



United Congregational Church



VOICES Newsletter

April 2018



Message from the Pastor

*Alleluia! Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed! Alleluia!!*

Dear friends,

Joy filled the church on Easter morning as we celebrated the resurrection of Jesus the Christ! Guest musicians played trumpet and organ, children crowded the chancel steps, flowers covered the altar, long-time, former members visited along with newcomers, and we brought out the "good" silver – the Salisbury silver – for communion.

Rumor has it that some people even found grapes or grape tomatoes instead of chocolate when they unwrapped their candy eggs! While Easter may have fallen on April Fool's Day this year, our glorious, joyous celebration was no joke!

And this is the Good News: resurrection isn't the end of this story – it's just the beginning....and we're the ones who continue to live resurrection Good News for this world that is in such great need of our witness and our prayer.

Richard Rohr, the contemporary theologian and Franciscan priest, wrote the following in one his daily meditations:

Christianity is a lifestyle – a way of being in the world that is simple, non-violent, shared and loving. However, we made it into an established religion and avoided the lifestyle change itself. One could be warlike, greedy, racist, selfish, and vain in most of Christian history, and still believe that Jesus is one's 'personal Lord and Savior'. The world has no time for such silliness anymore. The suffering on Earth is too great.

Meditation 37, April 3, 2013

Jesus' resurrection is far from the end of the story for those of us who are Christian – it is, truly, the beginning: a beginning that continues with us as we seek to live as Jesus lived and taught us to live; a beginning in which our faith moves from something we profess to something we live.

On that first Easter morning, Jesus appeared to Mary and told her to go and tell the others that she had seen him; the news of his resurrection was not for her alone ~ but to be proclaimed: first to those who knew and loved Jesus, then to all the world...Who will you tell about the grace and power and love of Jesus?

...and because words aren't enough when it comes to resurrection, how will you live resurrection? How will your life reflect the Good News of God's power of life over death and love over hate?

*Alleluia! Christ is risen!
Thanks be to God!*

Blessings,
Nancy



EASTER THANKS!

Heartfelt thanks to all who gave of their time during Holy Week and Easter! Special thanks to **Karen Brough**, for printing all the extra bulletins; to **Ed Bourgault** (and his many helpers!) for moving furniture (with a smile, even!!) into a different configuration almost daily; to **Mae Strohane** for all the extra music; to **deacons** who arranged for communion on Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday, and **worship leaders and fellowship hour providers** and all who contributed flowers and all who delivered flowers ~ and especially to all who joined us for the special services of this holy season! Thank you!!



Walk for the Homeless

HELP END HOMELESSNESS!

United Congregational Church will participate in the 33rd annual Walk for the Homelessness, scheduled for Sunday, May 20, 2018. This event seeks to increase awareness about the lack of affordable housing in central Massachusetts, while also raising funds for local organizations working to solve this problem. Last year the Walk raised \$136,000. The services receiving these donations included the Central MA. Housing Alliance, which offers a variety of housing services, the Hope for Housing Program, whose grants prevented 54 families from becoming homeless, and the Donations Clearinghouse, which supplied 375 families with needed furniture.

Truly, the donations raised by the Walk for the Homeless make a big difference! Our church is hoping to recruit a team who, as in previous years, will join the Walk, which begins at 2:00 pm. in Worcester's Elm Park. There will also be a table in Merriman Chapel on May 6, 13 and 20th, where everyone can make financial donations by sponsoring walkers from our church. Those wanting more information are encouraged to contact United member Tim Camp at timbcamp@aol.com, or 508- 798- 6997. We thank the many members of United who have supported this worthy ministry in the past, and invite all to consider supporting it again. With Blessings to Everyone,

~ United's Missions & Outreach Ministry



MAY 20TH: ORDINATION FOR DEBRA COTTIS

Debra Cottis will be ordained to ministry in the United Church of Christ on Sunday May 20th, at 3:00 in the afternoon, in the Gallery/sanctuary. This is a joyous service, the culmination of many years of hard work and preparation. United is delighted to sponsor her for ordination and to host her ordination service. The last ordination at United was for Mark Seifried, in 2005, and so Debra's ordination is truly a joy for this congregation. Please mark your calendars for May 20th, and plan to be at her ordination that afternoon!

Pentecost Sunday ~ May 20!

On Pentecost, we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit into our world with rush of wind and burst of flame! The Easter season liturgically ends with Pentecost ~ and our ministry as the living Body of Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, begins! The color for Pentecost is red - so find your red shirts and sweaters, socks, skirts and party hats - and celebrate the coming of the coming of the Holy Spirit by wearing red to church on May 20!!



PLANT SWAP IN MAY!

Think Spring!

As we have done before, we will have another plant swap in May!

Date to be announced.

Some folks like house plants, take some cuttings now or divide your plants.

Submitted by: COMMUNITY & FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE



NEW HYMNALS

Music Notes:

There is interest in looking at new hymnal possibilities for our church. On May 20th after church, we'll hold a short congregational Hymn Sing, where we can try new selections from the New Century Hymnal, as well as the Disciples of Christ Chalice Hymnal, and perhaps a few others.

If you would like to form a Hymnal Task Team and meet before that date, please contact Mae Stroshane at stroshanemae@gmail.com. Thank you.

United Calendar



April 18	Board of Ministry Meeting
April 30	Carty Cupboard Volunteer Monday / Wesley United Methodist Church
May 6	Blessing & Farewell to Debbie Duval
May 16	Board of Ministries Meeting
May 20	Ordination for Debra Cottis
May 20	"Walk for Homeless" ~ 2pm Elm Park/Worcester
May TBD	Plant Swap
June 10	Annual May Program & Covenant Ministries

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/>)



MAY 6TH: FAREWELL AND BLESSING FOR DEBBIE DUVAL

We have been blessed this past year to have had Debbie Duval serving as our seminary student. Debbie has divided her time between United and Worcester Fellowship, often going from Sunday worship with us to worship with WF. United has a long history of supporting seminarians and Debbie is the 4th student from Andover Newton Theological School we have had in the past five years. Debbie will graduate from ANTS on May 19th, and is planning to begin her required Clinical Pastoral Education (chaplains experience) this coming year ~ followed by ordination! Please plan to be at worship on May 6th, when we say our farewells and offer our blessings to Debbie.