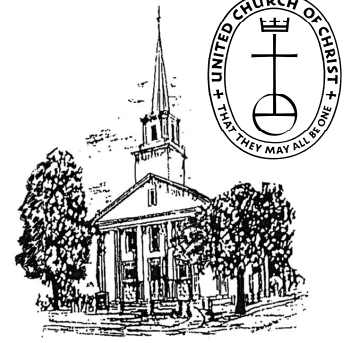


# THE UNION COURIER

Union Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ

The Rev. Corey J. Sanderson, Interim Pastor

220 Main Street  
Groton, Massachusetts 01450



## June 2020

FROM THE



PASTOR

Do you ever have a hard time when someone tells you ‘No’ to something you really want to do? If you’re at all like me, the answer is ‘Yes.’ If there is one thing that tends to frustrate us to no end, it’s being told we cannot do something. I’ve become acutely aware of that feeling lingering in the background of my life during these last two months.

As Americans, we pride ourselves on being individuals. We cherish our autonomy, we celebrate our freedom to choose, and we love having agency. Anything that seeks to constrain, diminish, disrupt, or challenge these cherished viewpoints or values comes across as ‘bad’ at best or ‘threatening’ at worst.

Years ago, when I was teaching at a college, I assigned my Ethics students a challenging project for their final exam. Each student had to develop their own personal ethical code for the rest of their life. They had to present it, explain it, and then defend it according to what we learned in class. [Count yourselves lucky I’m just your minister!] Our semester would begin with the simplest kinds of ethical reasoning, theories that are mostly relativistic and egoistic in nature. Here, people decide on a course of action based solely on their feelings or on their own personal gain. They do whatever feels good and rush to call that the ‘right’ thing. By the end of the semester, my students were thinking deeply about obligations to their neighbors, the role of community, enacting the virtues of justice, and the duties citizens have in supporting and working for The Common Good. The design of the course was intentional. I wanted it to mimic the general growth of ethical reasoning that we all go through in some way or another in life.

While restaurants and barbershops are taking their first steps at opening *safely*, I believe churches are being called to open *faithfully*. Rather than simply copying or reacting to what other groups are doing, faithful churches should be modelling responsible decisions while also making sure they exceed the basic health guidelines in order to ensure the safety of all. Churches that open faithfully will make sure that whatever they do, it reflects the values and nature of the God who creates us and loves us and the Church that God has called into existence. To open faithfully, churches will need to take some time to thoughtfully reflect on their values.

One value that I keep returning to is how we, as a Church, **honor and care for the vulnerable**. What would it say about us as a church if we excluded the vulnerable of our congregation as we rushed to re-open? “Sorry, Mom, but you have to stay home from church this morning because you’re over 70.” [Can you hear Jesus whispering something about the first being last and the last being first?]. Christ calls us to be the Church *together*. That’s the gift of being the church. While the surrounding culture often dismisses the vulnerable, usually those in their golden years, that’s not what we do in the Church.

I keep thinking of that beloved passage in scripture where St. Paul teaches about the unity and diversity of the Body of Christ. Paul says, “Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, enslaved or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many” (1 Corinthians 12).

As our church leaders discern the next best steps for our church family, we are seeking to do things in God’s time, which is not always our time. While we have no idea what the future will bring, we know that we follow a God of hope and resurrection who knows all about making all things new (Isaiah 43:18). This is where our faith lies and where our values are grounded. Remember, friends, the church has never closed. The church remains open, even though we aren’t physically gathering in our building. In the days ahead, let us remember to follow Christ’s call to love our neighbors just as we love ourselves (Mark 12:31).

Peace,



# Our Church Family/News



**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  
Connie & Bob Brown  
Mike Corbett & Family  
Tiffany Gibb

Betty Goulet  
Chris Joyce  
Myrtle Murphy  
Betty Sampas

Rudi Schmid  
Matt & Mandy Spain  
Joe Marchesani  
Bill Moeller

Betty & Liz Waggoner  
Laurie Waye  
Carol Zaiatz

## June Birthdays

Bill Gale, Sr.	06/01	Hayley Cahill	06/10	Alison Houde	06/24
Andrew Leonard	06/04	Aiden Luth	06/11	Cailidh Houde	06/24
Gerry Cahill	06/05	Sammi Smith	06/11	Kim Burgess	06/25
Barbara Avey	06/07	Grant Howard	06/12	Isabella Meehan	06/27
Jillian Van Pelt	06/08	Amy Nickerson	06/13	Bill Semienko	06/28
Doris Barreiro	06/09	Kathy Bates	06/14	Ed Stratton	06/28

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?



**Barbara Avey** will be celebrating her 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday on June 7. Wishing her a very Happy Birthday!



### A SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY

## Milestone Anniversaries

- Barbara and Bruce Wyman celebrated their 30<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary on May 12.
- Carla and Tim Carleton celebrated their 20<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary on May 20.
- Sara and Jason Zambuto will celebrate their 15<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary on June 5.
- Erica and Drew Davenport will celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary on June 7.
- Andrew and Leslie Howard will celebrate their 10<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary on June 19.
- Kevin and Kimberly Kuliesis will celebrate their 15<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary on June 25.

## From the Collector

Thank you to everyone who has sent their offerings and pledge donations to the Church Office, given online through their bank, or through the Online Giving. If you are considering using online giving or have any questions or concerns about your pledge, please contact Margaret Wheeler (collector@uccgroton.org).

## LILIES Update

LILIES is gathering over Zoom! All women of the church are invited to join in. We are focusing on how to bring intentional prayer into our daily lives. Our next meetings are:

**Thursdays, June 4 and June 18**  
**7:00-7:30 p.m.**

*For more details, please contact Raquel Majeski or Betsy Bridge.*

# Church News

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## 2020 Graduates

Congratulations to all our recent graduates and wishing you God's blessings for a bright and happy future!

- **Doris Barreiro's granddaughter, Julia Cebollero**, graduated from U-Mass Amherst with a degree in Nursing
- **Patrick Daly**, graduating from Groton Dunstable Regional High School. He will be attending Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) in the fall, studying Mechanical Engineering/Aerospace.
- **Ariel Dumont**, graduated from Franklin Pierce in New Hampshire. She has a Degree in Teaching. Ariel is the **daughter of Tim and Nancy Dumont and granddaughter of Bill and Barbara Gale**.
- **Brent Emerle**, graduating with a BA in Political Science from Trinity College, Hartford.
- **Taryn Emerle**, graduating from Groton Dunstable Regional High School. She will be attending Northeastern University in the fall.
- **Kristina Hnath**, graduating high school from Innovation Academy. She plans to go to Husson University in Bangor, Maine, where she has been accepted into their Nursing Program.
- **Charlotte LaGasse**, graduating from Groton-Dunstable Regional High School. She is going to New York University.
- **Clarissa LaGasse**, graduating from Groton-Dunstable Regional High School. She is going to Suffolk University.
- **Katie Milano**, graduating from Groton Dunstable Regional High School. She is attending Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Florida, this fall.
- **Casey Sjoberg** graduated from the University of Kentucky with a Biosystems Engineering Degree. She will be heading to Lincoln Memorial Veterinary School.
- **Kirsten Sjoberg**, graduating from Groton-Dunstable Regional High School. She will be heading to Lehigh University to study Engineering.
- **Pat and Dave Wood's granddaughter, Margaret McMinn**, graduating from Fairport High School in Fairport, New York. She will be attending Binghamton University in Binghamton, New York.



## Photos Needed

We started our Online Church Directory last November. If you are currently in our Church Directory, you received an email with information about how to log-in and create/change your profile, etc. In this email, there was also a link to a video with a short description of the new system. There is a link to the online directory on our website ([www.uccgroton.net](http://www.uccgroton.net)).

We originally asked everyone in the Directory to go in and upload a picture. At this time, there are still many people in the Directory that do not have a picture associated with their profile. If you are unable to upload a picture yourself, could you please send your picture to Carol in the Church Office ([unioncc@uccgroton.org](mailto:unioncc@uccgroton.org)) and she will gladly upload it for you. If you have any questions or problems, please contact Mary Hanson.

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## Missions Team Update

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Updates regarding our Partners in Christ and in service to our community:

**Loaves & Fishes** is continuing to feed our neighbors in need with drive-through service to pick up groceries. While it is not taking donations of groceries at this time, it is accepting financial donations. You can donate online at [www.loavesfishespantry.org](http://www.loavesfishespantry.org) or send a check to **Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry**, P.O. Box 1, Ayer, MA 01432.

**Hagar's Sisters** was unable to host its live Spring fundraiser due to the pandemic this year. Instead, it is hosting a virtual fundraiser. Links to written information, videos, and making a donation can be found at <http://www.hagarsisters.org/benefit/>.

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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.*

## **Gary Gumuchian Invitation**

At the request of the  
**Congregational Church of Littleton**  
**330 King St., Littleton, MA**

The Central MA Association is hereby called to meet as an  
**Ecclesiastical Council to examine**  
**Gary Gumuchian**  
as to his fitness to be ordained to the Christian Ministry.

Ministerial members of the Association and Churches represented by Ministers and Delegates are urged to be present at:

**7:00 PM on Wednesday, June 10, 2020**  
**VIA ZOOM**

**Registration is required to receive the Zoom link—go to:**  
*<https://sneucc-reg.brtapp.com/garygumuchianec>*

If the Candidate's examination is sustained, and his ordination approved, the Service of Ordination will take place at a time and location approved by the Board of Directors.