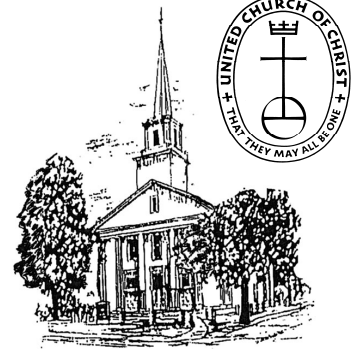


THE UNION COURIER

Union Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
The Rev. Corey J. Sanderson, Interim Pastor

220 Main Street
Groton, Massachusetts 01450



January 2020

A Message from Your Interim Pastor

Dear Friends,

During the 8:00 p.m. worship service on Christmas Eve, I shared a favorite poem written by Howard Thurman, former Dean of the Chapel at Boston University. Thurman had a profound and lasting influence on Martin Luther King, Jr. As King's mentor, Thurman introduced the younger Martin to Gandhi's work of non-violent resistance. Thurman's poem is entitled, *The Work of Christmas*. It reads,



*When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among brothers,
To make music in the heart.*

I read this poem every year to remind myself that Christmas is not simply a day or even the twelve-day liturgical season in the life of the Church. Christmas is the work of our lives.

One of the most beautiful images that inspires me to carry on *The Work of Christmas* comes from Saint Teresa of Avila. Five hundred years ago, Teresa wrote:

Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body.

I've come to see, through the years, that faith is not merely what we believe, but perhaps even more it is how we live our lives. We are called to practice our faith and we do that by being Christ's hands and feet and eyes in the world.

What are the gifts of your faith that you can share with other people in this new year? Maybe it is extending a hand in forgiveness to one who has wronged you. Maybe you can stand in solidarity with those who are marginalized and even persecuted in our society. Maybe you can look upon the faces of all whom you encounter with kindness and compassion.

May the Christmas story of God coming to dwell with us remind you that God dwells inside *you*. You are a beloved Child of God and with you God is pleased. That is your truest nature. That is the greatest gift of life. To practice one's faith involves living out of this sacred awareness. So, in the days ahead practice being Christ's hands and feet and eyes in all that you do. I wish you all great joy at the start of this new year.

Peace,

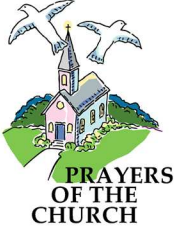


Our Church Family/News



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

Toni Bond	Betty Goulet	Myrtle Murphy	Joe Marchesani
Mike Corbett & Family	Chris Joyce	Betty Sampas	Bill Moeller
Tiffany Gibb	Frank Kanour	Rudi Schmid	Betty & Liz Waggoner
Ellen Hargraves	Jack Lyons	Matt & Mandy Spain	Laurie Waye



- Toni Bond, at Apple Valley. Prayers and well-wishes in the form of a note or card can be mailed to: Toni Bond, c/o Apple Valley, 400 Groton Rd., Rm. 111, Ayer, MA 01432.
- Michelle Emerle and family, in the death of her father, Adam Dynowski.
- The Elwood Family, in the death of Peg Elwood on December 10.

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.



Baptized in the Name of the Lord

Congratulations to **The Chrobak Family** on the Baptism of **Oliver** and **The Morrison Family** on the Baptism of **Blakely**. Both were **Baptized on Sunday, December 22**, during worship.

January Birthdays

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



Meeting Summary (December 18)

The agenda was set for the Annual meeting, which is scheduled for February 2, 2020.

We received an update on 2020 pledges from the Collector. The Council decided to allocate the Birthday Fund monies for this year toward lighting for the sign and walkway in front of the church.

We had a discussion about ways in which we can provide more hospitality to newcomers and visitors alike. This is an item we would like to discuss further while we are discussing committee nominations for 2020. Rather than form a new committee or ministry, this might be a way in which we can get existing committees involved.

Accessibility Project Capital Campaign Update

The Capital Campaign Team has been formed and is ready to kick off the campaign with the start of the new year! The team consists of **Co-Captains Bonnie Bicchì and Kelli Hnath, along with Don Kennedy, Halsey Platt, Karen Sherwin, Cheryl Townsend and Bob & Bebe Goudey with help from Reverend Sanderson.** In 2020 we will be *Coming Together - Lifting up - Reaching Out* as a congregation to make our church building accessible to all. More details and exciting announcements coming soon!



Ladies' Lunch

Mariano's (105 Main Street, Pepperell)

Friday, January 3 (Meet at the church at 11:30 a.m. to carpool)

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

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. If you give online and do not need offering envelopes, please let us know.

Contact **Margaret Wheeler** (collector@uccgroton.org) or the **Church Office** (unioncc@uccgroton.org; 978-448-2091).



Annual Meeting

Sunday, February 2, 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 2020 Operating Budget. **Details/content about these, as well as**

the 2019 Annual Report, will be available beginning January 19 in worship and at the Church Office. Contact **Jean Armstrong** or **Pastor Sanderson** with your questions in advance of the meeting.

Church News (cont.) Sunday School/Bible Study



2020 Fellowship Hour Signup

The Kitchen Ministry is very grateful for all the help received from individuals and families assisting with our hospitality efforts by preparing for and serving at Fellowship Hour. We would like to try a little different approach to scheduling of Fellowship Hour. **We would like to invite you to sign up for a Sunday of your choosing between January and March 2020. We have a sign-up form on the bulletin board downstairs at church and an online sign-up link is available in the weekly email.** Once there has been a chance for people to sign up for their preferred Sunday, the Kitchen Ministry will then fill in the open dates as needed. Please make note of your chosen Sunday and, if you are unable to serve, we ask that you find a replacement to help with the efforts. Thank you!

2020 Altar Flowers

The new 2020 Altar Flower chart is on the bulletin board in the downstairs 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 2020 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.

Sunday School



January 5

Holy Communion—Activity in the Fellowship Hall

January 12

Jesus' Baptism Matthew 3:13-17

January 19

The Lamb of God John 1:29-42

January 26

The Disciples Matthew 4:12-23

Christian Education Committee

—Carl Prestia, Chair

—Bonnie Marchesani

—Amy Nickerson

Bible Study

Wednesday Evening

7:30 p.m. in the Pastor's Office

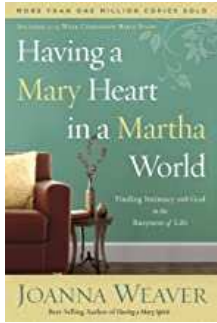
Contact: Janet Kennedy

Thursday Morning Bible Study

10:00 a.m.

Contact: Marvin Caldwell

Meeting 1/2, 1/9, 1/30. No class on 1/16 and 1/23, as Marvin will be away.



Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World ***(All Women of the Church are Invited!)***

Thursdays (January 16—February 13)

6:30 – 8:00 p.m. in the Parish House

We will read *Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World*. Please save these dates: 1/16, 1/23, 1/30, 2/6, 2/13. If you would like to participate, please order your copy of the devotional *Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World*, available through Amazon (a link is provided in the Friday email). This is a “come when you can” group. Hopefully, you will experience a fellowship worthy of our name: **Lord Inspired Ladies In Eternal Sisterhood (L.I.L.I.E.S)! Contact: Raquel Majeski**



Sermon on the Mount Series

Thursdays (January 16—February 6)

6:30—8:00 p.m. in the Parish House

Four-week concurrent Sermon Series and Bible Study on Jesus’ *Sermon on the Mount*. Join Rev. Sanderson and experience the longest teaching of Jesus in the entire New Testament. *The Sermon on the Mount* is where we find many of the most meaningful teachings of Jesus, such as *The Beatitudes*, *The Lord’s Prayer*, and *The Golden Rule*. We hear about ‘the lilies of the field,’ and the admonition that ‘where

your heart is there your treasure will be also.’ Yet in this same sermon we find the command to ‘turn the other cheek,’ to ‘love your enemies,’ and to stop judging others and being hypocritical. We find hard words about adultery and divorce, and a warning against religious leaders who parade around in public. Saint Augustine once described this sermon of Jesus as the ‘perfect standard of the Christian life’ and the teachings found in this sermon are often referred to as the ‘Ethics of the Kingdom.’ We can’t cover every facet during these four weeks, but we will explore major portions. **Join us Sunday mornings (January 12, 19, 26, February 2) for our regular worship service and on the four Thursday evenings (January 16, 23, 30, February 6) at 6:30 p.m. in the Parish House.**

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 to those of you who are volunteering your time to be a **Christmas Angel** for the various organizations we support. We will be organizing and contacting those who have volunteered.

Missions Committee

—Julie Platt, Chair
—Lynn Manalo

—Brenda Barker
—Halsey Platt

—Stefanie Lempp

—Sue Lunt

2020 Youth Mission Fundraiser



Soup Dinner

Sunday, January 12

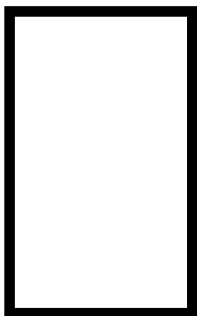
5:00—7:00 p.m. (come anytime)

The Fellowship Hall

This fundraiser will benefit the Youth Mission Trip to Guatemala this summer. We will be serving a variety of soup and bread. Please come and enjoy a delicious bowl of soup and good company! **Free-will Donations** will be received and appreciated!

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

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE DO NOT DELAY

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

January Highlights

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

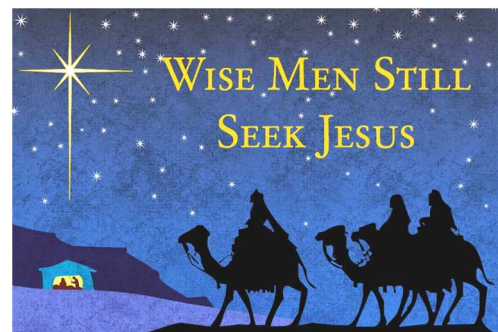
Sunday, January 5
Epiphany Sunday/Holy Communion/Activity for the Children

Sunday, January 12
Worship/Sunday School
5:00-7:00 p.m. Soup Dinner (Mission Trip Fundraiser) (see p. 5)

Sunday, January 19
Worship/Sunday School
2019 Annual Report available

Sunday, January 26
Worship/Sunday School

Sunday, February 2
Worship/Sunday School
Annual Meeting after Worship (see p. 3)



**Donations for CityReach being accepted through January 9.
Drop off your donations to the designated tables in the
Fellowship Hall. Thank you!**