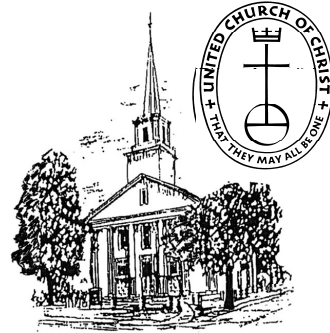


# THE UNION COURIER

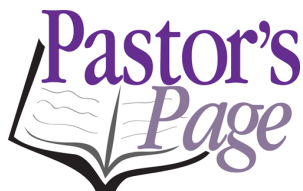
Union Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ  
The Rev. Corey J. Sanderson, Interim Pastor

220 Main Street  
Groton, Massachusetts 01450



## March 2022

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As we prepare to enter the season of Lent, a time of introspection and honest self-examination, we do so with an eye toward readying ourselves for the experience of Easter. We don't often hear it put like this, but the Easter story is as much about the resurrection of the people who loved Jesus as it is about the resurrection of Jesus.

At the very end of Jesus' life and ministry, he endured betrayals, beatings, and public crucifixion, taking upon himself the very worst the world could dish out. Looking back, we can see that the worst thing that could happen to Jesus was also seemingly the worst thing that could happen to all the people who loved Jesus most – fear, abandonment, disillusionment, and grief. When Jesus' earthly life was over, and he was laid in an earthen tomb, so too was the faith of all those disciples who were now left behind.

When Easter happened, two miracles occurred. The most obvious was that a dead man had come back to life. Admittedly, it's a seemingly impossible, unnatural, and implausible event that has stumped people ever since. Yet the equally impressive, and far more implausible, miracle occurred on Easter Sunday when those who given up hope, and even given up on God, slowly came to believe once again.

It didn't happen all at once, at least not according to Luke. Some folks doubted. Others scoffed at the nonsense of it all. But eventually each of them came to see that the worst thing that could ever happen to them was not the last word. It was the second to last word. They came to see that the very last word was 'life.' For people of faith, this has been the last word ever since.

Have you ever felt like our world is stuck on Good Friday? Whether it is Racism or Russia, it is far too easy to settle with where things are and think that this is our new accepted reality. As we re-enter church life, we remember that Easter refuses to let the tired old status quo take root in our hearts and minds. The last word is spoken from an empty tomb, and God waits for our response. The question for us is, 'Will we rise up too? Will we live and practice the resurrection in our lives, in our church, and out in the world?

I invite and encourage you to join us for these six weeks of Lent as we prepare for the twin miracles that will take place on Easter Sunday. This year we have a great study series and a sermon series to help you make the most of your journey (see p. 4)

Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Corey".





# 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](mailto:unioncc@uccgroton.org)).

Stephanie Booth  
Hayley Cahill  
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](mailto: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.



- Hayley Cahill, recovering from two fractured arms.

## March Birthdays

Jim Brennan	03/03	Sophia Smith	03/12	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		
Kaleb Larsen	03/11				

If we missed your birthday, it is not in our database. Please email [unioncc@uccgroton.org](mailto: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!



**John and Lisa Hitsos** will be celebrating their **30<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary** on **March 28**. Congratulations!

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# Church News

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## Lent Begins this Wednesday...

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### March 2—Ash Wednesday Dinner and Worship

**6:30 p.m.: Simple Soup Supper**

**7:15 p.m.: Brief Worship Service/Communion and Imposition of Ashes**

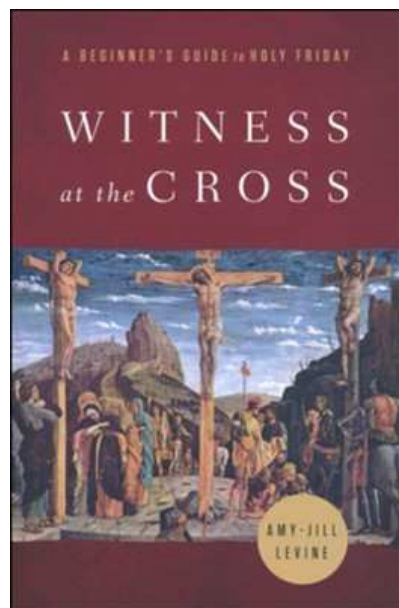
Let's begin our Lenten journey together this year! If you can't make it for dinner, come at 7:15 for worship. Families with children are encouraged to attend. (You'll be home by 8:00 p.m.)

**Questions:** Contact the Church Office (978-448-2091 or [unioncc@uccgroton.org](mailto:unioncc@uccgroton.org)).

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## Lenten Series 2022 — *Witness At The Cross*

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### Six Tuesday Evenings in the Season of Lent March 8, 15, 22, 29, April 5, 12

**7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. on Zoom**

The Cross. It's the core symbol of the Christian faith. Yet, for so many people these days, it's all so confounding. How can the crucifixion of Jesus be both ugly and beautiful, painful and healing, depressing and inspiring, defeatist and victorious? World-renowned Biblical scholar, A.J. Levine, helps us cut a path through the confusion by focusing on the stories of the different people who witnessed the crucifixion. By showing how and what the crucifixion meant to the people in the Biblical narratives, we find guidance and encouragement to ask the essential question, 'What will our testimony be?'

This six-week series is free, excluding the cost of the small book (about \$15). This series is open to everyone, no matter who you are, where you are on life's journey, what you believe, or even if you aren't sure what you believe.

During the Zoom session, we will watch a short 13-minute DVD segment each week, discuss the readings in the book, and have time to ask our own questions. If you are not on the church email list, please reach out to the office and we will make sure you get the links you need to join us. If you have any questions, please reach out to the office.

So, put the dates in your calendar, order the book with the link provided in the Friday email, and read Chapter 1 for our first session on March 8 at 7:00 p.m. The link to the Zoom session is also provided in the Friday email. I look forward to making this journey through Lent with you!

# Church News

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## Greeters, Ushers and Readers Needed

Now that we are back to in-person Worship, we want to invite people to be Greeters, Ushers, and Readers. This is a small yet meaningful and important way to give and serve. **If you would like to be a Greeter, Usher, or Reader, please use the link provided in the Friday email and sign up for any Sunday you are available. You can also contact the Church Office (978-448-2091 or [unioncc@uccgroton.org](mailto:unioncc@uccgroton.org)), let us know you would like to participate, and we can sign you up.** If you have never done this before, and want to give it a try, we will get you all the info you need. In our church family, we encourage people to help lead worship and make our Sunday morning a welcoming place. Thank you!



*From the Church  
Office Administrator*

## The Church Office Going Forward

As most of you are already aware, my last day as Office Administrator will be Friday, March 4. I begin my new position at Our Lady of Grace/St. John's on Monday, March 7. Please stop by this week as I'd love to have the opportunity to see you before I leave (although I will not say "good-bye" but simply "I will see you around").

Pastor Corey has started the process of looking for a new Office Administrator. Until the right person is found, I will be in the office here on Thursdays to make sure the bulletin gets done and things are kept in check. So, as I start my new job, I will still be "here" for a period of time until there is a new Office Administrator.

Again, I thank all of you for making me feel welcome and at home from day one and for the many friendships I have formed over these last 13+ years. Please keep in touch, and I am sure I will see you around town! I wish all of God's blessings on this church and everyone in it.



## 2022 Altar Flowers

We would like to start altar flower dedications again. You will notice the 2022 Altar Flower chart is on the bulletin board in the hallway downstairs. As in the past, Country Florist delivers a center arrangement to the altar on Saturday every week. If you would like to dedicate flowers on a particular Sunday, please:

- 1) fill in your name and dedication on the 2019 Flower Chart (so that Carol can include this in the bulletin);
- 2) send a check for \$25 (made out to the UCC; memo: Altar Flowers) to the church office (220 Main Street, Groton, MA 01450).

The church will pay the bill to Country Florist. You don't need to call Lisa at Country Florist (978-433-8974) unless you want to change the arrangement design (she'll let you know if there is a cost increase). Call Carol (978-448-2091) if you have any questions.

# Christian Education

## Sunday School



We are back to in-person Sunday School now that in-person Worship began again on February 20. **March 6 is Communion Sunday**, so we will have PreK-4th grade at **All Together Time** in the Fellowship Hall (5th—8th grade remain in Worship). **Then on March 13 we will have in-person classrooms again.**

Hope to see you in Sunday School!

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### All Together Time on Communion Sundays Volunteers Wanted - Teenagers and Older March 6, April 3, May 1, June 5

On Communion Sundays, we usually have All Together Time in the Fellowship Hall, then the children come back to Worship in time for Holy Communion. Bonnie Marchesani has been handling the All Together Time, which has children in PreK - 4th grade. She could use some people to give her a hand on these Sundays. We are asking for anyone interested in the teenager or older range. One-two volunteers per Sunday would be wonderful! If you would like to help, please contact the Church Office (978-448-2091 or [unioncc@uccgroton.org](mailto:unioncc@uccgroton.org)) or **signup with the link in the Friday email**. Your help would truly be appreciated.

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Christian Education Committee

—Jenn Coviello

—Bonnie Marchesani

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### Next Month—Holy Week



**Palm/Passion Sunday, April 10, 10:00 a.m.**

Palms will be handed out  
Senior and Handbell Choir

**Maundy Thursday, April 14, 7:30 p.m.**

Holy Communion will be served. Senior Choir will sing with the traditional Tenebrae scripture readings accompanied by the extinguishing of lights symbolizing Christ's death. A beautiful, dramatic worship service. *(Contact Gail if you'd like to read scripture.)*



**Easter Sunday, April 17, 10:00 a.m.**

Traditional Family Worship  
Senior and Handbell Choir  
Holy Communion will be served  
No Sunday School

*Do you know someone who doesn't have a church home?  
Consider inviting them to join you for Easter worship.*



**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.*

## **March Highlights**

### **Wednesday, March 2 — Ash Wednesday**

Simple Soup Supper at 6:30 p.m.

Worship at 7:15 p.m. (both in the Fellowship Hall) — p. 4

### **Lenten Series 2022 — *Witness At The Cross***

Six Tuesday Evenings in the Season of Lent

March 8, 15, 22, 29, April 5, 12

7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. on Zoom — p. 4

***We are back to in-person Worship every Sunday at  
10:00 p.m. Please join us.***