



United Congregational Church



VOICES Newsletter

April 2019



Message from the Pastor

*God of Resurrection,
We cry out to you as empty people in a fractured world.
We live in a world of Good Fridays:
where innocent suffer and die,
where midday darkness smothers the light,
where hopes and dreams dissolve,
where evil seems to triumph.
God of resurrection,
we long to discover your presence,
we long to feel the rhythm of your power,
we stumble toward the tombs in our lives
and long to find them empty.*

*Bring Easter to our hearts, to our eyes and ears, to our lives.
In the name of Christ,
whose life and love could not be stamped out,
whose resurrection hope is the hope
which plants love and laughter in our lives
and lures them to sprout and bloom and blossom
like spring flowers in the morning sun. Amen.*

John W. Howell, Touch Holiness

Dear friends,

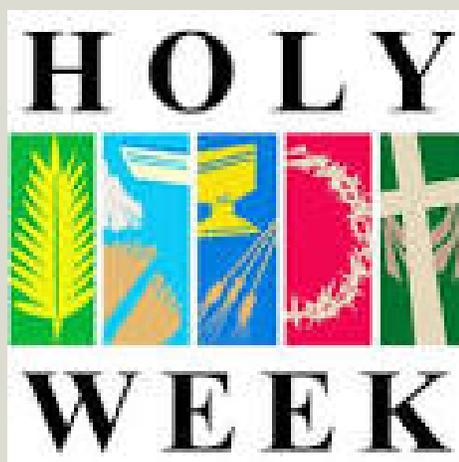
This prayer by John Howell speaks to both the somber and the celebratory spirit of this season, as we make our way through the increasing darkness of Lent into the joyous light of Easter. We know resurrection is coming – we know new life awaits us – but in the meantime, we live in the midst of brokenness and division; we see only too clearly and too often the hate and fear, greed and violence that at times seems to overtake our world.

On the first day of Lent, the children colored in “Alleluias”, which we tucked away in a box, where they will stay hidden until Easter morning. We talked about Lent as a time to think

about ways we hurt other people, and to ask forgiveness – that makes sense to children; for the rest of us, Lent is a time to acknowledge the brokenness in our lives and world – the ways and times we turn away from God: a time of prayer for ourselves and for our world. And truly – can we fully experience Easter’s joy if we haven’t first experienced Lent?

The Good News is that Lent only prepares us for Easter – it doesn’t have the final word! I hope you will join us for our Holy Week services, so that you can fully rejoice in the Easter promise of life and hope and joy that awaits us!

Easter blessings,
Nancy



HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SERVICES:

During Holy Week we join the crowds surrounding Jesus on his triumphant entry into Jerusalem; we gather around the table as he did with his friends, sharing one last meal together; we come to the foot of the cross, keeping watch during his final hours....and then ~ we come to the empty tomb: proof of God’s power of life over death! Please join us for worship and in prayer:

Sunday April 14th is Palm Sunday; we gather for worship in Merriman Chapel to at the beginning of Holy Week.

Thursday April 18th at 7:00 in Merriman Chapel is the quiet, contemplative, candle-lit service for **Maundy Thursday.**

Friday April 19th at noon in Merriman Chapel is the solemn **Good Friday** service.

Easter Sunday on April 21st will be joyously celebrated on 10:30 in the Sarah Wyman Whitman Gallery (the former sanctuary) with music of trumpet and organ.

EASTER FLOWERS

Our thanks to all who donated flowers to decorate the altar for Easter! Flowers were given in memory or in honor of the following people:



*Easter Plants have been given to the Glory of God and in
“Memory /Honor of “by the Following:*

IN MEMORY OF:

*Dorothy Drum
Bott & Kreiger parents
Marilyn Brooks
Theodore & Ned Castner
Vincent A. Droser, Jr.
Vincent A. Droser, III
Hazel S. Wallace
Mr & Mrs. Arthur Gill
Longvall Family
Dan Lewis
Our family no longer with us
Althea & John Orcutt
Our Parents
Our grandparents who have passed on*

BY:

*Jeri Babinsky
JoAn Bott & Elise Kreiger
Emerson Brooks, Elizabeth B., Danielle M.
Emily Castner
D.A. Droser

Arthur Gill
Sandra Johnson
Ann Lewis
Linda & Bob Michel
Katherine Orcutt
Joanna & Chip Pickering
Alisa Villarreal & Ann Rokosky
Rachel, Cleeve & Thea Wiese*

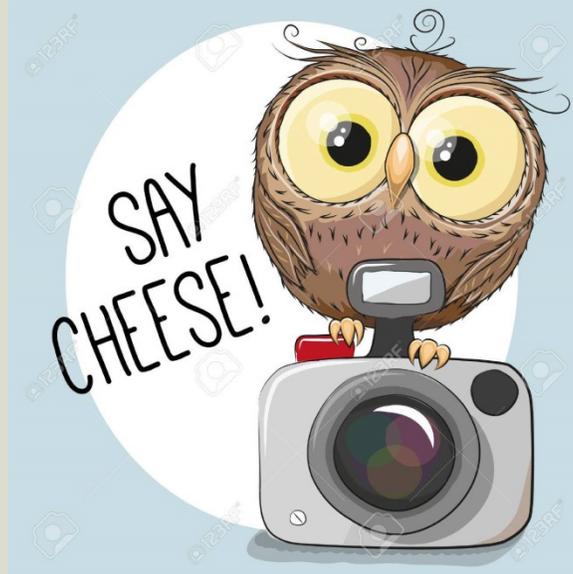
IN HONOR OF:

*Karen & Greg Wilfrid
Church Family
Those who are a voice for justice*

BY:

*Nancy Elder-Wilfrid
Elisabeth & Darrell Hyder
Linda & Bob Michel*

PHOTO SHOOT



It's been two years since the last photo directory of United friends and members came out, so the Community & Fellowship Committee has been discussing an update. Under consideration is making it an online resource, with photos and information as before, but with the advantage of being able to be able to update it in an ongoing way. While still considering some details, we thought it best to get started now by taking new pictures of everyone after church.

*Tom McMillan has kindly agreed to do this. He has proposed **Sunday April 28**, **Sunday May 5**, and **Sunday May 26**, over at the east wall of Merriman Chapel. So amble over for a quick click, and we hope you'll check out your information at the same time.*

Thanks for your help. This is a great resource in letting us get to know or get in touch with each other.

WALK FOR HOMELESS



~ EVENT DETAILS ~

THE 34TH ANNUAL :WALK FOR THE HOMELESS
SUNDAY, MAY 19, 2019 AT 2 PM
ELM PARK IN WORCESTER

The 34th Annual WALK for the Homeless will be held on Sunday, May 19th, at Elm Park in Worcester. The registration for the WALK starts at one and the walk itself kicks off at 2pm. Another date to remember is the Kickoff Party, which will be held at Coney Island Hot Dogs at 5pm on April 10th.

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RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS: MAY 12TH

We will be receiving new members during worship on Sunday May 12th. If you are interested in becoming a member of United, please speak to Nancy.



SPECIAL MUSIC MAY 5TH

On May 4-5 there will be a reunion at United of participants in last summer's MACUCC Adult Music Camp. There are some members (including Linda Michel) who have been attending the camp at Craigville since its inception in 1985. Our director, Dan Pettit is in the discernment process toward ordination and is currently serving Golden Hill Methodist Church in Stamford, Ct. as music director. The "campers" will be providing music for our service on May 5th and will join us for hospitality following worship.



MAY 5TH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION MEETING AT 6 INSTITUTE!!

United is co-hosting the Spring Association Meeting with the Worcester Area Mission Society on Sunday May 5th. The program starts at 4:00 and will include an Ecclesiastical Council, a business meeting, worship and a catered dinner. We are allotted two voting delegates (in addition to our clergy members!), but all are welcome to attend. More information will follow closer to the date, but if you are interested in attending, please speak to Nancy.

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FOLLOW UP TO:

“THE LETTER FROM THE BIRMINGHAM JAIL” BOOK SUGGESTIONS

During Lent, we had several conversations and one worship service centered around Martin Luther King’s “Letter from the Birmingham Jail”. In our conversation after church on March 31, we raised several books that we had found helpful in understanding issues of racial justice. I have included the (somewhat!) annotated lists of books that people sent me. We discussed beginning a book discussion/study group on one or more of these books as one way of continuing our conversation. If you are interested in either leading or being part of such a group, please let me know! Nancy

FROM SALLY NORRIS:

*Howard Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited* (first published in 1949) in paperback Boston: Beacon Press, 1996

*WEB DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (first published in 1903) In paperback New York: Dover, 1994 - but I'm sure there are other more recent editions

*Michael Eric Dyson, *Tears We Cannot Stop: A Sermon to White America* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2017)

*Michael Eric Dyson, *What Turth Sounds Like: RFK, James Baldwin and Our Unfinished Conversation about Race in America* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2018)

*Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me* (Spiegel & Grau, 2015) - though apparently his thinking has evolved since this book

*Bryan Stevenson *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* (New York: Spiegel & Grau,

2014) - he is a lawyer who founded the Equal Justice Initiative - a legal practice dedicated to defending the poor and wrongly condemned (most of whom are people of color)
*Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How our Government Segregated America* (New York: Liveright, 2017) - this is also on Wesley's list
*Taylor Branch, *The King Years: Historic Moments in the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013)- this small book is comprised of excerpts of Branch's huge 3-volume work on the civil rights era

WESLEY WILLIAMS RECOMMENDS:

*Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters* (1988), *Pillar of Fire* (1998), and *At Canaan's Edge* (2006). *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-1963* (won the Pulitzer Prize) is the recommended one of these three thick volumes of a trilogy, the others being *Pillar of Fire*, and *At Canaan's Edge*
*any of the slave narratives; there is an autobiography of Frederick Douglass which is very good; and you can also look up "slave narratives" Amazon

FROM PETER KECK:

*"White Fragility: Why it is so hard for white people to talk about racism" by Robin Diangelo (Beacon Press, 2018). This book by a white sociologist is not an easy read: first, it is by a sociologist who has their own lingo, and secondly because, as indicated by the title, the subject matter confronts the very assumptions underlying white European culture. And, yet, to truly understand and move beyond racism in the 21st century, these are the issues that we must come to understand and confront.

FROM DARRELL HYDER: (referenced at our gathering)

*Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*
*Stacey Abrams, *How to Lead from the Outside and Make Real Change*
*Stephen L. Carter, *Invisible*, about the first black woman lawyer, (referenced by Helen Bross)
*"Hands Across the Hills," a YouTube presentation about the town of Leverett MA and its intentional interconnection with a very different community in coal-mining Kentucky
Also mentioned: William J. Barber II, worth a Google visit, and said by Wesley Williams, quoting Cornell West, to be "the most likely or logical successor to MLK"

FROM MARY FLYNN:

*The New Jim Crow

FROM ANN LEWIS:

*"The Hate U Give" to be very thought provoking for racial justice. And 'The Reluctant Fundamentalist' opened my mind about our assumptions about people and their assumption about people they encounter.

United Calendar & Prayer Intentions



CALENDAR:

- April 18 Maundy Thursday Service ~ 7pm
April 19 Good Friday Service ~Noon
April 21 Easter Sunday Service ~Gallery/Sanctuary 10:30am
April 24 Board of Ministry Meeting ~ 7pm
April 29 Carty Food Cupboard

APRIL PRAYER INTENTIONS:

We are a community of faith: praying for and with each other! Each week in our Sunday bulletin, we list several members of United for whom we pray during the coming week. We are including that list in Voices so that those who are unable to come to church will know who is being prayed for, and can join their prayers with ours.

For Sunday, April 7th: Ann Rokosky & Alisa Villarreal, Robin Rosinsky, Nancy Schoonover, Mae Stroshane. We pray for them to feel the blessing of our prayer as deeply as they feel the loving presence of God.

For Sunday, April 14th: Gretchen, Sabrina, Parker, & David Switzer, Susan Tarantino, Monica Thomas-Bonnick.

For Sunday, April 21st: Elsie Wanerka, Audrey White & Aaron LaBranche, Sally Whitman.

For Sunday, April 28th: Rachel & Thea Wiese, Althea, Becca, Zoe & Xander Williams.

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/>)