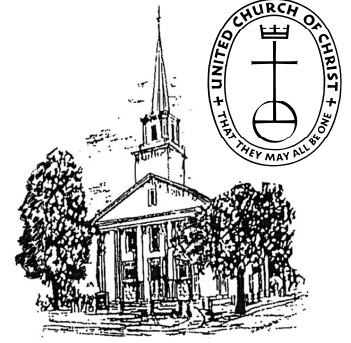


# THE UNION COURIER

Union Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ  
The Reverend Gail L. Miller, Pastor  
Gary Gumuchian, Pastoral Intern

220 Main Street  
Groton, Massachusetts 01450



## March 2019

### Adventuring through Acts

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the farthest parts of the earth. Acts 1:8*

*The farther backward you can look, the farther forward you are likely to see.*  
~Winston S. Churchill

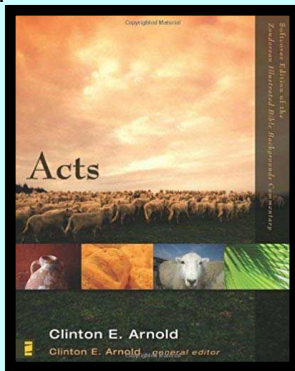
Gail and I will be preaching on selections from the *Acts of the Apostles* for the month of March and into early April. The *Acts of the Apostles* was compiled by the same author as the Gospel of Luke. It is the record of the early church in its absolute infancy. In the same way the *Gospel of Luke* follows Jesus from Galilee into Jerusalem, *Acts* has a trajectory, which takes the Good News and the church, empowered by the Holy Spirit, from Jerusalem out into the world. The roots of every church, every community gathered in Christ's name can be traced back to that group gathered in Jerusalem.

*Acts* is a tremendous volume of historical and spiritual information. It is the first history of the church. We could preach on *Acts* every Sunday for a year and still have material left over. But the selections we have chosen should convey the overarching themes found in *Acts*. Additionally, on March 31, I am going to need some help with the service (see p. 2).

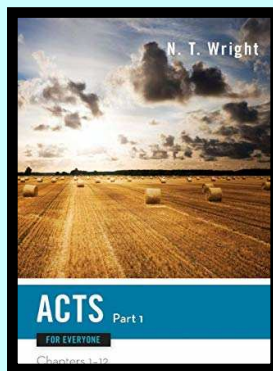
#### Gail and I identified six passages that we think are the "greatest hits" of *Acts*:

- March 3**      *Acts 2:1-12 (Pentecost)*
- March 10**    *Acts 2:43-47 (Early Community)*
- March 17**    *Acts 6 (Stephen / First Deacons)*
- March 24**    *Acts 9 (Paul and Ananias)*
- March 31**    *Acts 16 (Paul and Silas in Macedonia)*
- April 7**      *Acts 28 (Paul in Rome)*

For those looking to learn more about *Acts of the Apostles*, these books are good places to start:



*Acts*, C. E. Arnold



*Acts Part 1 and 2*, N. T. Wright

And if you are looking for a family movie to watch with the kids, the animated *Greatest Heroes and Legends: The Apostles* is great, and runs 44 minutes (if you skip the introduction from Charleton Heston). Enjoy!

Looking forward to "adventuring through *Acts*" with you this Lenten season.

Blessings,

**Lenten Devotions for all ages will be available at church beginning March 3.**



# Our Church Family/Church News



**Ongoing Prayer List** This list is refreshed January 1 and June 1. If there is a name you would like to put back on the list or add a name, please let Gail Miller or Carol Zaiatz (978-448-2091 or unioncc@uccgroton.org) know.

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



- Cindy Smith, in the death of her father.
- Emily and Dom Biocchi, in the death of Emily's brother, Chris Laursen.
- Charlie Bridge, home after a recent hospitalization.

## March Birthdays

Jim Brennan	03/03	Kaleb Larsen	03/11	Sheila Mitchell	03/21
Jim Daly	03/03	Sophia Smith	03/12	Carl Prestia	03/23
Christina Daly	03/06	Emma Nickerson	03/14	John Brooks	03/26
Janet Goudey	03/09	Craig Smith	03/18	Bob Huguenin	03/26
Wade Majeski	03/09	Bill Townsend	03/18	Bonnie Biocchi	03/28

## Church News

**Lent Begins...**  
**March 6—Ash Wednesday**  
**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 on the signup sheet on the bulletin board in the downstairs hallway at church; or through the link in the Friday email. Questions:** Contact the Church Office (978-448-2091 or unioncc@uccgroton.org).

## You Are Invited—All Ages Needed!



### Religious Drama during Worship Sunday, March 31

Religious drama has been part of church worship since the medieval period, and we're doing it on March 31. **We need actors, thespians, hams, and especially those who have always wanted to get in front of a crowd** but then chickened out. The service will include a narrated dramatic interpretation of the scripture reading. There will be no lines to memorize - Narrators say it all! No one is too old, nor too young. Not up for being out front? We'll be needing a hand with some of the preparations and "off-stage" assistance during the service. There will be **one**

**general rehearsal after church on March 24.** If you're interested, find Gary at Fellowship Hour or email him (gary@uccgroton.org).

## Annual Meeting Summary (February 3)

More than 50 people were present for this meeting, chaired by Moderator Stefanie Lempp, at which we:

- Reviewed and approved the minutes from the Congregational meeting on November 18.
- Heard remarks from Pastor Miller expressing gratitude for the people here and the new things that came our way in 2018.
- Reviewed and approved the 2019 Committee/Ministry Roster. Noting a few committees that have openings still (Christian Ed. and Buildings/Grounds), we considered inviting non-members to participate in select committees. Also, our Treasurer and Collector are seeking replacements this year.
- Heard an update from our Treasurer, Dennis Carey, highlighting that we met our pledge goal.
- Heard an update from the Accessibility Steering Team (Bebe Goudey), which is interviewing architects and hoping to select one at the end of February.
- Thanked Stefanie for her five years as our Moderator.



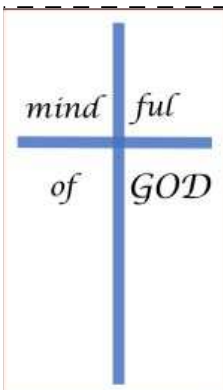
### Ladies' Lunch

**Friday, March 1** (Meet at the church at 11:30 a.m. to carpool)

**Bamboo** (1 Lan Drive, Westford)

All women of the church are invited! Contacts: Janice Owen, Brenda Semienko, or Peg Lloyd.

*RSVP to Margaret Wheeler so we have a head count for reservations.*



### Mindfulness with Macie

**Wednesday, March 20**

**6:30 – 7:30 p.m. in the Church Parlor**

*Teens: Are you Stressed? Overwhelmed at times?*

Join Macie Bridge (sophomore at Trinity College) as she shares how mindfulness and her Christian faith have helped her manage stress. You'll learn about the roots of mindfulness in the Jesuit (Christian) and Buddhist traditions, how it fits into our lives as Christians, and how we can use it to handle stress from school and life. You'll even try out some techniques and practices so you can start your own mindfulness practice.

## Kitchen Ministry



### March Muffin Madness

**Sunday, March 3**

The Kitchen Ministry is once again hosting "March Muffin Sunday." We hope that you will join us for this fun and tasty gathering immediately following church. **Please bring in a dozen of your favorite muffins to share.** In addition to traditional muffins, feel free to provide savory muffins, or snacks made in muffin tins - be creative! We will have display cards where you can write the muffin type and chef's name. Our table will be overflowing with homemade and tasty treats - and last year we had plenty to freeze and use on the following Sundays. If you won't be in church on March 3, feel free to provide muffins on another Sunday in March - just check with Kitchen Ministry to see who will be serving and we can let them know. Please remember - No Nuts, and Gluten Free is always welcome. Happy Baking!

#### Kitchen Ministry

—Greg Balligan  
—Wendy Jones

—Janet Carey  
—Myra Lockett

—Bill Colbert  
—Sara Zambuto

## Meet Our New Moderator – Jean Armstrong



### What is your church background?

*Our family went to the Christian Union Church in West Groton for a few years prior to coming here in 2011. As a child, my family worshipped at Barrington Community Church, which is a non-denominational church affiliated with the American Baptist Church. Barrington is a suburb of Chicago.*

### Who's in your family?

*Husband Mike, and daughters Emma and Katie. (Also our dog Cody, a Retrieve/ Collie mix, and my horse, Nashville)*

### What is your job?

*I work at Fidelity Investments in Merrimack NH, as a Product Manager supporting the research analysts for the Fixed Income business. It's my job to understand the needs of the business and prioritize and communicate them to the engineering team.*

### What do you love to do when you're not working?

*Riding horses has always been my main passion; besides that my favorite things to do are: play Sequence with my family (or any type of game), walking in the woods with my dog Cody or reading a book. I just finished reading Sunshine by Robin McKinley, which I highly recommend.*

### Something you appreciate about our church...

*How my faith has grown at this church. Specifically, teaching Sunday School has been such a blessing. Talking about what faith is and how to live it every day with the children in our church has made me more aware of my faith on a day-to-day basis.*

### Something you're looking forward to in your new role as Moderator...

*My focus in the church has been very centered on Christian Education and my kids involvement. I'm looking forward to branching out more and getting more exposure to other aspects of the church.*

### How can we reach you?

*Use my email or call.*

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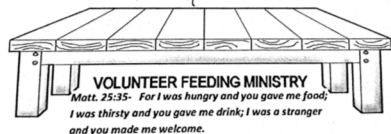
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## Missions—Opportunities to Serve

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*Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. (1 Peter 4:10)*

### Our Father's Table



### Our Father's Table (Serving a Meal in Fitchburg)

**Tuesdays — March 19 or April 30**

**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.



### Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry

*(Feeding Our Neighbors - Any Time)* We always welcome your donations of non-perishable food items at the top of the stairs. If you are interested in dropping our church's donations off at *Loaves & Fishes* at your convenience during one of the drop-off times, please contact Stefanie Lempp.

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### Missions Committee

—Julie Platt, Chair  
—Sue Lunt

—Brenda Barker  
—Lynn Manalo

—Stefanie Lempp  
—Halsey Platt



**March 3**

*The Transfiguration*  
Luke 9:28-36

**March 10**

*Tempted*  
Luke 4:1-13

**March 17**

*God's Promises to Abram*  
Genesis 1:1-12, 17-18

**March 24**

*Parable of the Fig Tree*  
Luke 13:1-9

**March 31**

*The Prodigal Son*  
Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

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Christian Education Committee

—Carl Prestia, Chair

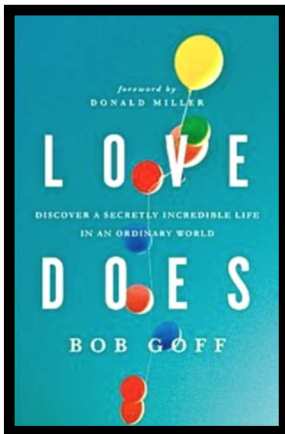
—Bonnie Marchesani

—Amy Nickerson

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## Adult Education

### *Love Does: Discover a Secretly Incredible Life in an Ordinary World*



**(Sundays) March 3, 10, 17, 24, and 31**

**6:30 – 7:00 p.m.: Snacks/Social Time**

**7:00 – 8:00 p.m.: Book Discussion**

**In the Church Parlor**

This book is full of anecdotes that Goff shares to connect the Christian faith to our daily lives. There will be a video introduction at the beginning of each session. 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 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.*

Questions: Carl Prestia

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## 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Artisan Craft Fair

**Saturday, May 4**

**10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.**



### **Volunteers Needed!!**

**Kitchen:** We need one or two folk to head up the kitchen's light lunch; Janet Carey will gladly give input on menu amounts, prices etc.

**Church Craft Table:** Please contact Erica Davenport ([erica@dedavenport.net](mailto:erica@dedavenport.net)) with your ideas for new items to donate; she will organize this table.

**Bake Table:** The donations last year were incredible...thank you so much! Help us provide a variety of baked goods again this year.

These areas and the table rents from crafters all contribute to the profit, which goes into the church budget.

Contact **Bonnie Martin** if you can help!

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## Youth Mission Trip Fundraiser Saturday, March 23 5:30-7:30 p.m. (come anytime) Fellowship Hall

**Menu:** Pasta and Sauce, Garlic Bread, Salad, Dessert

**Free-will Donations** in support of the Youth Mission Trip will be received.

This June, we will serve in Clendenin, West Virginia, doing disaster relief, while getting to know the people we are serving. Please come support our teens as they grow in faith and in service.