

Sharing Christ, Changing Lives



The Union Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Groton, Massachusetts

May 17, 2026 10:00 a.m.

The altar flowers are given to the Glory of God.

The Rev. Priscilla Lawrence, Interim Minister
Bernard Crane, Music Director
Cheryl Townsend, Handbell Choir Director

Welcome! We are glad you are worshipping with us today. Large print bulletins and personal listening devices are available at the back of the Sanctuary or from an Usher. If your baby or child(ren) become a little restless during worship, feel free to walk with them in the back of the Sanctuary or use the rocker by the right-side exit door. Children (PreK-7th grade) go to Sunday School in the Fellowship Hall after the Children's Sermon. Feel free to approach an Usher or the Pastor with any questions.

* * * * *

PRELUDE *My Faith Looks Up To Thee* — L. Mason / arr. J. Carter

CHORAL INTROIT *Come and Worship* — K. Marroli

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: When we look in the mirror, we do not look alone.

People: We look, knowing that in Christ, we are already set free from whatever threatens to keep us from God.

Leader: We look knowing that the Spirit lives within us, encouraging us toward life and peace.

People: Let us worship together;

Leader: through song, prayer, scripture, and with the conviction we belong to God!

People: We belong to God completely.

*HYMN #92 *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*

*OPENING PRAYER (*unison*)

Creator God, we come before you on this spring morning, where all creation sings your praise. We lift our voices to you. We lift our hearts to you. We lift our worship to you. Send your Holy Spirit to be with us and among us we pray, in the name of Jesus, who taught us his prayer...

*PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR (*unison, debtors*)

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

*ASSURANCE OF GOD'S GRACE

*THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

(As a sign of reconciliation with God and each other, you are invited to share the peace of Christ with those closest to you.)

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHORAL ANTHEM *Down To The River To Pray* — K. Medema

CHILDREN'S SERMON

(Following the Children's Sermon, children grades PreK-7 may proceed to the Fellowship Hall.)

**Please rise in body or spirit.*

SCRIPTURE READING

2 Peter 3:8-18

SERMON

Our Religious Convictions

Rev. Dr. Priscilla Lawrence

OFFERING OF PRAYERS

SONG OF PREPARATION

In The Stillness

—E. Tompkins

*In the stillness, Savior, draw me near. In the stillness, teach my heart to hear.
Like a little child I come to Thee, and pray that in the stillness I may rest in Thee;
and know that in the stillness You will speak to me.*

LIFTING NAMES INTO GOD'S LIGHT

SILENT PRAYER

PASTORAL PRAYER

PRAYER RESPONSE

Amen

— B. Crane

SHARING OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY MUSIC & PASSING THE PLATE

*THE DOXOLOGY

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (*unison*)

Glorious God, everything that is given to us rains forth out of the abundance of your love. Bless these gifts and our lives together that all we are and all we offer give glory to you, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

*HYMN #497

Near to the Heart of God

**BENEDICTION & CHORAL RESPONSE

Savior, Again To Thy Dear Name

— E. J. Hopkins

POSTLUDE

Recessional in G♭

— B. Crane

**Please rise in body or spirit.*

***Following the Benediction, you may depart immediately or remain seated to listen to the Postlude.*

Thank you for serving today: Doris Barreiro (Greeter), Andrew Leonard (Reader)

Offering Note: Pledge offerings and donations can be given in the passed plate, or scan the QR code on the back of this bulletin to give online. Thank you for supporting the mission and ministry of our congregation. **Ministry of Fellowship:** Welcome to all who are joining us this morning. We're glad to have you sharing in our celebration of worship. Please join us downstairs in the Fellowship Hall after worship for refreshments and conversation.

Welcome Guests and Newer Folks

Our church family is made up of people from all walks of life and from every point along the spiritual journey. No matter who you are, what you believe, or even if you aren't sure what you believe, you are welcome here in this place. We are not a church that tries to get everyone to think alike, but we do encourage and teach people to love alike. If you would like to stay up with what happens around here, we encourage you to sign up for our weekly Union Digest email that comes straight to your email inbox each Friday. There you will find worship recordings, devotional videos, seasonal reflections, upcoming events and opportunities, and other materials to support you in your journey of faith. Feel free to sign a guest card and place it in the offering plate, sign up on our website www.uccgroton.net, or email the office at unioncc@uccgroton.org.

Our Ongoing Prayer List:

Edie Tompkins

Janice Owen

Barbara Gale

Halsey Platt

Family of Michael Janiszewski

Family of John Murphy

Sarah Reiff

Mark Epply

Joe Marchesani

Settled Pastor Search Committee

Abby Winkler

Don Landry

Family of William Shute

Chris Brown

Family of Rev. Skip and Peg Lloyd

Marvin Caldwell

John Greene

Billy Smith

Rachel Elliott

Friends of Sheila Mitchell

Family of Rev. Vicki Hammel

David Stewart

Family of Barbara Kenney

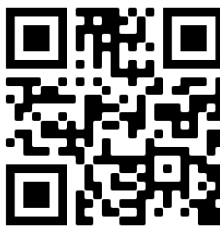
The Hargraves Family

We have updated and refreshed our prayer list. If there is a name you would like to add or remove, or if we have removed someone erroneously, please contact the Church Office (978-448-2091 or unioncc@uccgroton.org).

Need prayer and need it now? Simply email prayer@uccgroton.org and your request will go to the confidential pray-ers; or the Church Office (978-448-2091) and we 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.



Give Online



Upcoming Events



Join Our Email List

ANNOUNCEMENTS

May 17, 2026

Today	10:00 a.m.	Worship	Sanctuary
Monday	6:30 p.m.	Handbell Rehearsal	Sanctuary
Thursday	7:00 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal	Sanctuary

Habitat for Humanity Lunch – Thank You

Thanks to all who contributed to another successful Habitat for Humanity lunch! We fed a hungry crew of students from Mary Washington University who are spending this week working at the new Acton build site. We couldn't have done it without your time and delicious food donations. Stay tuned for more news on builds in Acton and Littleton.

Lego Day

St. Andrews, Shepherd of the Valley and Union Congregational Church Youth Groups will be hosting their Lego Day on Saturday May 30. Join us from 3pm - 5pm at the Parish Hall at St. Andrews at 7 Faulkner Street in Ayer. Join us for lego building, snacks and community building! This is a drop in event. All are welcome, and bring your family and friends!

Anniversary Birthday Party Update

The Flag Day Parade has moved to September 12th, but our June 14th UCC Birthday Party is still on!

Join us for a party to celebrate our 200th Birthday immediately following worship on June 14th. We will fire up the grill at 11:30 and have live music, games, and goody bags from 12-2pm. Mark your calendar and invite a friend! We are also looking for photos of the church and congregation through the years. If you have any please, send them to the office!

Sheila Mitchell Interment

Sheila Mitchell's interment has been scheduled for Monday, June 1st at 1pm, at the Old Burial Ground in Groton. All are welcome to attend. If you have any questions, please see Susan Walko.

Themes in Thirty - May 31, 2026

Themes in Thirty: "I Fear New Words, Like Metathesiophobia"

Metathesiophobia (meh-TATH-uh-see-uh-FOH-bee-uh) refers to the fear of change, particularly changes in routine, environment, or thinking. An uncommonly-used word for a basic anxiety that many of us share.

Our ancestors lived in a world where new situations often signaled danger. A new environment might harbor unknown predators. As a result, our brains evolved to approach the unfamiliar with caution, prioritizing the familiar and safe over the unknown.

Consequently, fear of change can be very useful when it keeps us safe, as long as it doesn't completely paralyze us or stop us from trying new things that might enrich our lives.

The theme for the next group will be *"I Fear New Words, Like Metathesiophobia."* In thirty minutes, we'll share our experiences and coping strategies with change.

Plan now to join us on Sunday, May 31, 2026, after worship (11:15'ish). Grab something to eat and/or drink at coffee hour and meet us in the Parlor!