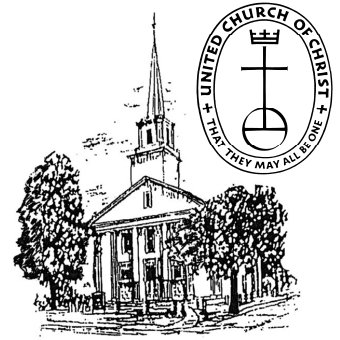


THE UNION COURIER

Union Congregational Church
(United Church of Christ)
220 Main Street
Groton, Massachusetts 01450

Website: www.uccgroton.net
Email: unioncc@uccgroton.org
Phone: 978-448-2091



November 2019

A Message from the Diaconate *Our Interim Period*

This is an exciting time for our church. The UCC Massachusetts Conference website summarizes the interim period as follows:

Interim time is a crucial time in the life of a congregation. It's an important time to reflect on where the church has been and where it is going. To prepare for the next chapter in the life and ministry of the church, this is a pivotal time to discover "Who we are?", "Who is our neighbor?", and "What is God calling us to do and to be?" Finding this crystal clarity is pivotal to an effective search process for the next pastor, as well as a healthy, faithful, and effective start in the church's next chapter.

We have been blessed to have Reverend Gail leading us along our spiritual path for the last 13 years. As she begins a new chapter in Concord, we begin a new chapter in Groton. Even without a pastor in the past few months, we are learning that WE – the congregation – are the church. We are energized and moving forward even as we wait. Adult leaders and youth are busy planning the Mission Trip to Guatemala for next year. The Accessibility Steering Team received unanimous approval to “move forward” with the Capital Campaign for the proposed Building Project. Our church is not sitting around waiting for our next leader, our next Interim or our next Settled Pastor. We are moving forward – *Sharing Christ and Changing Lives*.

Reverend Corey Sanderson will join us on December 1 and guide our church through our Interim Pastor period. He will steer us through the beginning of this chapter. This is not a period of just “keeping the ship afloat” and waiting for our next Settled Pastor. It is a dynamic time, a time to ask questions, and a time to take a close look in the mirror.

We will answer the questions posed by the UCC Conference by reflecting on where we have come from and discerning where we want to go. Looking back, we can acknowledge what we have accomplished, what we might have left undone, what our strengths are, and what challenges we are facing. Reverend Sanderson is trained specifically to help us in this way and brings the skills, energy, and passion necessary to support us in answering these questions. We will better learn who we are as a church and in which direction God is calling us to go. It is only then that we will be truly ready for the Holy Spirit to bring us a Settled Pastor.

Potluck Dinner



You Are Invited!

Potluck Dinner

**Meet Reverend Corey Jason Sanderson
Sunday, November 24 (time TBD)**

On Sunday, November 24, the Deacons will be hosting a Potluck Dinner for everyone to meet Reverend Corey Sanderson. He has already met with Carol, been in touch with the Youth Mission Trip organizers, and will attend the next Deacons meeting. His first Sunday leading worship will be Sunday, December 1. Stay tuned for more details about the potluck "meet and greet."



Our Church Family/B&G



Ongoing Prayer List: This list is refreshed in January and June. If there is a name you would like to add or remove, please contact Carol Zaiatz (978-448-2091 or unioncc@uccgroton.org).

Ruth Allen
Megan Bettison
Toni Bond
Robina Carestia
Mike Corbett & Family

Peg Elwood
Tiffany Gibb
Betty Goulet
Ellen Hargraves
Frank Kanour

Joe Marchesani
Bill Moeller
Myrtle Murphy
Karen Sands
Rudi Schmid

Matt & Mandy Spain
Diane Thorne
Edie Tompkins
Karen & Marc Vandembulcke
Betty & Liz Waggoner



PRAYERS
of the
CHURCH

- Sue Lunt and family, in the death of her mother, Dorothy Morris, on October 12.
- Toni Bond, home recovering from a back injury.

Thank You from Toni Bond

Thank you to everyone at church, including the Deacons, for doing so much for me. I really appreciate all the cards, telephone calls, and prayers from my church family.

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 in the Church Office (978-448-2091) and she 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.

November Birthdays

Lisa Hitsos	11/02	Halsey Platt	11/10	Kelli Hnath	11/19
Andrew Kuliesis	11/03	Jacqueline Gervais	11/11	Bryce June	11/21
Karen Sjoberg	11/04	Erica Davenport	11/12	Robert Rosenfeld	11/22
Hailey Sullivan	11/05	Savannah Kuliesis	11/12	Sally Waite	11/22
Nina Morrison	11/06	Kimberly Kuliesis	11/15	Izzy Smith	11/24
Connie Wall-Haas	11/06	Bob Brown	11/16	Briana Manalo	11/25
Liam Colbert	11/07	Heather Houde	11/16	Barbara Gale	11/26
Curtis Prestia	11/07	Kim Daly	11/18		
Krista Kubick	11/08	Leon Avey	11/19		

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?

Buildings & Grounds



Volunteers Needed for Winter Shoveling

Your Buildings & Grounds Committee will be prepared for the upcoming snow, but could use additional help. We'll have shovels, salt, and sand at church — when you finish your driveway, please lend a hand here on Sunday mornings after a storm to clear a sidewalk or two. Contact John Biocchi

Buildings & Grounds

—John Biocchi, Chair

—Chris Sullivan

—Joe Zambuto

Church News



September 25

The Council heard an update from the Interim Pastor Search Committee. The committee was very excited to report that they had extended an offer to an excellent candidate and expected to announce the name and other details to the parish on 9/29. It is

expected that the Interim will be in place to begin leading worship on 12/1. After the Interim Pastor arrives, the church will begin the work of forming a Settled Pastor Search Committee. Anyone can nominate anyone (including themselves) to serve on the committee, which should consist of 5-9 members.

The Finance Committee presented a budget update; at present we are on target financially for the year and anticipate being able to allocate some surplus funds to other areas in need.

Bebe Goudey summarized the presentation the Accessibility Steering Team gave to the congregation on 9/22. The team is extremely pleased with the plans presented by architect Paul Adison, and he answered many questions from the parish at that time. The team plans to compile all the questions and answers and make them available to any parishioners who were unable to attend the presentation. The next step will be to have a further discussion of the project at the Stated meeting on October 27 and potentially a vote to approve moving forward to the Capital Campaign.

October 30

The Finance Committee provided an update on the current 2019 Budget and the proposed 2020 Budget in advance of the November 17 Budget Meeting. Due to the changes in ministerial expenses. Despite a pledge shortfall, we are projecting a surplus this year. Some of this surplus has been allocated to B&G for painting and some to pay off a loan, which will then come off next year's budget. The balance of the surplus is being proposed for Missions, as our current overall percentage of income to Missions is only 3%. The 2020 Proposed Budget will be printed and available in church on Sunday, November 3.

We are going to be instituting an Online Church Directory where families can manage their own content. We haven't updated our picture directory in many years! This will be an easier way to keep it updated without going through a professional photo company for pictures. It will also be a great tool for our incoming Interim Pastor to learn who we are!

It is that time — we need to make committee nominations for the 2020 year. There are some areas in particular — Christian Education and Buildings & Grounds — where we are sorely in need of help. Especially in this time of transition, we really need to rely on our congregation to fill these important roles. Please carefully consider ways in which you can contribute your time and talents to our committees and ministries.

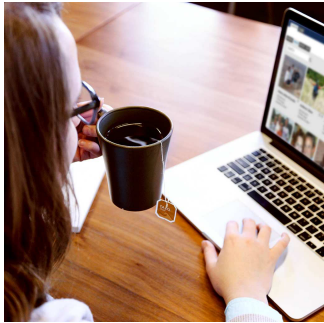
The Accessibility Steering Team provided an update and a look at next steps after the unanimous vote at our Stated Meeting (October 27) to move forward with a Capital Campaign! In the same vein as above, the primary focus right now is encouraging people to join the Capital Campaign Committee in any of a number of roles. People are all supportive of the project, which is heartening! But now we need to get people to accept a role on this committee, which is expected to be a short-term commitment. Please prayerfully consider whether you could help!

Congregational Budget Meeting

Sunday, November 17

After Worship in the Sanctuary

Copies of the proposed 2020 Operating Budget will be available in the Sanctuary and the Church Office beginning November 3. Then on November 17, after worship, all are invited to a meeting at which the membership will approve the Operating Budget for 2020. Questions may be directed to our Treasurer, Dennis Carey, Mary Hanson (Stewardship & Finance), or Moderator Jean Armstrong.



New Online Church Directory

We are moving our Church Directory online! Why?

- We can have pictures next to names. It will help our members (and the new minister) identify each other.
- We can look people up by name, group, or family.
- The church can print it out with pictures.
- It can only be viewed by members.
- It's always up-to-date because members can change their information anytime.



Starting the week of November 18, if you are in the Church Directory now, you will receive an email with your login information. Look for a demonstration downstairs after church each Sunday through November 17.

Mary Hanson
(Technology Ministry Team)



Serving on Committees and Ministries

As we prepare for the Annual Meeting in January/February 2020 (when the "turnover" of committee members occurs), the Church Council invites you to let us know your interest in serving on committees and ministries. Committee positions require formal membership in the church and ministry positions allow for anyone to serve.

Committees: Buildings & Grounds, Christian Education, Diaconate, Endowment, Missions, Pastor-Parish Relations, Stewardship & Finance

Ministries: Fair, Kitchen, Technology, Youth and Family

Feel free to approach Jean Armstrong (Moderator) with your questions or to express an interest in serving.

Stewardship...An Invitation

A parishioner reflects on changes in our church and what is to come:

With the news earlier this year that Reverend Gail would be leaving our church, I was afraid and uncertain of what would happen. I couldn't imagine not having Gail at the lectern, by my side in discussions and all that entails worshipping Christ as a congregation. But we forged ahead, and miraculously life in our church continued on. We prayed together, sang, reflected on the sermons, and enjoyed fellowship time outside this summer. Harvest Fair and the Backpack Drive went very well, we have teachers for all the Sunday School classes, and planning is underway for multiple Mission Trips and so much more. We are still the same church, and we are blessed with abundance of faith and fellowship.

Where have you experienced an abundance of blessings?

Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test in this, says the Lord Almighty, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.

~Malachi 3:10

Pledge Sunday is November 17

The Stewardship Team:

—Jean Armstrong
—Margaret Wheeler

—Halsey Platt

—Craig Smith

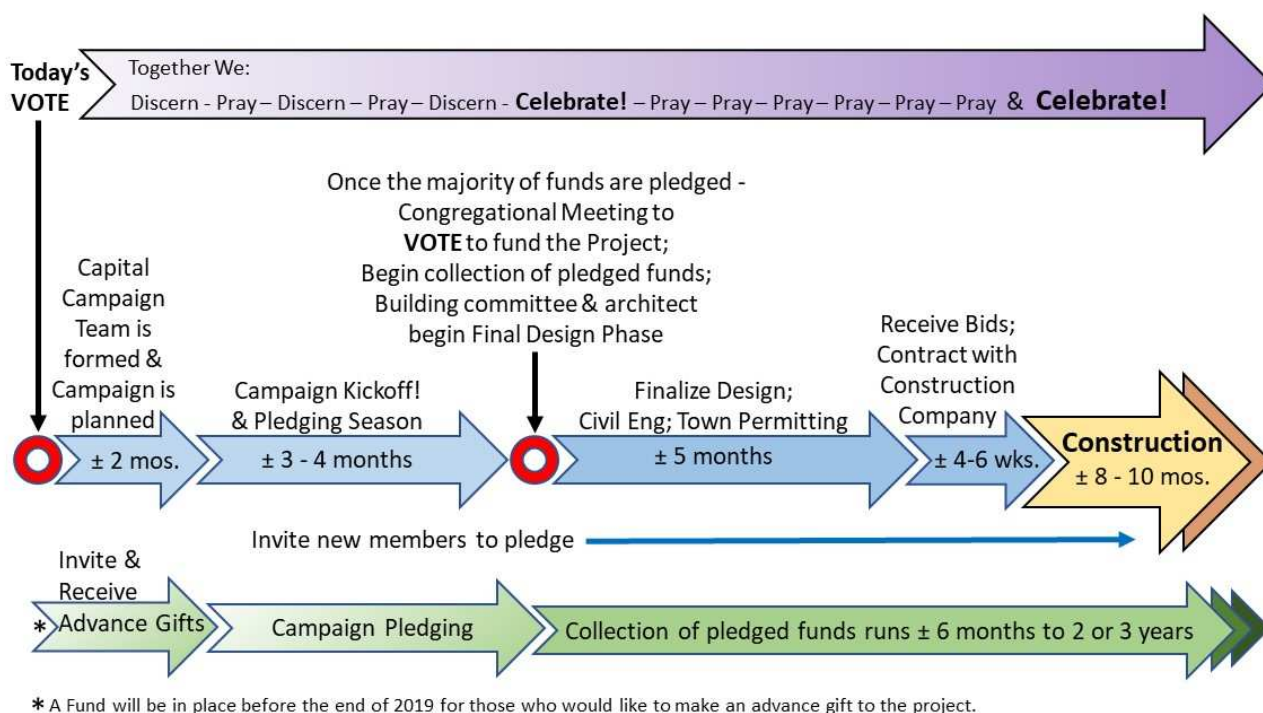
Accessibility Project Update

Great news! The Congregation is overwhelmingly in favor of moving forward with a Capital Campaign to support the Accessibility Project. About 65 members voted on this question at the Stated Meeting on October 27. The vote was unanimous! In fact, all of the statements received prior to the meeting from members who couldn't attend were also in favor of moving forward (24 members were represented in 11 statements).

Let's keep the momentum going! It's now time to form the Capital Campaign Team to plan the kickoff in early 2020. Please contact Bebe Goudey, call the church office (979-448-2091), or reach out to another member of the Accessibility Steering Team to serve the church in this way. Many hands make light work. THANK YOU!

UCC Groton - Accessibility Project

Estimated Timeline and Project Flow



Sharing Christ - Changing Lives

Accessibility Steering Team

—Bebe Goudey, Captain	—Anne Cahill	—Chip Detwiller
—Karen Sherwin	—Christopher Sullivan	—Sara Zambuto

Sunday School

November 3—All Saints Sunday
Activity in the Fellowship Hall (PreK-4th grade)

November 10—*The Sadducees' Question*
Luke 20:27-38

November 17—*God's Love Is Forever*
Luke 21:5-19

November 24—*The Day Jesus Died*
Luke 23:33-43

Christian Education Committee

—Carl Prestia, Chair	—Bonnie Marchesani	—Amy Nickerson
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Missions

Harvest Fair

Loaves & Fishes

Sunday, November 3

Please help make Thanksgiving a memorable one for local families. Most-needed items are:

Coffee, tea, cocoa
Stuffing
Crackers and nuts
Turkey gravy

Canned yams
Cranberry sauce
Pickles & olives
juice



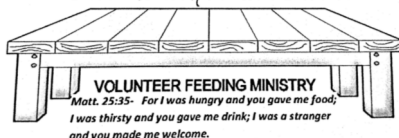
Turkeys (over 14lbs.), hams (3 lbs, 5 lbs and larger), and frozen fruit pies are *needed also; but these items need to be **dropped off at Loaves & Fishes** during open pantry or food collection hours. Check out their website (www.loavesfishespantry.org) for more information. Drop your (non-perishable) food items off on the landing on your way to the Sanctuary.*



Teen Challenge Banquet

UCC Groton has once again sponsored a table at the annual *Teen Challenge* Banquet on Friday, November 8, in Manchester, New Hampshire. This event is a fundraiser for the *Teen Challenge* program, offering "Life Changing Hope to Addicts and Their Families."

Our Father's Table



Our Father's Table (40 Boutelle St., Fitchburg)

Tuesday, November 26, 4:00 – 6:30 p.m.

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 (4:00- 6:30 p.m.) includes travel time. **If you would like to serve, please contact Julie Platt.**

Missions Committee

—Julie Platt, Chair
—Lynn Manalo

—Brenda Barker
—Halsey Platt

—Stefanie Lempp

—Sue Lunt

Harvest Fair—October 5

Thank you to all who helped to make this year's Harvest Fair a success. After expenses, we were able to donate over \$7,000 to *Hagar Sisters*!

In addition, we would like to acknowledge and thank those who so graciously donated to the Silent Auction portion of the fair.

Anthony's Coal Fire Pizza
Bailey's Bar & Grill
Lois Berge
Blackbird Café
Body Mind Spirit Salon & Day Spa
Paul and Donna Brown
Bruno's Pizza
Dennis and Janet Carey
Compassionate Care Veterinary Services
Country Butcher & Deli
Courtyard Marriott, Littleton
Chip and Carly Detwiller
Facets
Filho's Cucina
Forge & Vine
Gervais Ford

Gibbet Hill Grill
Bob Goudey
Groton House of Pizza
The Groton Inn
The Groton Station House
Tom and Mary Hanson
Indigo of Groton
Jack O'Lantern Wine & Spirits
Steve and Charlene Legge
Luth's Family Karate/Harmony Wellness
Rev. and Mrs. Skip Lloyd
Bonnie Marchesani
Mariano's
Bonnie Martin
Masala Bay
MetroRock Littleton

Moe's Southwest Grill
Moison's Ace Hardware
Nashoba Valley Dance Academy
NOA Gallery
O'Neil Cinema
Patriot Pizza
Halsey and Julie Platt
Salon at 48
Salt & Light
Sheila Smith
Spavia Day Spa
Taka Asian Cuisine
Tavern in the Square
Margaret Wheeler
Ann Wortman

Upcoming Advent/Christmas Season

Preparing for Advent Sunday, November 24

Each year we make available to you candles to light, calendars to open, devotions to read, and stickers to stick for the children — all to help you experience the journey to Bethlehem more deeply. ***Be sure to visit the table downstairs at church on November 24.***



Decorate the Sanctuary Saturday, November 30 at 9:00 a.m.

Start the season with the Deacons for the annual decorating of the church Sanctuary for Advent and Christmas. Bring the whole family for a festive morning of beautifying the church. There will be hot cocoa and coffee available. Everyone is welcome—please join us!



Community Tree Lighting Sunday, December 1 at 4:00 p.m.

We invite your donations for a reception in our Fellowship Hall afterwards.



Journey to Bethlehem

Friday, December 6, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

Faith Evangelical Free Church (54 Hosmer St., Acton)

Meet at the church in Acton at 6:45 p.m.

Join your church family on this adventure, which takes you back to biblical times and reenacts the journey a family would have taken to Bethlehem to be counted in the census as Mary and Joseph were. It's not a show, it's a journey that winds through the grounds of the church and can't be described with words (visit the church's website for more information: <https://www.faithevfree.org/journey-to-bethlehem.html>). This is appropriate for children of all ages.

If you are planning on going and would like to lead the group, please contact Mary Hanson (mary.hanson@monotypeimaging.com) or Carl Prestia (ccprestia@gmail.com).

Groton Community Christmas Concert

**Sunday, December 15
2:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.**

**Monday, December 16
7:30 p.m.**



Singing with the Angels

Come and enjoy the 45th Annual Groton Community Christmas Concert. There will be wonderful music of the season, sung by children and adults from Groton and 11 surrounding communities; Edie Tompkins, Director. This concert is held in our Sanctuary and is free (though donations will be accepted at the door).

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

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Please return to your mail carrier.

November Highlights

Friday, November 1—Ladies' Lunch (meet at church at 11:30 a.m.)

(Daylight Savings ends—turn clocks back Saturday night)

Sunday November 3—All Saints Sunday

- ♦ Holy Communion
- ♦ Guest Preacher: Gary Gumuchian
- ♦ We name out loud those who have died in the past year

Sunday, November 17—Pledge Sunday

- ♦ Guest Preacher: Andrea McDonough
- ♦ We bring our Pledges forward in worship as an offering to God
- ♦ Congregational Budget Meeting after Worship

November 24—Christ the King Sunday

- ♦ Mission Trip Sermon
- ♦ Advent calendars, activities, and devotions will be available to take home.

December 1—First Sunday of Advent

- ♦ Holy Communion
- ♦ Reverend Corey Jason Sanderson is here!
- ♦ Community Tree Lighting at 4:00 p.m. (refreshments in our church)



**Annual
Stewardship
Campaign**