

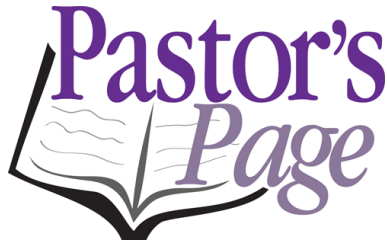
THE UNION COURIER

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

220 Main Street
Groton, Massachusetts 01450



April 2019



*Then the Lord said to Moses,
"Stretch out your hand toward the sky so that
darkness spreads over Egypt – **darkness that can be felt.**"
So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky,
and total darkness covered all Egypt for three days...
Yet all the Israelites had light in the places where they lived.
(Exodus 10:21-23, emphasis mine)*

Spring is taking too long to arrive in my opinion. The sun is shining yes, but the air is still cold ~ I've not given up my winter coat yet! I try to focus on the bright blue sky and the sound of the leaf blowers outside my window (certainly a sign of spring, no?), but still I feel a chill in the air, and see the leafless trees, and the brown garden patches lying fallow.

This Bible verse describes the ninth of the ten plagues that God brought upon Egypt as His means to free His people (the Israelites) from the more than 400 years they were held as slaves there. And I'm captivated by the notion of *darkness that can be felt*. Perhaps you have experienced a darkness that you could feel – or perhaps you are feeling it right now.

Yet all the Israelites had light in the places where they lived. And, as crushing as a darkness that can be felt is, I pray that the good news of light for the people of God is an even more powerful comfort. What a gift this is that the Church has to offer ~ light in the darkness, even the deepest darkness that can be felt.

As we move through the season of Lent toward Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter, consider the darkness that Jesus felt as he was facing his death (painful and torturous), being betrayed by his friends, and completely misunderstood by everyone around him. Because Easter has no meaning if we don't also experience the darkness of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday.

Plan to join us for these services if you are in town. (Holy Week is during April vacation this year.)

Remember.... even though the darkness can be felt, the light will never leave us!

With you on the Way!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Gail'.





Our Church Family



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
Megan Bettison
Robina Carestia
Mike Corbett & Family
Peg Elwood
Tiffany Gibb

Ellen Hargraves
Scott Joyce
Frank Kanour
Julie Kenyon
Joe Marchesani
Jan Miller

Helen Misselhorn
Bill Moeller
Myrtle Murphy
Betty Rettig
Karen Sands
Rudi Schmid

Matt and Mindy Spain
Diane Thorne
Edie Tompkins
Karen and Marc Vandenbulcke
Laurie Wade
Betty and Liz Waggoner



- The Platt family in the death of Halsey's dad, Phillip.
- Leon Avey, at home after a hospitalization.
- Our Muslim brothers and sisters, especially those suffering from the attacks in Christchurch, New Zealand.
- Connie Brown, who broke her wrist in a recent fall.

April Birthdays

Stefanie Lempp	04/01	Liz Brennan	04/07	Andrea Burrier	04/19
Devin Goudey	04/03	Michelle Emerle	04/07	John Gervais	04/23
John Hitsos	04/04	Ben Coviello	04/09	Gail Jefferson	04/23
Jason Hnath	04/04	Julia Zambuto	04/12	Danika Manalo	04/23
Randy York	04/04	Alicia Barbon	04/17	Irene Koutrouba	04/29
Georgia Brooks	04/06	Chris Clinton	04/17	Grace Nickerson	04/29

If we missed your birthday, it is not in our database (please email unioncc@uccgroton.org). Also, we would like to recognize significant anniversaries if would you share that information with us?

Church Accessibility Project Update

The Accessibility Project Team is overjoyed to report that we exceeded our fundraising goal for the first step in making our church fully accessible to all. With your support we were able to contract with Paul Adison of Adison Architects of Keene, NH. The team had a great kick-off meeting with Paul on March 21, a meeting that affirmed for us that he was the right choice for our project. We tasked Paul with preparing schematic plans and to also obtain a building cost estimate based on the plan. The team hopes to present all of this information in June. Look for future updates and keep in touch with the team. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

Accessibility Steering Team

—Anne Cahill
—Karen Sherwin

—Chip Detwiller
—Chris Sullivan

—Bebe Goudey
—Sara Zambuto

—Rev. Gail Miller

Church News



Ladies' Lunch

Friday, April 5 (Meet at the church at 11:30 a.m. to carpool)

Chili's Grill & Bar (42 Orchard Park Dr, Leominster)

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

RSVP to Margaret Wheeler (mlwheeler33@gmail.com) so we have a head count for reservations.



Church Spring Clean-up Day

Saturday, April 20

7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

You are invited! Outdoor cleanup and raking will be our primary job. More hands make the work fun and go faster. Please bring a rake and tarp if you can—and show up anytime for whatever time you can give! If you have any

questions, contact John Biocchi or any other member of the Buildings & Ground Committee (Chris Sullivan or Joe Zambuto). **We appreciate your support.**



Church Council

February 27

Gail spoke about upcoming church events beginning with Ash Wednesday and continuing through Lent, including a class on Mindfulness for teenagers.

We received an update on the status of the Accessibility Steering Team.

Steve Legge presented several options for revisions to the *Communications Covenant*, which he has been working on with Halsey Platt. They have spent significant time on this effort and the council thanked them for their work. We will continue the discussion at our next meeting.

As this was the first meeting of the new Council with new Moderator, Jean Armstrong, she invited the committee chairs to share any joys or concerns relating to their respective committees. We also had a brainstorming session with respect to areas the Council could focus on in 2019. These ideas will be consolidated into a list for discussion and selection of what we'll focus on.

March 27

Gail shared the many wonderful things that have been happening recently at our church, from groups like the men's gathering to the Mindfulness for Teens class with Macie Bridge, from the spaghetti dinner to the Lenten worship services. We are richly blessed!

The Council discussion centered on what the council's main focus should be in 2019. The majority agreed that developing a Hospitality plan needs to be a top priority, and there were some ideas shared and implemented about how to do this.

We would like to re-introduce Feedback Circles into the life of the church, as they can be a very valuable source of information to discern how we as a body are doing in key areas. They will be most valuable if we can hear from new voices! Look for an opportunity to participate in the coming months.

There was further discussion on the revision of the *Communications Covenant*, with the goal of finalizing a presentation format at our next meeting. We also discussed church safety and some members of the council plan to attend some upcoming training on this topic next month.

April 28 Worship Moved to 4:30 p.m.

Due to the *Groton Road Race* start time at 10:00 a.m., we will **worship at 4:30 p.m.** This gives people time to run the race, have a big lunch, take a nap, take a shower and come to church! And if you're not running in the race, it gives you an opportunity to sleep in (if that's your thing) and to do your day a little differently. *There will be no Sunday School, we will have pizza and snacks during Fellowship Hour afterwards, and everyone will be able to be home before dark.*



Men's Fellowship—Bible and Breakfast Saturday, April 13 8:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall

Following (or during, as the Spirit moves us) a simple breakfast, we will examine the four accounts of Palm Sunday as recorded in the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). There are commonalities and variations between them, and so we'll ask, "What joys and celebrations are to be found in those differences?"

To make sure there is enough food for everyone, please email Gary Gumuchian (gary@uccgroton.org) or sign up on the bulletin board in the downstairs hallway at church.

In food we hope to find fellowship, in study we hope to grow closer to God.

Mission Trip Fundraisers



Spaghetti Supper Fundraiser on March 23

Thank you to all those who worked at and attended this year. Your generosity made this event a huge success and we were able to raise \$1,400 toward the trip this summer! Great job supporting our kids!



Yard Sale Fundraiser

Saturday, April 27

9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Fellowship Hall (Items mostly inside with large items outside)

As you are doing your Spring cleaning, please donate items in good re-saleable condition, and the leftovers will then be donated to Savers afterwards. There are sign-up sheets on the bulletin board in the hallway

for many ways that you can help/donate/bake to make this event successful for the Mission Trip Teenagers. **Questions:** Contact Charlene Legge.



April 7

Mary Anoints Jesus, John 12:1-8

April 14 (Palm Sunday)

No Sunday School

April 21 (Easter Sunday)

No Sunday School

April 28—4:30 p.m. Worship (see p. 4)

No Sunday School

Christian Education Committee

—Carl Prestia, Chair

—Bonnie Marchesani

—Amy Nickerson

Missions



Hagar's Sisters Fundraiser

Saturday, April 27, 5:00 p.m.

**Mount Hope Christian Center
(3 McGinnis Drive, Burlington, MA)**

*Ending the cycle of violence through
the transforming power of God.*

Hagar's Sisters is presenting its second annual Comedy benefit, *Filled with Laughter*, in Burlington, MA. The goal is to raise \$50,000 to provide women with scholarships for resources, including safety planning, legal consultation, resource referral and Bible-based education and support.

This year, we are looking to support the benefit with VOLUNTEERS on the day of the event. If you are interested in joining us for a fun evening of serving and fellowship, please contact Brenda Barker or Stefanie Lempp. No experience is needed! We will be helping with set-up, clean-up, tickets, the live and silent auctions, etc.; and we will plan to car pool — join us! Donations for the auction are also welcome.

Other Opportunities to Serve

Loaves & Fishes

Your donations of non-perishable food items at the top of the stairs are always welcome. Thank you for your generosity!

Our Father's Table

Two or three people from our church are invited to help with serving dinner and a light clean-up 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 on May 28 or June 25, please contact Julie Platt.

Missions Committee

—Julie Platt, Chair

—Sue Lunt

—Brenda Barker

—Lynn Manalo

—Stefanie Lempp

—Halsey Platt

And coming in May...

14th Annual Spring Artisan Craft Fair

Saturday, May 4

10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.



Seeking Volunteers

- **Kitchen:** Carl Prestia needs kitchen help on Friday afternoon and Saturday, as well as donations. Contact Carl if you can help.
- **Church Craft Table:** Looking for sewing, crochet, and knitted items. Contact Erica Davenport.
- **Bake Table:** Mark Rzeknikiewicz will need donations for the bake table. We had a great turnout last year—let's do it again!

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

Set-up Help Needed

Sunday, April 28: After church, break-down the Nursery (Don't forget Worship is at 4:00 p.m.!)

Wednesday, May 1, at 6:00 p.m.: Set-up the Fellowship Hall

Saturday, May 4, starting at 2:30 p.m.: Break-down the fair and rebuild the nursery

Come shop for Mother's Day, birthdays, weddings, yourself! All "Made in America"!

Contact: Bonnie Martin

Spiritual Memoir

Six Weeks — Tuesday Nights starting in May

(May 7, 14, 21, 28, and June 4 and 11)

7:00 p.m. in the Parish House Front Room

The spiritual writer uncovers, probes, and honors what is sacred in his or her life story, the writing process itself is a means in spiritual growth, and the end product makes the experience of the sacred available to the reader. ~Elizabeth J. Andrew



Memoirs are not necessarily a complete autobiography. Rather they recount specific events or people we have encountered on our life's journey. Writing a spiritual memoir is often a fulfilling experience. We have all had precious moments — though we may not have recognized them at the time — of God moving and intervening in our lives. Reflection upon key moments in our lives can often remove the veil and cause us to recognize that God has lovingly been walking with us.

In this six-week workshop, we will examine our lives, read excerpts from some spiritual memoirs written by others, write and share memoirs. There will be writing homework, but I do not expect it to be onerous and, hopefully, it will be rewarding.

For those lacking confidence in their writing, this is a wonderful opportunity to write in a safe, loving environment with no grades and certainly no marks off for grammar or spelling errors. Rather, it is an opportunity to tell your story. There are no books to purchase, all you need is paper and a pen.

First session is May 7 at 7:00 p.m. in the Parish House front room. Sign up on the bulletin board in the downstairs hallway at church; or email Gary (gary@uccgroton.org).



2019 Easter Plant Order Form

Easter Sunday is April 21!

FORM DUE BY: SUNDAY, April 14

Please return this form and a check made out to UCC (memo: Easter Flowers) to the Church Office:

Carol Zaiatz
Union Congregational Church
220 Main Street
Groton, MA 01450

For the bulletin insert:

Plant is Given by: _____

In Loving Memory of: _____

In Honor/Celebration of: _____

Qty Ordered	Flower	Cost	Total
_____	Double Stem Lily	\$18.00	\$ _____
_____	Daffodils	\$ 9.00	\$ _____
_____	Hyacinths	\$ 9.00	\$ _____
_____	Tulips	\$ 9.00	\$ _____
Total Order			\$ _____

After Easter, plants will be delivered to folk in the church who might appreciate a gift of love. If you have a specific person in mind, please enter their information here:

Name _____

Address _____

If you have any further questions, please contact Carol Zaiatz (978-448-2091 or unioncc@uccgroton.org). Thank you very much and may you have a Blessed Easter!



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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE DO NOT DELAY

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



Holy Week

Palm/Passion Sunday, April 14, 10:00 a.m.

Palms will be handed out
Senior Choir

Maundy Thursday, April 18, 7:30 p.m.

Holy Communion will be served. Senior Choir will sing with the traditional Tenebrae scripture readings accompanied by the extinguishing of lights symbolizing Christ's death. A beautiful, dramatic worship service. (Contact Gail if you'd like to read scripture.)



Good Friday, April 19, 12:00 p.m.

We gather in the Sanctuary to pray, sing, and view a 20 minute video interpretation of the arrest, trial, and death of Jesus, as recorded in the Gospel of John.

Easter Sunday, April 21, 10:00 a.m.

Traditional Family Worship
Senior Choir, Handbell Choir and Trumpet
Holy Communion will be served
No Sunday School

*Do you know someone who doesn't have a church home?
Consider inviting them to join you for Easter worship.*

