



# United Congregational Church



VOICES Newsletter

December 2017

## Message from the Pastor



*O Holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;  
cast out our sin, and enter in; be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.*

Dear friends,

In the midst of a world and a time that is so full of chaos and turmoil, of conflict and fear and anxiety, we pray with our whole being for Christ to enter into our hearts and lives ~ to be born in us today. We await the coming of the one who is the Prince of Peace, the Light of the world; the one who will bring release to the captives, whose holy love will embrace even the most outcast among us, and whose grace will make us new.

We await Christ's coming with hopeful hearts ~ knowing how far we have wandered from the life he taught us to live and how much we need to hear and experience again his promises of God's love and power. The grace is that as far as we have gone from God, God still comes to us in the being of a child ~ the Christ Child, Jesus. As we move through this Advent season, I invite you to take time from all the busyness of each day, from all the temptations of gift-

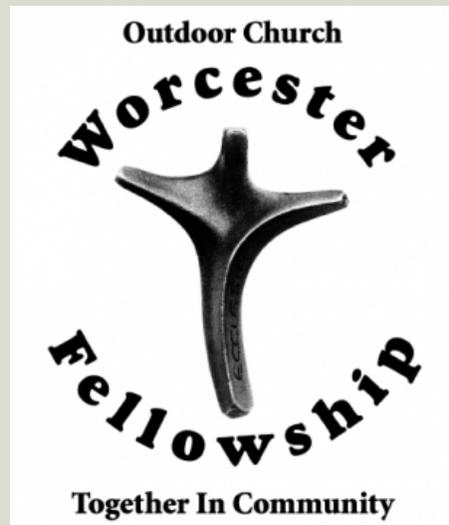
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giving and parties, from the tendency to take for granted the wonder of Christ's birth ~ and to let yourself experience again the gift of this season: God's love made flesh, and come to dwell with us here.

Advent blessings of hope, peace, joy and love be yours...

Nancy

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*I am pleased to announce that Worcester Fellowship's Pastor Noelle Dattilo has graciously agreed to preach at United on Sunday, January 28<sup>th</sup>. In support of her ministry, our confirmation teens will be collecting socks for the unhoused people of Worcester on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, and 28<sup>th</sup>.*

**We are in need of thick, warm, black or white crew socks for men and women!**

*After worship on January 26<sup>th</sup> the Confirmation teens, along with a few adults from United, will be attending worship at Worcester Fellowship with me and Pastor Noelle. While there we will help to serve lunch and distribute the socks that have been collected. Please e-mail me at [debbieduva@aol.com](mailto:debbieduva@aol.com) if you would like to join us that day!*

*Blessings and thanks,*

Debbie

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## **UNITED'S WELCOME TABLE**

Often the first face new-comers and "old-timers" see when we walk in the door at United is that of Walter Cushman – greeting us at the Welcome Table, with a display of cards for us to sign that will be sent out celebrating birthdays and graduations and new babies, welcoming new members, and offering condolences and comfort at times of death or other difficult times. From behind the Welcome Table, Walter has been our greeter, usher, and "welcome-to-United-er" – a warm and smiling presence that is pure gift to us all!

After much thought and prayer, and with no small amount of sadness, Walter has decided to move from the Welcome Table to a seat in a "pew"; we will honor his ministry in January. Walter stepped in to oversee the Welcome Table just over seven years ago. Now is the time for others to step in!

So this is an invitation: would you be interested in helping "staff" the Welcome Table?!?! It is something that could be done by one person – or a team, which would need one person to oversee, while others would take turns on different Sundays.

As a congregation, we know what receiving cards from United means; as visitors and newcomers, we know what a gift it is to be welcomed by a smiling face; as worshippers, it is wonderful to have someone greeting us when we pick up our Sunday bulletin!

Please speak to Nancy if you are interested in being part of the Welcome Table team.



## CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

Join us for our usual worship at 10:30 on Christmas Eve morning, December 24<sup>th</sup> ~ as we hear again the story of Christ's birth and sing our favorite Christmas carols.

We will gather for a traditional candlelight service of Lessons and Carols on Christmas Eve at 5:30 in the Sanctuary (*Sarah Wyman Whitman Gallery*). Please join us for this lovely evening service as we welcome the newborn Christ Child into our world!

*Please note that there will be no Sunday Service on Christmas Day, December 25<sup>th</sup>. There will be Sunday worship as usual on New Year's Day.*



## CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS!

Thank you to all who donated poinsettias this holiday season! If you would like to bring your poinsettia home, please take it after the Christmas Eve service or after worship on January 1<sup>st</sup>. Poinsettias not taken will be given to our less mobile members.

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

## **IN MEMORY OF:**

*My mother, Dorothy Drum  
Bott & Kreiger Parents  
In Loving memory of Marilyn Brooks  
Enberg & Day Family Loved Ones  
Vincent Droser Jr.  
Vincent Droser III  
Hazel S. Wallace  
Loved Ones  
My dad ~ Richard Rogers  
Guy Metcalf  
G Everett Holmes  
Joy  
Dan Lewis  
Warren Page  
Dan Lewis  
John & Althea Orcutt*

## **BY:**

*Jeri D. Babinsky  
JoAn Bott & Elise Kreiger  
Emerson Brooks  
Ann B. Day & Donna E. Enberg  
Carolyn Droser & Andy Dzaugis  
  
DA Droser  
Nancy Elder-Wilfrid  
Debra Duval  
Dorista & John Goldsberry  
Norma Holmes  
Elisabeth & Darrell Hyder  
Ann Lewis  
Judy Page  
Joanna Pickering  
Katherine Orcutt  
Rachel Wiese*

## **IN HONOR OF:**

*The Glory of God!  
Our Children*

## **BY:**

*Karen & Bob Chaplin  
Linda & Bob Michel*

## **United Calendar**



**Dec 20** Board of Ministry Meeting  
**Dec 24** Christmas Eve Service – 10:30 ~ morning in MC /5:30 in Sanctuary/SWW Gallery  
**Dec 25** CHRISTMAS ~ NO WORSHIP SERVICES

## **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/>)



## **ABOUT THE 3 GREAT LOVES INITIATIVE**

In the fall of 2016, after dialogue between representatives across the denomination, the Board of Directors adopted refreshed purpose, vision and mission statements for the United Church of Christ.

The UCC purpose statement comes from the Gospel of Matthew: To love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength and our neighbor as ourselves. The vision: United in Christ's love, a just world for all. And the Mission statement: United in Spirit and inspired by God's grace, we welcome all, love all, and seek justice for all.

3 Great Loves is a denomination wide initiative to live out our purpose, vision, and mission and is a witness to our collective efforts in making a more just world for all as God's hands and feet. Beginning at Synod 2017 and ending at Synod 2019, through the lens of the 3 Great Loves, the United Church of Christ in its many settings of ministry will discern and lift up how we act upon our Love of God in and through these 3 Great Loves; **Love of Neighbor, Love of Children, and Love of Creation**. As we do so, we will tell the story of how we are impacting and transforming the world as covenantal partners united in common purpose, vision, and mission.

During these upcoming two years, there will be moments of special invitation to participate in this denomination-wide undertaking. One by one we will focus on each of the 3 Great Loves in service to our communities as we continue to live out the Love of God. Won't you join in and tell your story? You are already doing and being the Love of God. Let us, together, share the stories of our ministry, and, together, see the extraordinary ways God is transforming the world into a more just place through us.