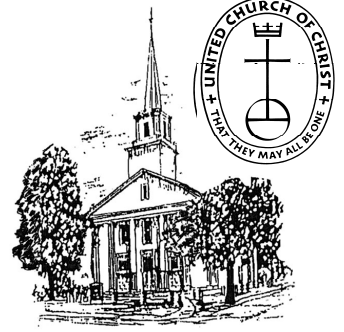


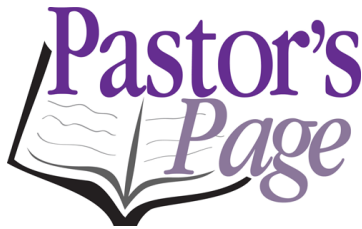
THE UNION COURIER

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

220 Main Street
Groton, Massachusetts 01450



February 2022



I've been told that, somewhere deep in the archives of Harvard University, is a small pamphlet that chronicles the earliest years of the Plymouth colony in Massachusetts. The original Puritan settlement was called, 'New England's First Fruits.' The surviving 26-page pamphlet, which was published in 1643, summarizes the values the early Puritan community held and it outlines the goals this new settlement community would be striving for. Today, we might recognize this as their Vision, Mission, and Values statements.

One of the most important values the Puritans held was learning. In the ancient Greek manuscripts of our Bible, the original language of the New Testament, the word used for 'disciple' is *mathétés* (pr. 'math-ay-tes'). While *mathétés* does mean 'disciple,' it equally means 'learner.' This is why Jesus says, 'Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls' (Mt. 11:29).

The early Puritans understood the need for constant learning and education. Here's a slightly paraphrased version of what the pamphlet said.

"After God had carried us safe to New England, and we had built our houses, provided the necessities of our livelihood, reared convenient places for God's worship, and settled the civil government, one of the next things we longed for and looked after was to advance learning and to perpetuate our posterity, *dreading to leave an illiterate ministry to our churches when our present ministers shall lie in the dust.*"

Our Congregational heirs were pretty brilliant and aware. It's a powerful realization, isn't it? When the current crop of ministers is buried in the ground, the fear was that the churches would lose their highly educated leaders. Right from the start, these dour, uptight, and overly serious Puritans had a bold vision for what was needed if this new community settlement were going to survive and thrive in the future. These were the five values, priorities, and aims to which they held dearly. These values would become the foundation to this brand-new society:

1. **The Home:** You not only need a solid house, but solid family relationships.
2. **The Necessities of Life:** You need a productive way of making a livelihood.
3. **A Place to Worship God:** You need faith and a faithful community.
4. **The Role of Civil Order:** You need social organization expressed through government.
5. **The Need for Education and Learning:** You need literate, wise, and learned people.

Learning and education was an *essential* element for this new society. As you may know, the vision of the Puritans is still with us today. They started educational institutions, such as Harvard College, which is now Harvard University. Many of the nation's top colleges and universities began as religious schools to raise up an educated clergy *in order to help churches be educated*. Still today, we have Princeton, Columbia, Rutgers, Brown, Dartmouth, University of Pennsylvania, William and Mary, and more.

As we move out of this pandemic, we all have a lot of learning to do. Our world is radically different. As a church, we will have to adjust and change, pivot and refine, pick up new things and let go of old things. We simply need to ensure that our church is relevant to our post-pandemic world, rather than a model of how things used to be.

(continued on next page)

Pastor's Page (continued)

We always need to see ourselves as learners because our teacher is Jesus. We should be able to learn from everybody and anyone, but most of all, we should be engaged in learning that focuses on the One who we learn the most from. The journey of faith is not learning 'about' Jesus, but 'learning from Jesus' or 'learning Jesus.'

I look forward to the exciting new ministry opportunities that await us!

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, please contact Carol Zaiatz (978-448-2091 or unioncc@uccgroton.org).

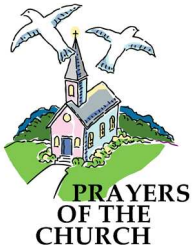
Stephanie Booth
Joe Marchesani
Matt & Mandy Spain
Mayra Marquez

Helen Misselhorn
Bill Moeller
Sakkinen Family

The Sanchez Family
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.



- For Helen Misselhorn, suffering from various health issues. If you would like to send a card to Helen, her address is:

Helen Misselhorn
c/o Karen Sherwin
66 Clubhouse Road
Rotonda West, FL 33947



To our Dear UCC family,
Please forgive me for the delay in expressing our heartfelt thanks for the wonderful send off you all gave us before we left for Florida and for all your kind words. It couldn't have been lovelier and it meant the world to us to be with all of you one last time sharing in God's love among those we have shared with for so many years. God couldn't have given us a better church family to grow with along with a lifetime of cherished memories and friends. God Bless you All!!

Helen (Misselhorn) and Karen (Sherwin)



Our Church Family



February Birthdays

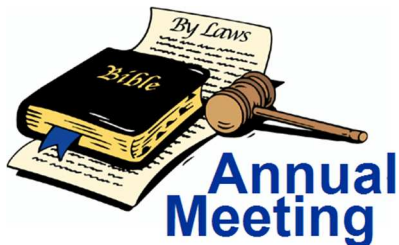
Tony DiCenzo	02/01	Mark Wheeler	02/14	Lily Burgess	02/23
Ryan Carey	02/02	Travis Bugbee	02/16	Dylan Hughes	02/24
Carl Haas	02/04	Steve Flynn	02/21	Arianna Barker	02/25
Rebecca Brennan	02/06	Lily Dabritz	02/22	Jessica Plausse	02/25
Henry Richardson-Irvin	02/07	Charlotte LaGasse	02/22	Ryleigh Cunningham	02/28
Emily Howard	02/10	Clarissa LaGasse	02/22		
Charlene Legge	02/14				

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 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!

Church News



Annual Meeting Sunday, February 6 11:00 a.m. (via Zoom)

All are encouraged to attend via Zoom! If people wish to say The two items seeking approval on the agenda are:

- 1) Nominations for Committees and Ministries;
- 2) The Final 2022 Operating Budget.

A link to connect to the Zoom Meeting is included in the Friday email (please sign in a little before 11:00 a.m.), as well as links to all materials to be voted on in the meeting and the 2021 Annual Report. After the meeting, if you would like to continue with Coffee Hour, simply remain in the meeting. Contact Jean Armstrong or Pastor Sanderson (corey@uccgroton.org) with your questions in advance of the meeting.

LILIES – All Women Invited! (Women's Spiritual Gathering)

Join LILIES this winter as we get back to basics for a study on prayer! We are reading *Prayer in the Night: For Those Who Work or Watch or Weep*, by Tish Harrison Warren. We look forward to seeing you in our engaging Zoom Discussions!

Zoom Discussion Dates:

Wed, 1/19, 7:00-7:45pm. (Chapters 1 – 5)
Wed, 2/9, 7:00-7:45pm. (Chapters 6 – 10)
Wed, 2/16, 7:00-7:45pm. (Chapters. 11 - 13)

A link for the Zoom meeting is provided in the Friday email.

Sermon Series

How To Be In The Present. Five Sundays **January 23*, 30*, February 6*, 13*, 20**

The Christ Child has been born. The Magi from the East have arrived with their unusual gifts. What will this mean in our lives? Will we even notice? The strange paradox of life is that our very best future depends on how we live in the present. For most of us, we have some work to do. Maybe we are ruminating about the past or worrying about the future. Author, Annie Dillard, says, "How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives." Most of us aren't truly present. We are distracted. We aren't paying attention. We're too busy. This five-week sermon series will help us become more fully present to God, to others around us, and even to ourselves.

**Due to the "pause" in Worship, January 23 and 30 and February 6 and 13 will be recorded and emailed to the congregation.*

Sermon Series Concurrent Book Group **Three Tuesdays (2/1, 2/8, and 2/15)** **7:00 p.m. via Zoom**

In conjunction with this sermon series, we will be reading Rob Bell's book, *How to Be Here: A Guide to Creating a Life Worth Living*, (HarperOne, 2016). You can pick up a used paperback copy dirt cheap - or click on the link in the Friday email to order through Amazon. It's a good, fun, easy read. See below for the reading schedule.

February 1: Chapters 1-3 Pages 1-74

February 8: Chapters 4-6 Pages 75 - 130

February 15: Chapters 7-9 Pages 132 - 201

In order to have some meaningful discussion during Zoom, please be sure to read the chapters prior to the scheduled week. A link to the Zoom meeting is provided in the Friday email.

Sunday School



While Worship has been on pause, Sunday School has also been on pause. When Worship is expected to resume (on February 20), school vacation will be in progress. There will be no Sunday School during school vacation. March 6 (Communion Sunday) we will have the usual All Together Time for grades PreK—4th grade (with 5th and above remaining in Worship). Our first in-person classroom session will be Sunday, March 13.

Christian Education Committee

—Carl Prestia, Chair

—Jenn Coviello

—Bonnie Marchesani

Missions

Final Totals for Christmas Angels

The Missions Committee would like to thank the Congregation for their generosity toward two local causes for Christmas Angels. The totals were:

The Sanchez Family	\$1,315
Catie's Closet	\$ 300

Thank you for your support!

From the Sanchez Family



To all at UCC Groton,
I cannot express the gratitude I feel in words alone for your generosity, prayers, and thoughtfulness. My girls and I feel embraced by so many. The blankets are amazing! Thank you from the bottom of my heart.
With gratitude,

Lauren, Ana, and Aimee Sanchez

And in response to the check for their heating costs (Betsy Bridge dropped the check off to her):
Oh my goodness, Betsy! I am overwhelmed! This means so much to me and the girls! Thank you, and please pass on our wholehearted gratitude to your church community. XXXX

Missions Committee

—Julie Platt, Chair

—Krista Kubick

—Stefanie Lempp

—Lynn Manalo

Next Month—The Season of Lent Begins...



Ash Wednesday
March 2



Easter is
Sunday, April 17, 2022

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.

February Update

In-Person Worship is scheduled to start again on Sunday, February 20.
Please join us!

***And for Lent...
Lenten Study with Rev. Sanderson
Save the Dates***

***Tuesdays in Lent
3/8, 3/15, 3/22, 3/29, 4/5 and 4/12
7:00—8:30 p.m.***

***More information to follow—check the Friday email
and the March newsletter!***