

United Voices Update



UNITED CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
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Sunday Worship Service 10:30 a.m.

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AT A GLANCE...

UNITED EVENTS

- **PANEL PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION**
Sunday, April 27, 2:00 p.m.
- **MISSION FAIR**
Sunday, May 4
- **ANNUAL PROGRAM MEETING**
Sunday, May 18
- **ADULT BIBLE STUDY**
Friday mornings at 10:00 a.m. Small Parlor



DEACON ON CALL

508-752-6592

DEACON ON CALL provides assistance to the congregation and the community at large every Monday, and any time Terry is out of town or unavailable.

OUR PASTOR'S SCHEDULE

Terry Fitzgerald is usually at the church Tuesday through Friday. 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.

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

**SUMMER CAMP
SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS AVAILABLE
FOR ADULTS AND CHILDREN**

**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL AND
ANY SUMMER CAMP EXPERIENCE**

**Call the church office for information
on camp scholarship money.**



**Summer
Day Camp**

NEXT STEP IN OUR DISCERNMENT PROCESS

What is God calling United Congregational Church UCC, in light of its mission and vision statements, to be and to do with the building, without the building, with the building restructured, etc?'

On April 27, Sunday afternoon, at 2:00, we invite you to come to hear stories from 3 different congregations that have made important decisions concerning significant changes in their life as a faith community.

The presentation will include discussion about what led to the need for change in these churches, how the decision was made, and what thoughts and planning went into the new direction in which they now move. One congregation has voted to begin the process of selling their building. One congregation is federated – a union of 2 denominations. One congregation voted, in the 1990's, to plan, design, and build a new facility. There will be time for questions and conversation.

There will also be a lunch provided and some "church family" activities planned for those who do not wish to go home and come back. (Maybe I can make the sermon longer so that there won't be time to go home first. I know you'd be thrilled....!)

To date, many of you have participated in small group discussions and task team research - all of which has been reported to the congregation either directly or through the newsletter. This process has been completely open and transparent, and has proceeded in a thoughtful way. All members have been provided with opportunities to listen and to share thoughts and ideas. And all participants have engaged in this challenging discussion with courage, honesty, respect, and creativity. We can now anticipate the formulation of one or more proposals that will lead, after discussion and vote, to significant action.

The process has been both anxiety-producing and exciting, and has been essential given changes within our own congregation as well as in the broader culture. We are not alone! According to a New York Times article (Feb. 25, 2008) a new survey of religious affiliation by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life indicated that "more than a quarter of adult Americans have left the faith of their childhood to join another religion or no religion.... The group that had the greatest net gain was the unaffiliated." We, indeed, have challenges ahead, as a local church and as part of the struggling institutional church. But, with God's grace and help, we will be the church that God desires and calls us to be.

We desire to emphasize that our decisions for the future will be made as disciples seeking to be faithful to the promptings of God's Spirit.

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MISSION FAIR

MISSION FAIR - May 4

The Mission Fair will be an informative after worship event that includes a light lunch in the Large Parlor. Numerous groups that have been funded by United in recent years will be present.

Representatives from these groups will have a display table set up to provide information about their groups. The event is intended to be interactive where folks can ask questions of the various groups. This is a good opportunity for the congregation to learn how Wider Church dollars (and a portion of pledge dollars) are spent to make a difference at local, national and international level.

“Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have.”

Hebrews 13: 16a

Your gifts to *One Great Hour of Sharing* carry God’s message of love and hope to people in more than eighty countries! The United Church of Christ works with international partners to provide sources of clean water and food, education and health care, small business micro-credit, emergency relief and advocacy and resettlement for refugees and displaced persons. Your gifts also support domestic and international ministries for disaster preparedness and response.

One Great Hour of Sharing has an amazing history. Since 1949, a number of Christian denominations have participated in this life-changing offering. Today, the UCC is one of nine denominations that support *One Great Hour of Sharing* in cooperation with Church World Service.

We will be receiving the *One Great Hour of Sharing Offering* in April.

*God is still speaking,
through your gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing*

The
GREEN ROOSTER CoffeeHouse
Doors open 7:30 All shows 8:00 p.m.



Apr 12 \$10	<i>The Latin Endorphins and Olde ‘Nuf to Know Better</i> – A benefit concert for AIDS Project Worcester.
May 3 \$15	<i>The Baby Boomer Revue: The Buzzards, David Reed-Brown, original songs of Mary Ann Rossoni, all hosted by SteepleJack, Ken Ferguson</i> – Music, Comedy, Magic, and information on finances, relationships, and medical wonders!
May 10	<i>Kitchen Musicians Production</i> – Stay tuned!
	<i>Thanks for dropping in! We always need volunteers.</i>

SAVE THE DATE!!
Sunday April 27th 2:00 p.m.

PANEL PRESENTATION and DISCUSSION

3 different churches will share stories on how important decisions were made, resulting in changes in the life of each Community of Faith.

You are invited to stay for lunch after worship and to relax with “church family” activities before the meeting!

HELP RAISE FUNDS FOR IHN

A gala fund-raising event is happening on **May 3** at the **Chocksett Inn in Sterling, MA**, and you’re invited! The First Church **Treasures of the Community Fifth Annual Auction** will raise funds for IHN, the La Romana Mission in the Dominican Republic, and First Church outreach and community programs. A gourmet dinner, live and silent auctions, Wine Wonders table, and a raffle for \$1,000 in cash provide an evening of pleasure, anticipation, and excitement and all proceeds go directly to our charities! In the past four years, we’ve raised over \$103,000, **\$36,245 of which has gone directly to IHN.**

Every year we choose a theme and this year’s is particularly appropriate. We ask: ***What will you do today that will matter tomorrow?***

Tickets are \$50, which includes a donation; contact Phil Holman at 978-422-7694 philsterl@comcast.net, (P.S. Tickets go fast!)

We also welcome donations of items or services; contact Linda Davis at 978-660-6587 or davisfarmers@comcast.net to talk about the possibilities.

Ads in our catalog help the cause: call Lucy Parker at 978-534-9615.

THE SECOND WEDNESDAY BOOK GROUP

ALL ARE WELCOME!! Meetings are at 7:30 p.m. Please call the host/hostess if you plan to attend.



May 14, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini, home of Tom Sanford (508-853-4225).

June 11, *The Atonement* by Ian McEwan, home of Joy Hennig (508-852-3590).

We look forward to having anyone who loves to read!

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.

COFFEE HOUR IS PAID FOR BY YOUR DONATIONS. THANK YOU FOR CONTRIBUTING TO THE BASKET AS YOU ARE ABLE.