

THE UNION COURIER

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

220 Main Street
Groton, Massachusetts 01450



Mid-Summer 2021

FROM THE



Pastor

Among the avalanche of emails that tumble down into my inbox each week, I always keep my eyes peeled for one that comes from James Clear, author of the book, *Atomic Habits*. His deeply insightful book is all about habit formation. With a healthy dose of biology, psychology, and recent discoveries in neuroscience, Clear offers practical guidance on how to ditch the old habits that no longer serve our interests and, instead, pick up new ones that will help us achieve our goals.

Each week, his email newsletter offers a fascinating array of quotes and stories, some of which show up in my sermons. In one recent email, Clear shared these words from lawyer and activist, Vernon Jordan, about the collaborative nature of life. Jordan says,

You are where you are today because you stand on somebody's shoulders. And wherever you are heading, you cannot get there by yourself. If you stand on the shoulders of others, you have a reciprocal responsibility to live your life so that others may stand on your shoulders. It's the quid pro quo of life. We exist temporarily through what we take, but we live forever through what we give (2002 speech at Howard University).

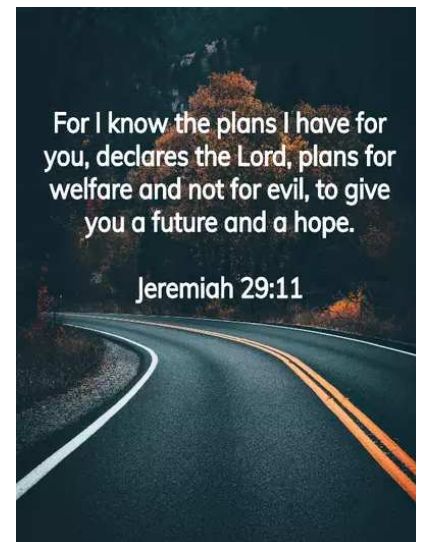
In so many ways, isn't this what Church is all about? We are here because of the faith of those who came before us and who showed us the way. If someone helped get you to where you are today in the journey of faith, then whom are you helping for tomorrow?

As we continue to move through our regathering, one of the big questions on my mind is, 'How do we 'pay it forward' in faith in our new post-pandemic world?' What are the new ministry expressions that God is — and will be — calling us all to undertake? I'm sure not everyone feels the same level of excitement that I do at such questions. Most folks, I imagine, are feeling a little skittish and uncertain. That seems to be par for the course in most churches around the country.

Whenever life starts to feel a little out of kilter we usually yearn for homeostasis. We search out firm footing, grab hold of the status quo, and try and pull ourselves back toward the familiar. Of course, that's not how God works. Churches that only seek to return to 'normal,' by simply trying to mirror a pre-pandemic sense of things, are most likely heading in the wrong direction. Of course, there are so many familiar things that churches will be bringing forward that are nourishing, vital, and meaningful.

This church is blessed with a great sense of community, a strong faith, and talented leadership. We got to this place because so many other people paved the way for us. What will you do to pave the way for others in the days ahead? To whom will we help and serve? I have no doubt that many fruitful and faithful days are ahead of us as we continue our regathering process this summer and look forward to an exciting Fall.

Peace,





Our Church Family



Ongoing Prayer List

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

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

William Isaiah Kennedy
Brigid and Brian Klingberg
Cindy McGuire
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 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.

July Birthdays				August Birthdays			
Charlie Bridge	7/1	Mary Kubick	7/15	Jack Van Pelt	8/1	Matt Carey	8/23
Eleanor Ferrero	7/2	Corey Sanderson	7/15	Ellen Hargraves	8/8	Pat Woods	8/24
Reaghan Carleton	7/3	Leslie Howard	7/18	Grace Johnson	8/12	Gregory Barbon	8/25
Peg Lloyd	7/3	Cassie Sampas	7/19	Leo Biocchi	8/13	Macie Bridge	8/25
Bob Goudey	7/4	Jon Sjoberg	7/20	Barb Lefebvre	8/14	Kristina Hnath	8/26
Chip Detwiller	7/5	Cameron Grasso	7/21	James Leonard	8/15	Steve Legge	8/26
Paige Carleton	7/8	Betsy Bridge	7/22	Janice Flynn	8/16	Makaila Meehan	8/28
Lynn Manalo	7/9	Colin Grasso	7/24	Patrick Daly	8/16	Elizabeth Hughes	8/29
Robert Houde	7/10	Amy Sjoberg	7/24	Bebe Goudey	8/17	Nancy Bugbee	8/30
Abigail Howard	7/10	Lois Berge	7/25	Margaret Wheeler	8/17	Alex Platt	8/31
Eleanor Kubick	7/10	Destiny Bou	7/26	Jenna Plausse	8/20	Jason Zambuto	8/31
Janet Kennedy	7/12	Sarah Flynn	7/30	Pete Hnath	8/21		
Cloe Bridge	7/13						

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?

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!



Milestone Anniversaries

- **Dick and Sheila Smith**, celebrating their **60th Wedding Anniversary** on **July 22**.
- **Mark Rzeznikiewicz and Bonnie Martin**, celebrating their **15th Wedding Anniversary** on **August 5**.

Church News

From the Collector

Thank you to everyone who put their pledge offerings and donations in the collection boxes or sent them to the Church Office. Donation Statements as of July 11th will be mailed in mid-July. If you do not receive a statement or have any questions or concerns about your pledge, please contact Margaret Wheeler (collector@uccgroton.org).

Upcoming Important Dates

September 12 – Welcome Back Sunday

This will be our first Sunday back after summer! Sunday School will begin.

September 19 – Stated Meeting

The congregation is invited to stay after Worship for this important meeting.

Christian Education



Sunday School

Now that we seem to be through the worst part of the pandemic, we are busy at church preparing for Sunday School to reopen in September. We are working out the classes to keep the number of kids per class in balance and assigning rooms in the Parish House accordingly.

Can you Help?

Sunday School Teachers will again teach in teams (3-4 teachers per team per grade). Each team will divide up the Sundays as fits their schedules. This provides consistency for the kids and ready support for the teachers, while simplifying communication regarding the kids and the classes. If you are interested in helping, please contact Carl Prestia or Carol in the Church Office (unioncc@uccgroton.org/978-448-2091).

Confirmation 2021-2022

We are planning on having a Confirmation Class starting in September. We have sent emails to those families on our Sunday School list with children entering grade 9 or above this coming September. If you are new to the church or if your children have not recently participated in Sunday School but are interested in Confirmation, please contact the Church Office (unioncc@uccgroton.org/978-448-2091) and we will add them to our list of students. Please include the name, age, grade, and email address for each student so that we will be able to communicate with all students in the class. Thank you.

Christian Education Committee

—Carl Prestia, Chair

—Jenn Coviello

—Bonnie Marchesani

Firepit Gathering—Saturday, June 26

We had such a great turnout at the last Firepit Gathering on May 22, we decided to do it again on Saturday, June 26. It was a wonderful evening! We had 33 people attend. We had a cookout (hamburgers and hot dogs), with some sides and desserts brought by people in the Congregation. Of course, S'mores by the fire were included! Fun was had by all.

Did you miss one or both of these gatherings? Don't worry, we will have at least one more planned before the end of the summer. Stay tuned for more information...



Worship June 27—We Have Music Again!

For the first time in a long time, the Senior Choir joined us in Worship on June 27! Pastor Corey and his son Nathan played the Prelude. Come and join us in Worship—we are finally beginning to see things come back together since the pandemic!



Backpack Drive 2021



Sharing Christ ~ Changing Lives ~ Providing Backpacks!

We are ready to launch our 4th Annual UCC Groton Backpack Drive on August 27, 2021. We hope that school will be more “normal” again in the Fall, but the need by families for help with school supplies will be as great as ever. After last year’s fun in the sun, we hope to be outside again to distribute backpacks while generating some enthusiasm around the start of a new school year and keeping everyone safe.

Generous donations and cheerful volunteers are the key to making this program a success! Here’s how YOU can help:

Donations: We will be accepting the following types of donations by August 6:

- **Backpacks:** Higher-quality backpacks in various styles and colors, especially in larger sizes, are greatly appreciated.
- **Bulk school supplies:** Look in the Friday email for a link to this year’s Amazon Wish List to donate items in bulk. It’s easy! Just copy and paste the link into your browser, select the items you wish to purchase, proceed to checkout and be sure to select Stefanie’s address to have the items shipped directly to her.
- **Masks:** New masks will likely still be needed by students in the Fall. All sizes and styles are welcome.
- **Monetary Donations:** Will be used to buy items still needed. Checks can be made payable to “UCC Groton,” with “Backpack Drive” in the memo line.

Volunteer: As we get closer to the end of August, there will be opportunities to volunteer!

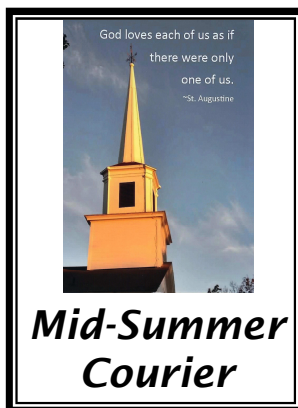
- **Stuff backpacks on the late afternoon/evening of August 23:** This is super fun and would be a **great youth event!!** We will be filling backpacks with appropriate age school supplies. Snacks and drinks will be provided.
- **Volunteer on Distribution Day, Friday, August 27, at Devens Community Center:**
 - ⇒ Transport backpacks to the Center in the early afternoon.
 - ⇒ Greet families and distribute supplies in the parking lot at the Center. Due to privacy concerns, volunteers must be adults.
 - ⇒ Set up and break down tents and tables and decorate stations.

Please contact Stefanie Lempp or Julie Platt with any questions, if you’d like to volunteer, or to coordinate pick-up, delivery, or shipment of bulk supplies. We would love to hear from you!



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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.

A large graphic featuring a church steeple against a blue sky. Text overlay reads: "God loves each of us as if there were only one of us. ~St. Augustine".

We are back to in-person Worship. Over the summer, please be sure to read the latest emails from Rev. Sanderson for the most up-to-date information. We hope you will join us for Worship when you are in town.

If you are not on our email list and wish to be, please contact the Church Office (unioncc@uccgroton.org; 978-448-2091).