

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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NUMBER 10

Looking Ahead: A Change of Plans

In the last newsletter I wrote about the work of the Merger Exploration Task Team, and the potential for conversation with First Baptist Church about merger. Over the summer, the Governing Board of First Baptist discerned that the time was not right for a merger possibility, and, so, voted not to continue merger discussions.

A brief summary of the work of the Merger Exploration Task Team follows: The Task Team included Barry Jones, Larry Iannetti, Walter Cushman, Peggy Manoogian, Dorista Goldsberry, Ray Gaspari, Sandra Johnson, Miriam Montalvo, and Terry Fitzgerald (ex officio). On November 11, 2008 the Task Team met, brainstormed and developed a list of criteria for churches we would be considering. The list included:

1. Open and Affirming
2. Mission oriented
3. Christ Centered – Christian Education
4. Service to Community
5. Vibrant community/hospitable/multigenerational
6. Location (within 15 miles of United)
7. Open to considering a merger
8. Music program

An informational meeting with the congregation was held 12-14-08 to share this potential list and elicit feedback regarding it. Monthly meetings were scheduled. Various teams of members visited area churches, sometimes directed by the team and other times just on their own, out of curiosity. Reports of their experiences were shared at subsequent meetings. January found the team visiting a number of churches. At the Annual Financial Meeting of United in Feb. the congregation was apprised of the work that had been accomplished to date.

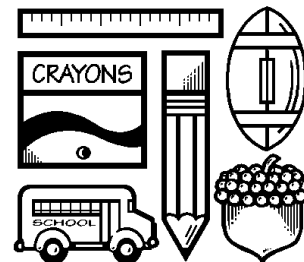
The team narrowed the possibilities down to Hadwen Park Congregational Church UCC, Wesley United Methodist Church, and First Baptist Church. Wesley declined graciously, not interested in merging with another church at this time. Hadwen Park was contacted; the team visited with the Board of Hadwen and their pastors; and they ultimately decided not to pursue merger possibilities. First Baptist was approached and expressed interest. The team met with the Governing Board of First Baptist and their minister, the Rev. Tom McKibbens, on April 14th 2009.

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*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.

There was considerable interest. A second meeting was held at United on May 12th that included the First Baptist Governing Board, the Task Team and the two ministers. There was continued interest. Our congregation was informed of the beginning dialogue with First Baptist regarding merger possibilities.

On June 10th First Baptist officially informed us that they were withdrawing from merger talks after the vote of their Governing Board. Our congregation was informed of the withdrawal of First Baptist interest during worship on June 14th, and in the subsequent Voices Update and through the weekly Spirit.

The Board of Ministries met on July 22nd to talk about this development. In the opening prayer we invoked God's Spirit individually and together. Those present remarked that the ideas, input, insights, and discussion were, without doubt, shaped and guided by that Spirit. The conversation was frank, open, respectful, and moving – with a clear sense of hope, energy, and enthusiasm. The outcome of the discussion about the remaining possibilities will be the basis for dialogue with and input from the congregation in the early fall.

We continue to pray for God's Spirit to guide us to consensus and clarity about the direction God intends for us.

Now to God who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (Ephesians 3: 20-21)

Terry



- Prayers of healing for Betty.
- Prayers of healing for Marilyn, facing a medical procedure.
- Prayers for Matt, a friend of the Stewarts, as he joins the navy.
- Prayers of comfort for the Metcalf family on the death of Guy and Jo's son, Guy David Metcalf, Jr.
- 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 strength for the people of Taiwan affected by the flooding.
- 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 wisdom for those in power struggling to achieve health care reform.


HERITAGE SUNDAY
SEPTEMBER 20

Join us as we celebrate
the rich history
of our church and its members.

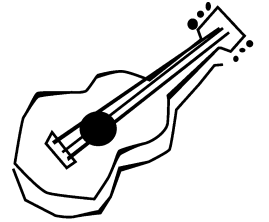


Celebrate Summer!
Join us for a free family
music concert featuring...

¡Celebremos el verano!
Reunete con nosotros en un
concierto musical gratis que
presentaremos para la familia...

Chuck & Mud

and The Hole in the Dam Band
20th Annual Family Concert



Sunday, August 30th 5 ~ 7 p.m.

Institute Park Salisbury Street, Worcester

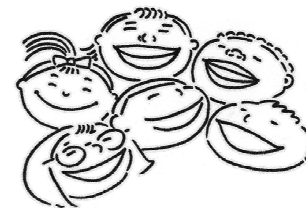
Featuring:

Sten Gustavson - Keys
Mark Manuel - Bass
Joe Zupan - Drums
Walter Crockett - Lead
Bob Dick – Dobro
Fran McConville – Mando
Myra MacLeod – Fiddle

* **RAIN LOCATION**
UNITED CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
GREEN ROOSTER COFFEEHOUSE
(6 Institute Road, Worcester)

FREE!
¡GRATIS!

**Bring a picnic, chairs, blankets,
kids, friends and neighbors to
enjoy one more night of music in
this beautiful park before the
school year begins!**



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