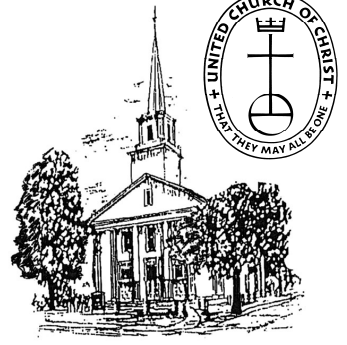


THE UNION COURIER

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

220 Main Street
Groton, Massachusetts 01450



April 2020

Pastor's Page

Do not be afraid. That's what the disciples were told on that very first Easter morning. For those of us, living so many years later, we know that there is a lot to fear. In the midst of this current pandemic it's easy to feel like the onslaught of painful and fearful things will never end. One of my favorite pastoral theologians, UCC minister Martin Copenhaver, writes:

As a pastor, I spend a portion of my time in close proximity to death. In such regions, shadowed by fear and loss, I so much want to reach for words that are reassuring. In the end, I don't have such words to offer, at least none of my own. I am not alone in this, of course.

Neither do the doctors. In the end, ultimately doctors do not have the authority to say, 'Do not be afraid.' Doctors do not know the future. They do not have the antidote to uncertainty. They cannot accompany a patient down every road. None of us can.

This is the reality of our lives right now, yet this is also the hope of Easter. Copenhaver says that whenever we find ourselves in these moments of fear, that's precisely when we need angels to arrive, in scripture and occasionally in our lives, to reassure us, 'Do not be afraid.' God often has this marvelous way of breaking into our lives, and into human history, often in ways that take us by surprise.

Copenhaver reminds us, "When the angel says, 'Do not be afraid,' or when Jesus says, 'Fear not,' it is NOT the assurance that nothing can go wrong, because often things do. It is NOT the assurance that everything will turn out for the best, because often it doesn't. Rather, it is the assurance that, whatever may happen to us, whatever the day may hold, God has the power to strengthen us and uphold us; that whatever we must face, we will not face it alone; that nothing we encounter is stronger than God's love; that ultimately God gets the last word in the end — and sometimes even before the end."

This is the message of Easter, and this is the hope that ushers in new life. While we will not be able to gather in person for shared worship on Easter Sunday, we can still find ways to celebrate the promise of resurrection in our lives. So, in the meantime, do not be afraid. God is with us in the midst of these liminal moments and is leading us through to the other side.

Peace,





Our Church Family



Ongoing Prayer List This list is refreshed January 1 and June 1. If you would like to add or remove a name, please contact Carol Zaiatz (978-448-2091; unioncc@uccgroton.org).

Peggy & John Blair	Betty Goulet	Betty Sampas	Bill Moeller
Connie & Bob Brown	Chris Joyce	Rudi Schmid	Betty & Liz Waggoner
Mike Corbett & Family	Frank Kanour	Matt & Mandy Spain	Laurie Waye
Tiffany Gibb	Myrtle Murphy	Joe Marchesani	Carol Zaiatz

April Birthdays

Stefanie Lempp	04/01	Randy York	04/04	Julia Zambuto	04/12
Marley Cunningham	04/02	Georgia Brooks	04/06	Alicia Barbon	04/17
Devin Goudey	04/03	Liz Brennan	04/07	Andrea Burrier	04/19
Danielle Pushee	04/03	Michelle Emerle	04/07	Danika Manalo	04/23
John Hitsos	04/04	Ben Coviello	04/09	Irene Koutrouba	04/29
Jason Hnath	04/04			Grace Nickerson	04/29

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?

<p>The Birthday Fund This is a fun way to contribute above and beyond your regular giving to the church to something above and beyond our normal operating budget. Simply make a donation on (or around) your birthday in the amount of your age (Memo: Birthday Fund)! If everyone participates, this will add up to a significant amount. Please participate and watch our gifts grow!</p>	<p>Milestone Anniversary Congratulations to Dick and Eleanor Ferrero, who will be celebrating their 65th Wedding Anniversary on April 30!</p>
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From the Collector I hope you are faring well. Thank you to the people who have sent their offerings and pledge donations to the Church Office, or who have given online through their bank, through the Online Giving link in the weekly email, or on the Church's website. If you are considering using online giving and have some questions or have questions or concerns about your pledge, please contact Margaret Wheeler (collector@uccgroton.org).

Church Council Meeting Summary — March 25

The meeting opened with Devotion (Rev. Corey Sanderson) - *Lockdown* (poem). We shared our thoughts about this poem and our current strange times and isolation imposed by the virus. We shared some of the joys we may have been able to find during these frightening times. We discussed purchasing a Zoom account for the church so that we could continue to gather with other church members in unique ways - smaller Bible studies, virtual ladies' lunch, even virtual coffee hour?

There was an open discussion. Corey asked about ways in which we can reach out to those most in need during this time. Steve Legge said we need to give a lot of thought to who is living home alone, because those people might be having a really hard time emotionally. We discussed some people who might be most in need of contact and will make sure that those people get calls.

We spoke about office coverage and how we are trying to ensure Carol can work at home as much as possible. There will be a message stating that the office is closed but to leave a message and someone will respond.

Steve Legge asked about our current finances. Dennis said we are currently in a very good position. We have a number of people who donate online, which means most of that is still happening even without an offering. As long as at least some of the people who drop their pledges in the offering plate continue to mail in their checks occasionally, we will be fine until at least the end of July just with the money we have in the bank.

Music Appreciation Sunday is currently scheduled for May 17.

Capital Campaign / Missions / Spring Fair

Our Accessibility Project: An Important Message from the Capital Campaign Team

Our Capital Campaign Team hopes you and your families are doing well during these trying times. The week of March 16, the team met (virtually) to discuss how to best proceed with the *Coming Together-Lifting Up-Reaching Out* campaign for the Accessibility Project. We came to the conclusion that, given the pandemic and the myriad of difficulties it is imposing on people everywhere, we should postpone the Capital Campaign for at least a few months. We have, formally, made the recommendation to the Church Council that we delay the campaign for a few months (maybe until September) to accommodate the potential changes our congregation may be facing in terms of employment, financial situations, and all the things that can occur in the aftermath of a pandemic.

We are deeply saddened to recommend taking this step back, even temporarily, as so many people are looking forward to completing the project. That being said, we do believe it is the best course of action at this time. We are very much looking forward to moving forward together as soon as is reasonably possible. But for the time being, it is necessary to “press the pause button.”

Our Campaign Kickoff Event on March 8 was so well received and fun with nearly 100 people of all ages in attendance. We are thankful to all those who participated and to all who lent us a hand to make the event run so smoothly. We were thrilled to see so many attendees dressed in 1820s and 1920s costume! With your continued enthusiasm, prayers and support we have no doubt that our church will achieve accessibility in the near future!

Wishing you all good health and God’s blessings!

The Capital Campaign Team

—Bonnie Biocchi & Kelli Hnath, Co-Captains —Bebe & Bob Goudey —Don Kennedy
—Halsey Platt —Karen Sherwin —Cheryl Townsend

Missions—Opportunities to Serve

Hagar’s Sisters Fundraiser

“Ending the cycle of violence through the transforming power of God.”

Rather than holding a live event on April 4, 2020, *Hagar’s Sisters’* Spring Benefit is going digital. Help raise \$65,000 for scholarships for women served by *Hagar’s Sisters* who are striving to overcome their experience of domestic abuse. Go to hagarssisters.org to make a donation, participate in the online auction, or for more information.

Loaves & Fishes *“Lifting & Feeding our Neighbors”*

Loaves & Fishes is continuing to serve its clients by holding a drive-through pickup of groceries during its pantry hours. In order to limit exposure, they are encouraging financial donations instead of food and personal care items. You can make an online payment at loavesfishespantry.org or mail a check to *Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry, Inc.*, P.O. Box 1, Ayer, MA 01432.

2020 Missions Committee

—Julie Platt, Chair —Brenda Barker —Krista Kubick
—Stefanie Lempp —Sue Lunt —Lynn Manalo



15th Annual Spring Artisan Craft Fair
Saturday, May 2*
10:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

NEEDED: Kitchen Crew for the light lunch.

Bake Table: Help us provide a variety of baked goods again this year.

Contact Bonnie Martin if you can help!

*Date may change depending on the Pandemic situation.

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



**DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE DO NOT DELAY**

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Please return to your mail carrier.



**DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, ALL
WORSHIP AND CHURCH ACTIVITIES HAVE
BEEN PUT ON HOLD INDEFINITELY.**

**CHECK OUR WEBSITE (WWW.UCCGROTON.NET)
AND EMAILS FOR UPDATES AS TIME
PROGRESSES.**

THANK YOU.