

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 Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m.

VOLUME XXIX

FEBRUARY 25, 2009

NUMBER 3

*Hold me, God, in this Lenten season; hold my feet to the fire of your grace and make me attentive to my mortality that I may begin to die now to those things that keep me from living with you and with my neighbors on this earth;
to grudges and indifference, to certainties that smother possibilities, to my fascination with false securities...*

*to my arrogant insistence on how it has to be;
to my corrosive fear of dying someday which eats away the wonder of living this day, and the adventure of losing my life in order to find it in you.*

(adapted from a prayer by Ted Loder, Guerillas of Grace)

Let us make time during this Lenten season to pray and to ponder how we might grow ever closer to God - and how we might act more faithfully together as followers of Jesus, as the Body of Christ.

Let us pray and act so that we will die to those things that keep us from living as steadfast and fearless disciples; let us pray and act so that we will die to those things that keep us from deep and intimate connection with God, with our neighbors, and with our deepest selves –

Dying to grudges, as we pray and work on forgiveness and releasing those offenses that keep our own hearts heavy and closed;

Dying to indifference, as we seek to act to improve the lives of our sisters and brothers in need of assistance, advocacy, justice, and peace;

Dying to certainties, as we question, challenge, and open ourselves to new paths on our own personal life journeys; and as we open ourselves to new paths as a church body, seeking to discern where God is leading us;

Dying to false securities, as we dare to leave behind the safety of familiarity and complacency, and dare to live dangerously - changing our own lives, transforming this world, and living the Gospel message;

Dying to arrogant insistence, as we consider unexpected, even unwelcome, perspectives, options, and suggestions on how each one of us might live more faithfully, and how this church might more fully manifest God's Holy Spirit;

Dying to fear, as we – individually and together - eternally prepare to lose life as we know it; as we anticipate rising from the ashes of all that has needed to die in us;

Dying to fear, so that we might rise – liberated, empowered, and emboldened – to live and love as Christ would have us do.

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.

Please feel free to contact the Pastoral Relations Committee if you have any concerns, suggestions, or affirmations.

Members of the Pastoral Relations Committee for the Rev. Dr. Terry Fitzgerald are:

Ray Gaspari Marcus McCorison
Peg Manoogian Stacey Mott

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.

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.

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May the peace and hope and love that is Christ journey with you through these holy days of prayer, pondering, dying, and rising.


Terry



•Prayers of comfort and strength for Lucia Clemente Falco and her family on the death of her father, Peter Clemente.

- Prayers of healing for Julia Cushman Mills suffering from bulimia.
- Prayers of healing for Chris recovering from colon cancer.
- Prayers of strength for Carol Olsen.
- Prayers of comfort for Marion and Scott Orczyk.
- 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 this country affected by violence.
- Prayers of hope for all people and countries in the grip of war, 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 President, Barack Obama, and the new administration.

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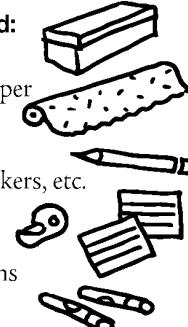


PRAYER BOX

Family prayer time is a good habit. Make it fun with this activity for all family members. They can use this special box whenever they have a prayer request.

What you need:

- Shoebox
- Wrapping paper
- Scissors
- Tape
- Stickers, markers, etc. (optional)
- Index cards
- Pencils or pens



What you do:

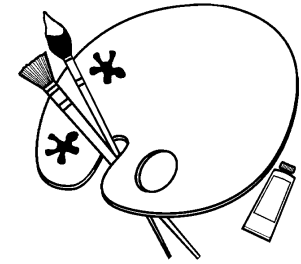
1. Wrap the shoebox like a present. Be sure to wrap the lid separately so it can be removed.
2. Let the whole family help decorate the box. You can write Bible verses about prayer, draw pictures, glue on pictures or add stickers. Be creative!
3. Put the box in a prominent location of your house. Keep a pile of index cards and pencils or pens near the box.
4. Whenever a family member has a prayer request, he or she can write or draw it on a card and put it inside the box.
5. Family members can share the cards in a prayer circle, or people can take turns praying for all the requests. Throughout the week, family members can check the box for new prayer needs.

Art for Hearts

Presented by Hope for Housing

April 2, 2009 Arts

Showcase Cinema North Worcester



6:00 Reception

6:30 "Art from Young Hearts" ... Self-portraits created by children presently experiencing homelessness will be unveiled.

Local congregations, including United Congregational, will provide a homeless child with crayons, colored pencils, magic markers, small watercolor sets along with "loose" change or a small check for the child to create and frame a self portrait. A collection box will be located in the Robinson Room until Sunday March 1 for donations of Art Supplies. "Loose" change and small checks may be given to the Hope for Housing team (Sandra Longvall-Johnson, Jolie and Noelle Demers)

7:00 Premier Central Massachusetts screening of feature film "**Where God Left His Shoes**" starring John Leguizamo. Based on a true story, this award winning film tells the story of a family evicted from their apartment and forced to fight homelessness.

Those in attendance will also have an opportunity, following the film presentation, to visit with representatives of several organizations involved in addressing family homelessness ... including our Interfaith Coalition's "Hope for Housing" program.

Preventing family homelessness is a community task.
Thank you for being part of it.

Sandra Longvall-Johnson, Jolie Demers, Noelle Demers