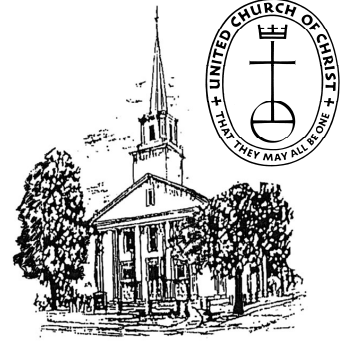


THE UNION COURIER

Union Congregational Church
United Church of Christ

The Rev. Corey J. Sanderson, Interim Pastor

220 Main Street
Groton, Massachusetts 01450



March 2021



Interim Pastor

It happens to each and every one of us that, at some point or another, we have to work through some experience of sadness and disillusionment in order to get to a place of reconstruction and newness. Sometimes we have to endure difficulties in our personal relationships to get ourselves better in synch with another person or group. Other times we have to deal with challenging personal ordeals or issues in order to reach a place of healing and wholeness. Whatever the situation happens to be, there needs to be some kind of movement and progression. Something has to change and evolve.

In our shared journey through this pandemic, we have come to see that this has been a marathon and not the sprint we had initially hoped for. We have all been managing our spiritual, emotional, and relational fuel tanks as best as we have been able, given all that has taken place. We are nearing the time when there *may* be a *possible* end in sight. As we have all seen, global pandemics do not unfold in linear fashion. Nor do they consider our expectations or work according to our plans. There is no doubt in my mind that we will be living with this coronavirus from here on out, managing it like we do with the yearly influenza outbreaks.

I have heard it said that one of the worst feelings in life is to recognize that you missed the chance of greatness when opportunity unexpectedly knocked. These last few weeks, I have been coming back to this lesser-known story of The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It was early in the 1960s when Dr. King was invited to teach a course in social philosophy at Morehouse College, his *alma mater*. At first, and on subsequent occasions, Dr. King declined the invitation. He was simply too busy with his civil rights work to slow down and teach a class. Eventually, after much pressure and encouragement from the college President, Dr. King agreed. The course, which was open to the entire student body, ended up with five men and three women enrolled. Eight students. None of them saved the course syllabus. None of them kept their term-papers which Dr. King had marked up. None of them had their picture taken with their now-famous teacher. The only proof these eight students have of taking this course — the one and only course Dr. King ever taught — is that they received a grade on their transcript. Not only do they kick themselves for not saving their work, but all the other student who failed to sign up for the class live with the reality that they missed a chance of greatness.

All throughout our country, churches are asking a number of big questions.

- How do we continue to support one another as we deal with this lingering ongoing pandemic fatigue?
- How do we balance out our day-to-day operations with a focus on strategic planning for the long haul?
- How will we decide what we should stop doing — those things that no longer will serve us in the 'new normal' — in order to make space for new and more meaningful initiatives?
- How will we continue to weather the financial changes that affect us all so as to position ourselves for new adventures in ministry when they show up?

While the exact questions vary from church to church, and denomination to denomination, they all seem to fit into these four areas. Thankfully, your church leadership is discerning and working on these areas so that, when the time eventually comes, we don't miss our chance at the greatness toward which God is calling us.

Peace,



Our Church Family/Church News



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).

Peggy & John Blair
Mike Corbett & Family
Ralph Finney
Tiffany Gibb

Betty Goulet
Brigid and Brian Klingberg
Betty Sampas

Rudi Schmid
Matt & Mandy Spain
Joe Marchesani

Bill Moeller
Betty & Liz Waggoner
Laurie Waye

Need prayer and need it now?

Simply email prayer@uccgroton.org and your request will go to the confidential pray-ers; or contact Carol in the Church Office (978-448-2091 or unioncc@uccgroton.org) 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.

March Birthdays

Jim Brennan	03/03	Kaleb Larsen	03/11	Carl Prestia	03/23
Jim Daly	03/03	Emma Nickerson	03/14	John Brooks	03/26
Christina Daly	03/06	Craig Smith	03/18	Bob Huguenin	03/26
Janet Goudey	03/09	Bill Townsend	03/18	Bonnie Biocchi	03/28
Wade Majeski	03/09	Sheila Mitchell	03/21		

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 milestone anniversaries—could you include that information also.

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!



Charlene and Steve Legge will be celebrating their **5th Wedding Anniversary** on **March 13**. Congratulations Charlene and Steve!

From the Collector

Thank you to everyone who has sent their offerings and pledge donations to the Church Office, or 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, please contact Margaret Wheeler (collector@uccgroton.org) to see how I can help.

Church News



Lenten Bible Study

The Gospel of Mark as a Story

Tuesdays, Feb. 23, March 2, 9, 16, 23, and 30
7:00 – 8:00 p.m. (via Zoom)

Even if you missed the first week, you can still signup! We are reading through the entire *Gospel of Mark*, but in a rather unique way. As we read, we are going to pay close attention to the author, setting, narrative style, sources used, genre, composition, point of view, plot, characters, etc. What emerges is a chronological and complete story of Jesus that is very different from hearing small snippets and vignettes on Sundays. All are welcome! You will need to be able to use Zoom and email. We do need folks to sign up for this series, as there will be a number of things emailed out that will include different resources to help you each week. ***A signup link is available in the Friday email, or you can contact Carol in the Church Office (978-448-2091 or unioncc@uccgroton.org). Also included in the email is the link to the Zoom meetings (the same link will be used for all six weeks).***

Zoom Worship — Two Upcoming Sundays

Sunday, March 7 (Lent 3) and Easter Sunday, April 4



Please mark your calendar, as we will be having "Zoom Worship" on the **third Sunday of Lent (3/7)** and **Easter Sunday (4/4)**. This format will be similar to what we did on January 31. Additional details will be sent out closer to the dates, including a link for Zoom. We hope you will be able to join us — **be sure to check your Friday emails to stay informed!**



Virtual Coffee Hour — You Are Invited!

Join us each Sunday at 11:00 a.m. via Zoom. Grab a cup of coffee/tea and a snack and say hello to your church family. We'll start at 11:00 a.m. and end either when folks are done catching up or at 12:00 noon. ***Click on the link in your Friday email and get together virtually with your church family!***



Give & Take - Children's Clothing

Our UCC Give & Take of children's clothing supports *Loaves & Fishes'* clients, as well as our own family and friends. We continue to ask for donations that have been gently used to flourish our mission. Feel free to drop off your clothing offerings at the Legge Family's house located at 856 Townsend Rd., Groton.

We welcome you to make an appointment for either a Saturday or Sunday in the coming weeks to come by and see our clothing room on the first floor of the Parish House. In order to keep everyone safe during this difficult time, we aren't able to accept walk-in visits at this time. ***Please contact Charlene Legge with any further questions.***



Church Council

Meeting Summary — January 24

Stefanie Lempp gave an update on Missions. The team is planning a Zoom Game Night using a moderator who hosts these kinds of events. They are thinking of 4:00 p.m. on a Sunday, to end at 5:30 p.m.

There was a discussion regarding short and long-range planning and was centered on three main areas: 1) Getting back to “normal” church life; 2) Capital Campaign; and 3) Settled Pastor search. In summary, these three main areas of focus might best be done largely linearly rather than trying to do too much in tandem. We want to avoid spreading ourselves too thin. The Council agreed in terms of prioritization of the next steps. Many of the Council expressed their gratitude that Corey is willing to stay for an extended interim period through these transitional steps.

Steve Legge asked about Confirmation and it was agreed that is definitely one of the items we will have to consider when planning a return to “normal”. On our normal two-year Confirmation cycle, we would have had Confirmation Class Fall 2020—Spring 2021 and then Confirmation in June 2021. We have to wait and see how comfortable people are in returning before we put anything in motion.

Currently, we are hoping to get back to some kind of in-person worship after Easter, although likely it will still be constrained by social-distancing guidelines and service modifications (such as no singing, etc).

Helen Misselhorn Contact Information

Karen Sherwin and Helen Misselhorn are in Florida until sometime in May. If anyone would like to call or write to Helen while they are there, her contact information is: Helen Misselhorn, C/O Karen Sherwin, 66 Clubhouse Road, Rotonda West, FL 33947; Tel. #941-241-5393.

Sunday School

The Christian Education Committee will continue with no in-person or virtual Sunday School Classes for the remainder of the school year. For PreK—6th grade, we have pamphlets we can mail to families who want them. If you have not yet responded and would like to receive these pamphlets, please contact Carol in the Church Office (unioncc@uccgroton.org; 978-448-2091) and she will add you to the mailing list. Please include your child/children’s name(s) and their grade, so she can be sure to send you the correct curriculum for that grade level. The pamphlets will be mailed on a monthly basis.

2021 Christian Education Committee

—Carl Prestia, Chair

—Jenn Coviello

—Bonnie Marchesani

—Amy Nickerson

MISSIONS — SAVE THE DATE!

All-Church Trivia Game Event Sunday, March 21 at 3:45 p.m.

Please mark your calendars for this exciting event! The Missions Committee is hosting a first-time-ever Trivia Game Event on Zoom. There will be fellowship, laughter, many faces of your church family, trivia questions, music and prizes!! All ages are welcome. No experience (or even trivia knowledge) necessary, other than the ability to get onto a Zoom link. We can provide technology assistance as needed. Please be sure to check your Friday emails for the link closer to the date.



2021 Missions Committee

—Julie Platt, Chair

—Krista Kubick

—Stefanie Lempp

—Lynn Manalo

Vaccine Information for Those Who Are Eligible

If you are eligible to receive the COVID vaccine and are unsure of where and when you can get it, go to the official Mass.gov page that lists out all the options (a link is provided in the Friday email). Since the number of vaccine doses coming to our immediate area is still very low, it is going to take a while to get everyone inoculated. Feel free to check in the Groton Senior Center for updates. If you still have questions, please reach out to us in the office and we can help direct you to the best resources.

Transportation

The Groton Council on Aging (COA) is offering transportation for **residents 75 and older** to vaccine appointments. COA vans can safely transport two people at the same time to a mass vaccine site. Their first choice would be to travel to the Danvers site; however, they will go to Gillette as well. **They ask you not to make your appointment yourself, but call them first as they may have to coordinate multiple appointments. Please call 978-448-1170. For your safety, they urge residents not to accept an offer from a stranger, accept payment, or pay for such services.**

Groton Interfaith Council Event

Zoom Movie Discussion: *CNN's John Lewis: Good Trouble* Sunday, MARCH 7, 2:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Members of *Groton Interfaith Council*, with gracious co-host Groton Public Library, welcome the local community in first viewing and then discussing the documentary. Using interviews and rare archival footage, this CNN Films' documentary chronicles the late Congressman's 60-plus years of social activism and legislative action on civil rights, voting rights, gun control, health-care reform and immigration. Director Dawn Porter explores Lewis' childhood experiences, his inspiring family and his fateful meeting with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1957. Instructions for participation are below:

Step 1: Watch the movie IN ADVANCE of the Zoom discussion. The film can be accessed by any Groton resident with their library card via the online Hoopla database. Simply open Hoopla and search for John Lewis. DVD copies of the film will also be available upon request at the library.

Step 2: Zoom link will be sent after registration. Register at: <https://www.libraryinsight.com/eventdetails.asp?jx=ii&cnf=1&lmx=1252965> (a link is provided in the Friday email)

Step 3: On Sunday, March 7, at 2:00 p.m. join our lively Zoom event. Area Faith Leaders will share thoughts on the history of Social Activism and Spiritual Perspective in their faith tradition.

Super Saturday—REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

Deadline for Registration is March 4

And It Came to Pass, Luke 2:15

Living Into the Fulfillment of God's Promise

Virtually, March 13 & 20

With keynote speaker Rabbi Elan Babchuck, we will gather to learn, share and grow together in faith and practice. We are also looking for local pastors and congregations to offer workshops. What exciting thing is happening in your church? What gift do you want to share with the wider church? Register by clicking on the date you would like to attend: **March 13 or March 20. A link to registration is provided in the Friday email.**

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Church
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220 Main Street
Groton, MA 01450



DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE DO NOT DELAY

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

March Update

We are continuing with online only Worship for the time being. Rev. Sanderson will send out recordings of Worship through our email list.

We will be having Zoom Church (virtual Worship) on March 7 (the third Sunday of Lent) and April 4 (Easter Sunday) (see p. 3).

If you are not currently on our email list, please contact the Church Office (978-448-2091 or unioncc@uccgroton.org) to be added to our list. This will keep you informed.

When it is safe to do so, we will resume in-person Worship again. Please check your Friday emails for updates.

Thank you for your patience as we try to keep everyone safe.

God Bless!



Sunday, March 14, 2021