gail and really liked her. They met some other church members at that time as well. They attended Edie’s Community Christmas Concert and loved it; went to the Christmas Eve Worship, and then started coming regularly in the new year. They like the Traditional Worship, and want a ministry they can participate in together.

Christian Education



January 6
Jesus the Word John 1:10-18

January 13
Jesus' Baptism Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

January 20
Wedding at Cana John 2:1-11

January 27
Jesus Goes to Nazareth Luke 4:14-30

Christian Education Committee

—Krista Kubick, Chair
—Amy Nickerson

—Jean Armstrong
—Carl Prestia

—Bonnie Marchesani

Bible Study

Wednesday Evening
7:30 p.m. in the Pastor's Office
Contact: Janet Kennedy

Thursday Morning Bible Study
10:00 a.m. 26 Court Street
Contact: Marvin Caldwell

Missions

Many thanks for all your support in December of *The Giving Tree* and *The Christmas Angels*.

We provided gifts for patients at **Tewksbury State Hospital**, individuals often forgotten and many without family support. Thank you to our team of gift wrappers and to Cassie Sampas for organizing this mission effort.

Thank you also for your generous support of the organizations selected to be **Christmas Angels**.

Missions Committee

—Julie Platt, Chair —Brenda Barker —Ellen Hargraves
—Lynn Manalo —Halsey Platt

2019 Youth Mission Trip Deadlines

June 23—July 1
Clendenin, West Virginia
Middle and High School Youth (Grade 6 and up)

Cost: \$350 (scholarship available, contact Gail)

Deadlines:

January 31, when we need to know who **intends** to join us on this trip.

February 15, when we need to know who **WILL** be going, plus your \$350.

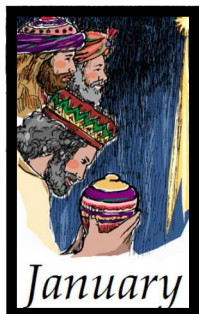
Mission Trip Meetings for kids begin Sunday, March 3 (April 7, May 5, and June 2).

Contact Pastor Miller (978-448-2091 or gail@uccgroton.org) with your questions or to let her know if your son/daughter plans to participate.



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PLEASE DO NOT DELAY**

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Please return to your mail carrier.

January Highlights

Friday, January 4—Ladies' Lunch at Mariano's in Pepperell (see p. 3)

Sunday, January 6

Epiphany Sunday/Holy Communion/Sunday School

Sunday, January 13

Worship/Sunday School

6:30 p.m. Confirmation Class

Sunday, January 20

Worship/Sunday School

2018 Annual Report and Updated 2019

Operating Budget available in Sanctuary
or Church Office

Sunday, January 27

Worship/Sunday School

6:30 p.m. Confirmation Class

Sunday, February 3

Worship/Sunday School

Annual Meeting after Worship (see p. 3)