

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.

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SUSTAINING HOPE

I sit here at my desk on a summer afternoon. Having prayed, this morning, with a member suffering because of the tragic death of his grandson, I am reminded that life is fragile, fleeting – and that hope is ephemeral. What is it that comforts us and sustains our hope in those excruciating moments of our lives?

Our first recourse is often to take comfort in performing our routine tasks – like writing this newsletter article. Those tasks ground us in the real, the mundane, the necessity of picking up one foot and placing it in front of the other. We immerse ourselves in the demands of family life, work responsibilities, personal goals. And those are of no little consequence, for sure! Here at church, for example, all our tasks – our ongoing discernment process, planning our calendar, maintaining a safe building, planning worship - give meaning and purpose to the daily living of those of us involved in these activities.

But in the slower pace and quiet spaces of our lives, we are, often, more directly confronted with our fragility and our, sometimes, tenuous hold on hope. When it seems to slip through our fingers and evaporate on the horizon, how can we re-capture it? What can sustain it?

Words – messages thoughtfully written by others; shared in quiet whispers; poetry, commentary, written wisdom, scripture. Words connect us with others; they tether us to the world and open us to shared experience. A fragile hope can be sustained with these words!

Community – embrace of family and friends; the deep communion of a faith community that provides hallowed and secure ground for questions, rage, tears doubt! A sacred, safe setting in which all wounds are tended to and anointed! A fragile hope can be sustained in this place!

The Ineffable, the Holy One – beyond reason; when all seems lost; when there is no one else; when words and community do not suffice! God is, Christ is ... intrinsically one with that fragility, despair, hopelessness. Not making sense of it! But relentlessly abiding in it! Unremittingly! Ruthlessly, unyieldingly, inexorably sustaining the faintest traces of hope in the midst of it! A fragile hope can, and will inexplicably be, sustained by the One who loves you so.

May you, now and forever, be sustained with hope – by hope – by God.

Terry

*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.

