

United Congregational Church, UCC  
6 Institute Road  
Worcester, MA 01609



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# UNITED VOICES

A Newsletter of the United Congregational Church, UCC  
6 Institute Road, Worcester, MA 01609

508-752-3785 [staff@ucc-worcester.org](mailto:staff@ucc-worcester.org) Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.

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## REVISITING REFLECTIONS ON THE RESURRECTION

*I wrote this article in March 2005. And when I re-read this article, I realized that these works are pertinent, still, in this day and age. I was reminded that the struggle to help transform the lives of others – as well as our own – demands a raw power that comes only from God, from the risen Christ! And so I offer again what I wrote four years ago.*

As I sit here in my office this evening, having had dinner with our guests from the Interfaith Hospitality Network, I am aware that the gentler images and symbols of Easter do not adequately communicate the radical, raw power that God makes manifest in raising Jesus from death, and in raising all of us to new life! Real transformation – whether social transformation or personal transformation – is never neat, easy, quiet, reasonable, or judicious. Change in the world, such as seeking an end to homelessness, often demands radical protest, outrage at injustice, loud voices, and bold actions. Transformation in your own life means dying to what is destructive and hurtful to you, rising out of those grimy ashes, and bravely reaching out for new life and a new way of being. Resurrection - the power of God's victory over death, of Christ rising from the dead - untamed, unexpected, inexplicable – is what you have the capacity to experience yourself and to offer to others.

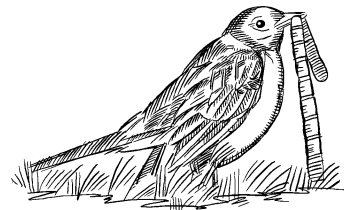
In the sermon for Easter Sunday, I quote from Pamela Cooper-White who wrote an article in the journal, *Lectionary Homiletics*. She reflected on the passage from John in which Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Pamela Cooper-White admitted that it was not a pretty picture when Lazarus was raised. I quote a paragraph from Pamela Cooper-White because she captures the essence of what the Resurrection means and how powerful it is.

After she described Lazarus as a rotting corpse and referred to Martha's words in the passage - "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days" - Pamela Cooper-White wrote, "Such truth about the Christian faith can often get covered over this time of year by cute Hallmark cards of bunnies and pastel eggs. The truth is that resurrection is neither cute nor pretty... The healing new life of the spirit comes, not when we're looking our best, but when we are at our worst: when we are lying in hospital beds with tubes in our bodies; when we are sick or bleeding or in pain; when are minds are tormented and depressed. Jesus didn't have time to be squeamish about

An Open and Affirming and  
Just Peace Congregation  
of the United Church of Christ

### Please be considerate...

Many of us are involved with projects, ministries and events sponsored by United, and it is tempting to just "ask a simple question" or "say a few words" pertaining to church business to others on Sunday mornings. It has been brought to our attention, however, that some feel interruptions of this nature before and/or during the worship service disrupt the flow of the service and their personal thoughts and prayers. Please be considerate of your fellow worshippers and speak to them at another time.



### PASTOR'S SCHEDULE

**Terry Fitzgerald** is usually at the church Tuesday through Friday. (508-752-3785 ext. 106) She is also available evenings and Saturdays for appointments as needed. Monday is her day off. Her home phone number is 508-753-5867, e-mail: [tfitz47@charter.net](mailto:tfitz47@charter.net).

**If you need to contact the church on Sunday morning**, you may now leave a message on the church answering machine. Follow the instructions contained in the greeting to leave a message. The Sunday Host, Ed Bourgault, will be checking for messages frequently on Sunday mornings.

**Please call the church office directly if you or a loved one is in the hospital.** We recently learned that we are not always informed when a church member is hospitalized. We need you to help us as we try to respond to the needs of our members and friends.

*continued on pg.3*

Lazarus' condition. Resurrection is not delicate or sentimental. It is shocking, raw, and powerful – powerful enough to lift a man out of his rotting burial cloths and bring him back to his sisters as a new person.” Pamela Cooper-White reminds us that when we are dying, gentle and cute are not what we need. What we need, she says, is the indelicate, unsentimental, raw power of God!

If you are to be the risen Christ to others, then you will have to draw upon that fierce power in order to study the issues, to change public policy, to revive the community, and to transform lives. If you are to rise from the death of your own hopes, the death of your dreams, the death of meaning for your life this moment, then you will have to draw on the raw power of God to overcome sorrow, grief, despair, and fear – and to rise again! Believe me, I know that it is not always pretty – in the struggle for others' dignity and freedom – and in your own struggles! It is not without frustration and setbacks; it is not without your sweat and your blood and your tears! You cannot be squeamish in your heroic efforts to help raise others, or, indeed, to raise yourself to new life! But the victory will be yours – with your deep courage and strength, and with the raw power of God!

I do not wish you a Happy Easter in this message, but, rather, I pray that you will be filled - this moment and every moment that you need it - with fierce, untamed, magnificent, awe-inspiring Resurrection power! Alleluia! Amen!

Terry



- Prayers of comfort and peace for Ken as he undergoes treatment for stomach cancer.
- Prayers of comfort for Javier Crespo on the

death of his sister.

- Prayers of hope and healing for those living with HIV/AIDS.
- Prayers of courage and strength for all men and women who are serving in our Armed Forces, especially in areas of conflict.
- Prayers of courage and peace for the families of soldiers who have died and have been injured.
- Peace and hope for the people of Iraq and Afghanistan.
- Prayers for the people of Zimbabwe, the Congo, the Sudan, Kenya, Tibet, and for the people of the Middle East.
- Prayers of hope for all people in our own country and neighborhoods affected by violence.
- Prayers of hope for all people and countries that are struggling with conflict and disease.
- Prayers of hope for all whose lives have been devastated in our struggling economy.
- Prayers of strength and wisdom and safety for our leaders in government.



## Thank God for Rain

Each spring the Lord sends April showers to water the earth. Without rain to nourish our trees, plants, flowers, fruits and vegetables, there would be a poor growing season and very little to harvest. Thank God for rainy weather!

*Write the words from the raindrops on the numbered lines below. Read the Bible verse.*

10	16	5	28	18	
4	22	26	;		
29	11	3	19	14	15
9	1	20	31	23	
12	7	21	17	25	"
30	6	24	13	.	

*Zechariah 10:1 (NIV)*

Answer: "Ask the Lord for rain in the springtime; it is the Lord who makes the storm clouds. He gives showers of rain to men, and plants of the field to everyone." Zechariah 10:1

## **The Food Cupboard at United Congregational is going green!**

In 2008, we used 3800 paper and plastic bags to distribute our food. Here is our plan to reduce those numbers:

- 34% of our clients visit our food cupboard 3 or more times a year. We will give repeat clients reusable grocery bags and request that they return the bags on their next visit to the food cupboard.
- Our listing on the Worcester County Food Bank website now urges all clients to bring reusable grocery bags.
- There are signs on the office entrance door and in the food cupboard distribution area encouraging all of our clients to bring reusable grocery bags.

Please consider making a donation to help us reach our goal of 375 reusable bags. You can either donate bags or donate money to buy bags. (Make checks out to United Congregational Church with "reusable bags" in the memo line.)

Thank you for helping our Food Cupboard to go green!

Connie Stewart and the Food Cupboard  
Volunteers



Our Food Cupboard

*Goes Green*