



# United Congregational Church



VOICES Newsletter

April 2015

## Message from Serena Leiser



Dear Friends,

Happy Spring! Yes, I kid you not, it is spring - at least according to the calendar. But having to put on a heavy winter coat to go to church on Easter Sunday made me wonder if there was a misprint on the calendar. Easter should be sunny and warm so we can wear new spring clothes in soft pastels. But fear not, we still have several weeks of Easter left, since the Easter season runs from Easter Sunday for 50 days until Pentecost. Too often this is something I forget as the busyness of the end of another semester draws near and the Spring cleaning inside and outside of my house demands my time. But we will continue to celebrate Easter right up until Pentecost Sunday, May 24th. And celebrate we should. This is not just the anniversary of an event in history, it is the time when Jesus was on earth as the **risen** Christ. The greeting "He is risen!" should not be reserved only for Easter Sunday, but through the entire Easter season.

One way the church pursues this goal of seeing God present in the world is through the reading of the Acts of the Apostles. In the coming Sunday's, our usual practice of reading from the Old Testament is replaced by reading from the Acts of the Apostles. These readings tell the story of the church's earliest days, and the beginnings of our faith's spreading throughout the ancient world. These stories of heroism, controversies, persecutions and miracles all testify to the continued presence of the Risen Christ in the world, through the lives of his disciples, and the actions of the Holy Spirit.

I came across another way that is going to help me remember there are 50 days of Easter. It is a website that provides a "thought a day" for the 50 days of Easter. The website is <http://old.explorefaith.org/easter/50days.html> and I encourage you to join me in going to this site each day. It is just one sentence a day, so it just takes a few seconds, but it reminds you of the incredible gift God has given us in the resurrection which certainly deserves at least 50 days of celebration.

Blessings,  
Serena

## Pastoral Coverage

Nancy will be on vacation from April 29 – May 8; Serena Leiser will be providing pastoral coverage. Please contact Serena (781-492-1478) or the church office in case of pastoral emergency.

## Office Coverage

Ann will be on vacation from April 17 – April 27. The church Office will be closed. If you have any pastoral needs call Nancy Directly, for anything else leave a message on the Church Office phone and Ann will deal with it when she returns.

## Holy Week and Easter Thanks



### Special Easter Thanks....

...thank you to all who donated and all who delivered Easter flowers! It was wonderful to see the sanctuary decorated with beautiful signs of spring, and our less mobile members appreciated knowing they are thought of and missed!

...thank you to all who shared in worship during Holy Week services: readers, ushers, greeters, communion servers and “preparers”!

...a special thanks to Karen Dorshimer-Chaplin for preaching on Good Friday....to Ed Bourgault and Tim Camp for setting up and taking down our worship space countless times during Holy Week and to Ann Lewis for printing bulletin after bulletin after bulletin!

....and a very special thanks to the musicians who made our worship so very special, especially Karen Wilfrid for playing the piano on Palm Sunday, Audrey White for singing and playing the violin on Maundy Thursday (on last minute notice), Greg Wilfrid and Dave Uhl for providing music on Good Friday, and Karen Wilfrid and Chris Vece for the joyous Easter music!

## Welcome Rev. Warren Hicks

On May 3, we will be welcoming the Rev. Warren Hicks as our guest preacher. Rev. Hicks is the new Executive Director and Co-Pastor of Worcester Fellowship. The focus of the service will be people who are in need, especially on the homeless and disenfranchised. After the service there will be a time for discussion on what we as a church community can do to help those in need in our local community.

## Walk For A Good Cause



United Congregational Church will be participating once again in the annual Walk for the Homeless, which will begin this year at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, May 17<sup>th</sup> in Worcester's Elm Park. The Walk, now in its 30<sup>th</sup> year, raises funds for organizations working to end homelessness. The 6 beneficiaries of this year's event include the Interfaith Hospitality Network, which offers temporary shelter to homeless families; the Donations Clearinghouse, a provider of free furniture to those in need; and the Hope for Housing program, which offers financial assistance to people needing a residence.

All are welcome to be part of the team from our church that will walk the 3 mile route through downtown Worcester on May 17<sup>th</sup>. We also need people who can be financial sponsors. There will be a sign up table in Merriman Chapel on the 3 Sundays before the Walk, May 3, 10 & 17, with more information about how you can help this ministry that seeks to insure that EVERYONE has access to safe and affordable shelter. You can also contact Tim Camp, the coordinator for United's Walk team, through e-mail at [timbcamp@aol.com](mailto:timbcamp@aol.com), or by phone at 508- 798- 6997.

In Christ,

United's Missions and Outreach Ministry

## Dear Friends of Worcester Fellowship,

I am writing to let you know that I have been called to a new job as the Minister to the Affiliates of Ecclesia Ministries. This means I will be helping outdoor churches throughout the United States to strengthen their ministries, and encouraging people to start new ministries. This requires that I resign as the Co-Pastor of Worcester Fellowship. Warren Hicks is already our new Executive Director.

My last day at Worcester Fellowship will be Sunday, April 26, 2015. I will start at my new position on June 1. Of course I will continue to work on my Doctor of Ministry Dissertation over the next year.

Please save the evening of May 30<sup>th</sup> for a gathering to celebrate our ministry together at a site to be determined.

I knew when I was called to Graduate Studies that this meant that God probably had ideas for something new. I'll admit, I thought that meant *after* I finish! But it is clear that this new opportunity matches my education, experience, and calling.

To be honest, you and the community of Worcester Fellowship have given me the training I need for this new work. All of you, the people who come for lunch, the people who just stop by to say hi, the people who bring lunch and hot cocoa and socks, the ministry support team, the people who fund this ministry, even the police officers watching from a distance, all of you, have taught me this ministry. Thank you!

Over the next few weeks, I hope we will spend time together. At the same time, I encourage you to spend the next weeks connecting with the other Pastors at Worcester Fellowship. Noelle, Warren, and Georgeanne are ready to listen to your stories, to be your connection to this ministry, to be your partners in helping to show and share God's loving spirit which is calling you into the world and ministry on God's behalf.

In the Peace of Christ,

-Liz

(The Rev.) Elizabeth M. Magill

[www.worcesterfellowship.org](http://www.worcesterfellowship.org)

**Evening Program: "Seizing the Nonviolent Moments", May 19<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 – 9:00 in Merriman Chapel**



All are invited to an special evening program with Nancy Small as she shares from her new book, "*Seizing the Nonviolent Moments: Reflections on the Spirituality of Nonviolence Through the Lens of Scripture*". She will lead a discussion on ways we can all practice nonviolence in our lives, drawing upon examples from scripture and the lives of contemporary peacemakers.

Nancy is a hospice chaplain, spiritual director, and seeker of peace. She is a former national coordinator and

current Ambassador of Peace with Pax Christi USA, the national Catholic peace movement.

For more information, please speak to Dave DuBois or Nancy Elder-Wilfrid. This event is free and open to the public; copies of Nancy Small's book will be available for purchase at the event.

The flyer is attached.

## Message From Helen

Dear friends,

Your outpouring of prayers, words, emails and hugs means more than you can imagine. Thank you so much. I don't know how I would navigate through this terrible time without you and my family. Helen Bross

## In Loving Memory



We give thanks for the life of Judy Quinn, a dearly beloved member of this congregation, who died on April 1<sup>st</sup>. Judy's deep faith and willingness to serve wherever she was needed was an inspiration to all who knew her, and she will be greatly missed. We hold in prayer her family and all whose lives were touched by her own. A memorial service celebrating Judy's life was held at United on April 9<sup>th</sup>.

## Save the Date:

May 17 – Plant Swap: Community and Fellowship  
May 19 – Evening with Nancy Small: Mission and Outreach  
May 31 – Annual Program Meeting  
September 7 – All church picnic at the Brooks Farm after worship  
October 4-5 – Church retreat at Glastonbury Abbey

## Calendar

April 19 – Mission and Outreach  
April 19 – Soup Sunday  
April 21 - Bible Study  
April 22 – Board of Ministries  
April 26 - Spiritual Life and Diaconate  
April 28 - Women's Religious Book Group  
April 28 - Bible Study  
May 3 – Community and Fellowship  
May 5 – Bible Study  
May 10 - Spiritual Life and Diaconate  
May 11 - Carty Food Cupboard  
May 12 – Bible Study

## Resources

UCC Lectionary Information (<http://www.macucc.org/pages/detail/220>)

United Congregational Church (<http://www.ucc-worcester.org>)

UCC Mass Conference (<http://macucc.org/>)

National UCC Web Page (<http://www.ucc.org/>)

## UCC News

Share the Spirit: Engaging Worship and Faith Formation

**First Congregational Church of Leicester**

**1 Washburn Square  
Leicester, MA**

This alternative worship service is held on the 2nd & 4th Sundays of each month, 5:00PM - 6:00PM. It was developed with busy families in mind, and all who would appreciate a briefer, less formal, and more active worship experience, combined with creative expression or deeper faith discussions. Come check it out and bring a friend!

**Candlelight Service**

**First Congregational Church of Shrewsbury**

**19 Church Road  
Shrewsbury, MA**

"On the Common"

You are invited to join us for our evening worship: 2nd & 4th Sunday of each month, 6:15PM - 7:00PM. A short candlelight service of beautiful and lively music, with the Word and Communion. Informal, come as you are. All are welcome.

## Nebraska UCC Church Joins Tri-Faith Movement Aligning Christian, Jewish And Muslim Communities

April 14, 2015

Written by **Anthony Moujaes**

The interfaith movement is alive and well in the town of Omaha, Neb., where Christian, Jewish and Muslim houses of worship are walking together to bring their congregations to a shared campus—the first of its kind. It's a landmark step in strengthening all three faiths, says the Rev. Eric Elnes, pastor of Countryside Community United Church of Christ, one of the three participating congregations in the interfaith initiative.

"It affirms that people of different faiths can live in harmony, finding common ground they didn't realize they had, and learning [about each other] through their differences," Elnes said. "Each faith gets stronger when they are in conversation with one another." Rest of the article can be found at:

[http://www.ucc.org/countryside\\_trifaith\\_movement\\_04142015](http://www.ucc.org/countryside_trifaith_movement_04142015).