



# United Congregational Church



VOICES Newsletter

August 2018

## Message from the Pastor



Dear friends,

It rained. A lot – every day and every night, and when it wasn't raining, it poured....our week at our family cottage on Seneca Lake (in the Finger Lakes area of New York state) was not the weather we'd hoped for, and the 100 year old (very) rustic cottage was only slightly drier than outdoors! I drove to the cottage the day after I came home from a week in Switzerland, where I was a guest at the wedding of a young man who I've known since he was born (a lovely wedding ~ and so wonderful to be with these dear friends for this celebration!).

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Switzerland, like California and so much of our world, is experiencing severe drought; fires, like the one that caused so much destruction and death in Greece, are increasing in number and severity because of on-going drought; lack of water is a major factor in migration in African and Middle Eastern countries, and a root cause of much of the violence in that part of the world.

While some people insist that climate change doesn't exist – or isn't the crisis many of us recognize it is, we can't deny environmental changes around us. The polar ice cap is shrinking; ice bergs are melting; sea levels are rising; many areas are warmer now than before; earthquakes more common....I could go on and on....

Maybe 15 years ago or so, zebra mussels invaded the Finger Lakes and caused a major change in the ecology of the lakes. Zebra mussels filter gallons of water each day – so the lake was never clearer once the zebra mussels took over, but that meant that sea weed could grow higher and more plentiful than ever before. I told my kids to just pretend they were "swimming through a car wash" when they dove off the dock, because the seaweed was so thick there. Our feet all have scars from being cut on the sharp shells that littered the lake floor and the beach. The zebra mussels filled the hose in the lake we have always used for our water, so we had to dig a well; the well water is often tainted with sulfur, so we have to buy drinking water at the grocery store.

This summer, the zebra mussels seem to have died off – something changed in the lake's ecology (another invasive species that the mussels can't filter? Who knows?!) and the lake was crystal clear...no seaweed! And more fish, because there was more algae for them to eat...No one seems to know what caused this change, but this made me aware again of how fragile and interconnected our environment is: a tiny zebra mussel, brought into the lake from an unwitting boater, changed a lake that is 700' deep and 39 miles long...and in one year, something caused another change that dramatically impacted this large body of water.

The UCC has long been a leader in environmental causes and supports the work of environmental activists. We do our best to be thoughtful stewards of this world entrusted to our care – recycling, reusing, using less. We are called to be aware of and educate ourselves about changes in our environment, and to take whatever steps we can – small though they may seem – to protect this gift of God: Creation.

Blessings,  
Nancy

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## MANY THANKS...

...to all who covered for Nancy while she was on vacation: **Tom McMillan**, **Jo-an Bott** and **Gretchen Switzer** provided pastoral coverage, and **Dave Cote**, **Tim Camp**, **Larry Iannetti** and **Tom McMillan** were guest preachers.

...and to **Pat Keck** for covering for Mae while she was on vacation!

How blessed we are to have people willing to give their time and share their gifts for the ministry of our church! Thank you!!

## CONGRATULATIONS TO...

"Beggar Chris" Vece and Kristin O'Connor, who were joined in marriage by Nancy on August 11. We wish for them a life together of many joys and much love!

## PASTOR NANCY'S VACATION

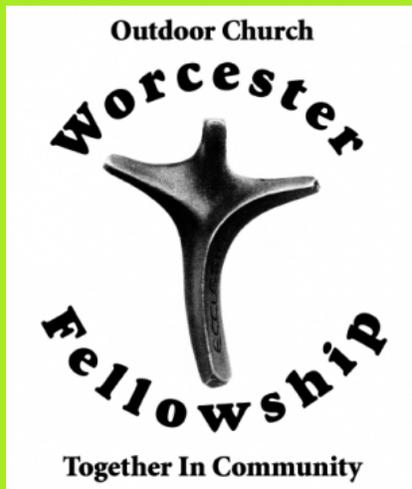
Nancy will be on vacation from **August 13-20**; please contact the church office or **Gretchen Switzer**, who will be covering for her during that week, with any pastoral concerns or emergencies; Gretchen can be reached at 508-789-8113.



## CHILD CARE

If you have a moment and catch up with them as they slip among us on Sunday mornings - please thank **Sam Montalto** and **Katie DiLoreto**, who have been providing child care most weeks! The girls will be with us through the coming year, but we are always looking for people to help with teaching a simple lesson to our "older-younger" kids...Please let Nancy know if this is something you would be willing to help with!

## WORCESTER FELLOWSHIP



### **Summer Greetings.**

**The Mission and Outreach Ministry has a basket in Merriman Chapel to collect supplies for Worcester Fellowship. While we usually conduct this collection over the Christmas season and include hats and mittens, there is a year-around need for supplies.**

**Worcester fellowship is in greatest need of white socks both crew and short, men's and women's underwear, and toiletries. We are collecting men's underwear, preferably boxer briefs, and undershirts in medium and large and women's underwear in small, medium and large. For toiletries we are collecting sample or travel size shampoo, body wash, soap, powder, toothpaste etc. along with toothbrushes.**

**We will have the basket available through the end of August and will bring them to Thursday Cafe when it opens up the first week in September. We appreciate your support of this important ministry in our community.**

**~ Andy and the Mission Ministry**

## United Calendar



- Aug13-20** Pastor Nancy's vacation  
**Aug 22** Board of Ministry Meeting  
**Aug 27** Carty Cupboard Volunteer Monday / Wesley United Methodist Church  
**Sept 9** Annual Church Picnic  
**Sept 19** Board of Ministry Meeting  
**Oct 27** One-Day Annual Retreat / St Francis Episcopal Church

## 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/>)

August

