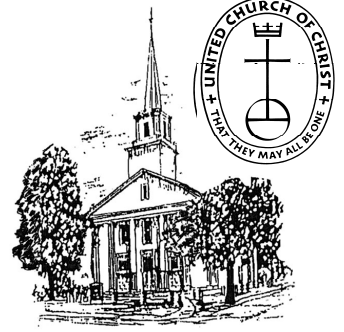


THE UNION COURIER

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

220 Main Street
Groton, Massachusetts 01450



February 2019

FROM THE



PASTOR

Here is a good word from an author I like – the word is SURPRISE – and here's what he says:

As servants of God, we must learn to make room for Him— to give God “elbow room.” We plan and figure and predict that this or that will happen, but we forget to make room for God to come in as He chooses. Would we be surprised if God came into our meeting or into our preaching in a way we had never expected Him to come? Do not look for God to come in a particular way, but do look for Him. The way to make room for Him is to expect Him to come, but not in a certain way. No matter how well we may know God, the great lesson to learn is that He may break in at any minute. We tend to overlook this element of surprise, yet God never works in any other way. Suddenly—God meets our life “...when it pleased God....” (Galatians 1:15)

Keep your life so constantly in touch with God that His surprising power can break through at any point. Live in a constant state of expectancy, and leave room for God to come in as He decides. (Oswald Chambers, My Utmost for His Highest)

Surprise!

That might not be the first word I'd think of if I were asked how God works in the world, or in my life. But when I think about it, I'd have to say that it's a pretty good descriptor. God's been surprising His people since the beginning...providing food for them when they were hungry and wandering in the wilderness, choosing David to be King (when he was the last person on the “short list”).

The events around Jesus' birth are full of surprises — angel visits, Mary being chosen, visitors from the East, warnings in dreams to flee for safety.

Until March 6th the church is in the season of Epiphany, which means to “shine upon.” It's when we lift up the ways that Jesus shines in the world and in our lives. And, if Oswald Chambers is right, that God's *surprising power can break through at any point* (and I believe he is right!), then we should be on the lookout for him.

When you are surprised by something, even something bad or troubling, ask “God, what are you showing me here? What do you want me to know or learn? What do you want me to do?” He'll respond — somehow — He'll show you.

With you in a state of expectancy,

Gail



Our Church Family/News



Ongoing Prayer List

This list is refreshed in January and June. If there is a name you would like to put back on this list or one you would like to add, please let Gail Miller or Carol Zaiatz (978-448-2091 or unioncc@uccgroton.org).

Dottie Bartlett	Julie Kenyon	Myrtle Murphy	Diane Thorne
Megan Bettison	Chris Laursen	Betty Rettig	Edie Tompkins
Peg Elwood	Joe Marchesani	Karen Sands	Karen and Marc Vandenbulcke
Ellen Hargraves	Jan Miller	Rudi Schmid	Laurie Wade
Scott Joyce	Helen Misselhorn	Matt & Mandy Spain	Betty and Liz Waggoner
Frank Kanour	Bill Moeller		

Prayers this Month

- Cheryl Townsend, recovering from foot surgery.

February Birthdays

Tony DiCenzo	02/01	Travis Bugbee	02/16	Lily Burgess	02/23
Ryan Carey	02/02	Arianna Boucher	02/19	Alaina Foss	02/24
Carl Haas	02/04	Steve Flynn	02/21	Dylan Hughes	02/24
Rebecca Brennan	02/06	Tom Wickham	02/22	Arianna Barker	02/25
Henry Richardson-Irvin	02/07	Charlotte LaGasse	02/22	Jessica Plausse	02/25
Emily Howard	02/10	Clarissa LaGasse	02/22	Tommy Wickham	02/27
Charlene Legge	02/14	Chloe York	02/22	Ryleigh Cunningham	02/28

If we missed your birthday, it is not in our database. Please email unioncc@uccgroton.org to give us your birthday. We would also like to recognize significant anniversaries — would you share that information with us?

Church News



Ladies' Lunch

Friday, February 1

The Alamo Texas Barbecue Restaurant

(99 Rt. 13, Brookline, NH—meet at the church at 11:30 a.m.)

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)! At this meeting we will approve the new committee roster and receive an update on the 2019 Operating Budget. **Details/content about these, as well as the 2018 Annual Report, are available on the tables at the back of the Sanctuary (and also in the Church Office).** Contact Stefanie Lempp or Pastor Miller with your questions in advance of the meeting.



Knitting Group

Wednesdays (resuming Feb. 6)

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).

Church Council Meeting Summary (January 23)

The Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, February 3. We reviewed the agenda for that meeting and discussed the two main topics of that meeting, namely the budget and the committee nominations. With respect to the budget, there is no vote required as the budget was already voted on at our November Budget Meeting. The purpose of reviewing the budget at the upcoming meeting will be to provide updates with respect to projected income with new pledging information received since November.

Regarding committee nominations, we have been blessed to have several people feel called to fill some of our vacancies this year. However, some committees, such as Christian Education and Buildings & Grounds, have several vacancies remaining. We did agree that it is not always necessary to fill all the empty slots for a committee to function smoothly and be productive. That said, we welcome anyone who might feel called to fill one of these vacancies to reach out to Gail.

Steve Legge is working with Halsey Platt to restructure/rewrite the church's Communications Covenant, which has not been revisited in the past 15 years.

We all wished a warm and hearty "thank you!" to our Moderator Stefanie Lempp, whose term will come to an end at the Annual Meeting. Stefanie has served us all well and faithfully for five years as Moderator!

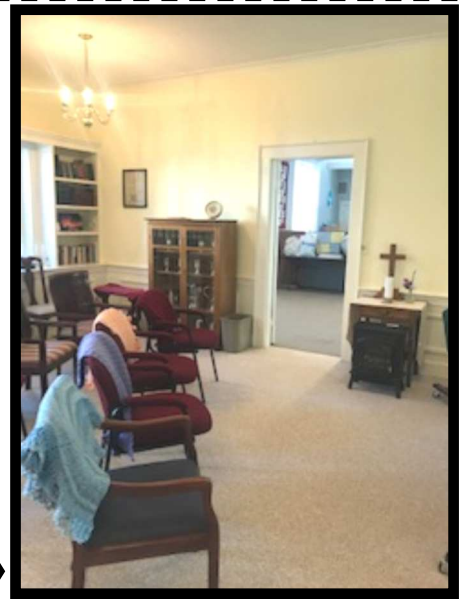


New Carpeting in the Church Parlor

Thanks to the Birthday Fund, we have new carpeting in our Church Parlor. This has been a long-time coming! To see the "new look" in person, stop by the Parlor the next time you are at church.

← Before

After →



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.

Super Saturday Registration Open



Super Saturday

March 16

Minnechaug Regional High School, Wilbraham, MA (621 Main St.)

8:00 a.m.—3:45 p.m. (Registration deadline is March 3)

Super Saturday is a full day of workshops, a keynote address, worship, a marketplace of vendors and ideas and an opportunity for UCC people to network with one another. **For more information, visit <https://www.macucc.org/supersaturday>.**

Christian Education

Sunday School Schedule



February 3
Jeremiah Jeremiah 1:4-10

February 10
The Disciples Luke 5:1-11; 8:1-3

February 17
No Sunday School—School Vacation

February 24
All Sunday School Lesson in the Fellowship Hall

2019 Christian Education Committee
—Bonnie Marchesani

—Amy Nickerson

—Carl Prestia

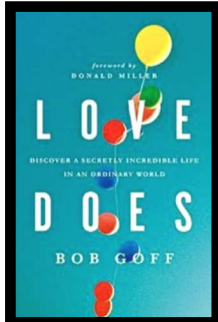
Bible Study

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

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

Adult Education

All Church Book Read—You Are Invited!
Love Does: Discover a Secretly Incredible Life in an Ordinary World



Five Sundays in March (time tbd)

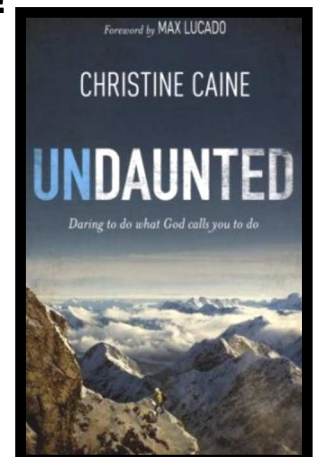
Come join your Church family as we spend five Sundays in March reading and discussing *Love Does* by Bob Goff. This book is full of anecdotes that Goff shares to connect the Christian faith to our daily lives. This is a wonderful opportunity to get to know others in a small group setting.

Signup sheet and books are available in the downstairs hallway at church on Sundays or in the Church Office (Tuesday—Fridays 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.). Please be sure to pick up your book this month, prior to March 3.

***Undaunted*—All Women of the Church are Invited!**
(Part 1) Thursday, February 7 and February 28
6:00—7:30 p.m. in the Church Parlor

In *Undaunted*, Christine Caine offers life-transforming insights into how to not only overcome challenges, wrong turns, and painful circumstances, but to actually grow from those experiences and be equipped and empowered. Much more than a typical Bible study: it is a call to action for anyone who has experienced the challenges of life and is willing to let God use those experiences to bring strength and transformation to their lives. **Part 2 will begin after Easter—stay tuned for upcoming dates.**

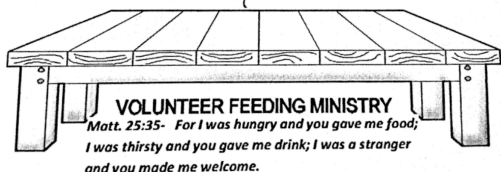
Come when you can (no need to commit to both sessions). Hopefully you will experience a fellowship worthy of our name: Lord Inspired Ladies In Eternal Sisterhood (L.I.L.I.E.S)! Contacts: Myra Locket or Betsy Bridge



Missions / Youth Ministry / Ash Wednesday

Missions

Our Father's Table



Our Father's Table

Tuesday, February 26, 4:30—6:00 p.m.

Two or three people from our church are invited to help once per month to serve dinner and help with light clean up afterward at *Our Father's Table* in Fitchburg. The time commitment is 4:00-6:30 p.m., including travel time. If you would like to serve, please contact Julie Platt.



Serving Ayer, Devens,
Groton, Harvard,
Littleton and Shirley.

Loaves & Fishes

Thanks to your generous donations, our church donated over 200 lbs. of food to *Loaves & Fishes* during the month of January.

2019 Missions Committee

—Brenda Barker
—Lynn Manalo

—Stefanie Lempp
—Julie Platt

—Sue Lunt
—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)

Next Deadline:

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.



Next Month—Lent Begins...



Ash Wednesday

March 6

Dinner and Worship

6:30 p.m.: Simple Soup Supper

7:15 p.m.: Brief Worship Service/Communion and Imposition of Ashes

Let's begin our Lenten journey together. If you can't make it for dinner, come at 7:15 for worship. Families with children are encouraged to attend. (You'll be home by 8:00 p.m.)

RSVP signup for the dinner will be available toward the end of February. Any questions, contact the Church Office (978-448-2091 or unioncc@uccgroton.org).

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



**DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE DO NOT DELAY**

[] PLEASE REMOVE ME FROM YOUR MAILING LIST
Please return to your mail carrier.

The Bible in 50 Words



God made,
Adam bit,
Noah arked,
Abraham split,
Joseph ruled,
Jacob fooled,
bush talked,
Moses balked,
Pharaoh plagued,
people walked,
sea divided,
tablets guided,
promise landed,
Saul freaked,
David peeked,
prophets warned,
Jesus born,
God walked,
love talked,
anger crucified,
hope died,
Love rose,
Spirit flamed,
Word spread,
God remained. Amen