

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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SABBATH

We have had a productive year! The discernment process moves forward. The meeting after church on June 8 was remarkable in the tone and substance of the discussion – lively, honest, respectful, graced with humor, and deeply theological. People’s comments about how the church is really the gathered people here at United. We are the Body of Christ, and not the building; comments about discerning our mission, with, perhaps, some new mission on the horizon; comments about a willingness to let go and follow God’s call – all thoughtful and faithful!. There were other comments – and many questions.

We take time now to ponder the results of the straw poll taken at that meeting. And we take time to pray, as we put ourselves in God’s hands, and trust that God is, indeed, leading us in this time of discernment. We take time to consider the next step; the proposal/proposals to be considered in the fall.

In the meantime, in this quieter, warmer season, we have the opportunity to enter into some Sabbath time for ourselves. In the sermon on Sunday, June 22, I quoted from the book, The Sabbath, by Abraham Heschel – Jewish scholar, activist, theologian, and mystic. “The Sabbath is not for the purpose of recovering one’s lost strength and becoming fit for the forthcoming labor... The Sabbath is not for the purpose of enhancing the efficiency of our work... Six days a week we wrestle with the world, wringing profit from the earth; on the Sabbath we especially care for the seed of eternity planted in our soul.” (pp. 13,14) He also wrote, “It is a moment of resurrection of the dormant spirit in our souls.” (p. 66)

I said that your Sabbath time may not, in fact, always be a Sunday. What matters is that you nurture the discipline of setting aside a time when you can sit in God’s presence – and feel your soul, your inner being, stir with the sensation of a deep peace, a deep joy, a deep contentment, a deep sense of freedom from the cares of the world – the sensation, the awareness, that a spirit, Christ’s Spirit, rises in you and cannot be contained; that it spills out of you. A time when you can truly feel your deep bond with all of God’s people, all of God’s creation! I pray that you will be able to set aside sacred time in these summer months.

May you take Sabbath time – time to be holy!

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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.

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.

Sabbath continued

May you take Sabbath time to enter into God, to let God enter into you, to experience God more fully in the relationships around you and in all creation!

May you take Sabbath time to be free from the cares that imprison you!

May you take Sabbath time to experience the resurrection of the dormant spirit in your souls!

Terry

Our fluid faith

America's religious landscape is diverse and ever-shifting, according to a recent survey. The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life found that almost half of Americans leave the faith tradition in which they were raised.

The results "seem in keeping with the high tolerance among Americans for change," says Pew Forum director Luis Lugo. "People move a lot, people change jobs a lot. It's a very fluid society." Other contributing factors include intermarriage and our consumer culture.

The survey of 35,000 adults showed that Protestants will soon become the religious minority in America for the first time. Meanwhile, there's a boost in people — especially young adults — who are "unaffiliated" with a particular faith. But not everyone in this group is necessarily "unreligious," Lugo notes.

While traditional, organized religion seems to be losing its appeal, faith is still relevant to Americans. Michael Lindsay of the Center on Race, Religion and Urban Life says religion is the most-important factor driving our beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. Religion, he says, is "a powerful indicator of where America will end up on politics, culture, family life. If you want to understand America, you have to understand religion in America."



- Prayers of healing for Billy Ackerly's mother, Shirley Philie, recovering from a stroke.
- Prayers of strength and healing for Rhonda Morrison.
- Prayers of hope and healing for Isabel Almonte, and prayers for her daughter, Carolina, as she makes some transitions in her life.
- Prayers of healing for the Rev. Duane Brown's wife, Amy, as she recovers from knee surgery.
- Prayers of healing for the Rev. Elaine Gaetani's husband, Steve, recovering from bypass surgery.
- Prayers of strength for Chet Orczyk and for Marion and Scott.
- Prayers of comfort and hope for the family and friends of Cpl. Christian Cotner who died recently in Iraq. Christian was a good friend of Alyssa and Kacie Mott.
- Prayers of comfort for the family of Martha Eck who died on May 30.
- 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 Iraqi people who are still held captive by unremitting and devastating violence.
- Prayers of hope for all people and countries in the grip of war, conflict, and disease.
- Prayers for the people of the Congo, the Sudan, Kenya and Tibet
- Prayers of hope and healing for those living with HIV/AIDS.
- Prayers of strength for those affected by the tornadoes and flooding in different parts of this country, especially at the Boy Scout camp in Iowa.
- Prayers of strength for all those affected by the devastating cyclone in Myanmar (Burma) and by the massive earthquake in China.
- Prayers of comfort for Lucia Clemente Falco on the death of her mother, Leona

UNITED CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH 2008/09

Pastor: The Rev. Dr. Terry Fitzgerald

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CHURCH STAFF

Minister of Music: Lucia Clemente Falco
 WAMS Minister of Outreach: The Rev. Robert S. Bachelder
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 Church Secretary: Elaine Mann
 Full-time Sexton: Ilirjan (John) Prifti
 Part-time Sexton: Ed Fenner
 Sunday Host: Ed Bourgault
 Chestnut Preschool Director: Chuck Demers
 Bookkeeper: Alaina Bisceglia

