

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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SACRED TIME

As we begin to enter a season of increased busyness, holidays, meetings, and other related activities, I turn to Abraham Heschel's book, *The Sabbath* (The Noonday Press; Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 1951).

In a beautifully written reflection on sacred time, Heschel offers us the perspective that Sabbath time is not just respite from work, but an attitude of holy re-creation. He reminds us that, in Genesis, as God made all aspects of creation and called them, "good," God called the "seventh day," the day of rest, *holy*. *God attributed holiness to time*. It is not a frivolous endeavor, but, rather, a spiritual discipline to set time apart simply to be with God and in God's presence.

Rather than explaining Heschel's thoughts, I simply offer some of his words. "...*the Sabbath as a day of rest, as a day of abstaining from toil, is not for the purpose of recovering one's lost strength and becoming fit for the forthcoming labor. The Sabbath is a day for the sake of life. Man (or woman) is not a beast of burden, and the Sabbath is not for the purpose of enhancing the efficiency of his/her work... The Sabbath is not for the weekdays; the weekdays are for the sake of the Sabbath. It is not an interlude, but the climax of living.*" (p. 14)

"*To set apart one day a week for freedom, a day on which we would not use the instruments which have been so easily turned into weapons of destruction, a day for being with ourselves, a day of detachment from the vulgar, of independence of external obligations, a day on which we stop worshipping the idols of technical civilization -...is there any institution that holds out a greater hope for humanity's progress than the Sabbath?*" (p. 28)

"*It is a moment of resurrection of the dormant spirit in our souls.*" (p. 66) "*All our life should be a pilgrimage to the seventh day; the thought and appreciation of what this day may bring to us should be ever present in our minds. For the Sabbath is the counterpoint of living; the melody sustained throughout all the agitations and vicissitudes which menace our conscience; our awareness of God's presence in the world.*" (p. 89)

"*On the Sabbath it is given us to share in the holiness that is in the heart of time. Even when our soul is seared, even when no prayer can come out of our tightened throats, the clean, silent rest of the Sabbath leads us to a realm of endless peace, or to the beginning of an awareness of what eternity means...*" (p. 101)

cont. p. 3

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

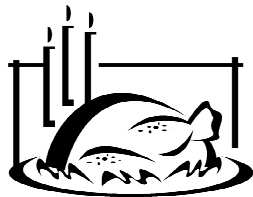
Terry Fitzgerald is usually at the church Tuesday through Friday. (508-752-3785 ext. 106) She is also available evenings and Saturdays for appointments as needed. Monday is her day off. Her home phone number is 508-753-5867, e-mail: tfitz47@charter.net.

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.

In upcoming seasons of meals and gatherings; of work, meetings and activities; of being pulled and pushed in many directions, I invite you to set aside Sabbath time, sacred and holy time, to refresh your minds, renew your bodies, revitalize your hearts, and restore your souls. To set aside time to rest, pray, meditate, be still – so you can experience God in your every breath; hear Jesus’ whispers of ceaseless love; be filled with strength for daily living, and glimpse eternal peace in the embrace of the One who loves you so!

Terry



THANKSGIVING GROCERY CARDS

This Thanksgiving Season we will be distributing \$25 grocery cards from the Hope for Housing program in lieu of turkey baskets. The grocery cards will be distributed to clients of You, Inc and Community Healthlink in early November, allowing clients to take advantage of grocery store sales. The switch to grocery cards eliminates food safety concerns about turkeys defrosting and dripping on the contents of the food baskets prior to distribution to recipients.

Although our food cupboard does not distribute turkeys, the clients appreciate receiving other thanksgiving dinner items including cranberry sauce, stuffing mix and pie fillings. Your donations of these items to our food cupboard will brighten a family’s thanksgiving dinner.



- Prayers of healing for Norma Quinzani who is in rehabilitation.
- Prayers of healing and strength for Warren Page’s brother, Gerald, dealing with a diagnosis of cancer.
- Prayers of comfort for the family of Carolyn Dzaugis’ cousin, Amy Barrett, who died last week. Amy was the mother of 5 children, ranging from 9-17 years old.
- Prayers of healing for Michele Merenda who is recovering from cancer surgery and radiation.
- Prayers of comfort and strength for Walter Crockett and family and friends on the death of Valerie Crockett, Chuck and Mud’s friend.
- Prayers of comfort for the family, friends, and children of Leesa Trim who died recently. And prayers of courage and strength for Marianne and Karan who are now caring for Kade and Chelsea.
- Prayers for a granddaughter that has some health problems.
- 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, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.
- Prayers of wisdom and peace for the people and leaders of Iran.
- Prayers for the people of North and South Korea, the Congo, the Sudan, Kenya, Tibet, and for the people of the Middle East.
- Prayers of hope for all whose lives have been devastated in our struggling economy.
- Prayers of wisdom for those in power struggling to achieve health care reform.