



United Congregational Church



VOICES Newsletter

January 2020

Message from the Pastor



Dear friends,

I recently came across this excerpt from a poem by Maya Angelou, and I can think of no better words to share with you at this start of a new decade and a new year...Our world, our community, our hearts need for us to **Continue** to shine God's Light into what seems to be increasing darkness...imagine if Angelou's wish became reality for us all.... Blessings as this New Year unfolds.....**Nancy**

CONTINUE: a poem



By Maya Angelou

My wish for you
Is that you continue

Continue

To be who and how you are

To astonish a mean world
With your acts of kindness

Continue

To allow humor to lighten the burden
Of your tender heart

Continue

In a society dark with cruelty
To let the people hear the grandeur
Of God in the peals of your laughter

Continue

To let your eloquence
Elevate the people to heights
They had only imagined

Continue

To remind the people that
Each is as good as the other
And that no one is beneath
Nor above you

Continue

To remember your own young years
And look with favor upon the lost
And the least and the lonely

Continue

To put the mantle of your protection
Around the bodies of
The young and defenseless

Continue

To take the hand of the despised
And diseased and walk proudly with them
In the high street
Some might see you and

Be encouraged to do likewise

Continue

To plant a public kiss of concern
On the cheek of the sick
And the aged and infirm
And count that as a
Natural action to be expected

Continue

To let gratitude be the pillow
Upon which you kneel to
Say your nightly prayer
And let faith be the bridge
You build to overcome evil
And welcome good

Continue

To ignore no vision
Which comes to enlarge your range
And increase your spirit

Continue

To dare to love deeply
And risk everything
For the good thing

Continue

To float
Happily in the sea of infinite substance
Which set aside riches for you
Before you had a name

Continue

And by doing so
You and your work
Will be able to continue ...Eternally

FEBRUARY 2ND ~ MARGARET BULLITT-JONAS GUEST PREACHER



Our newly formed (and forming) Climate Action Task Team (interested in being part of it?!?! Speak to Mary Flynn!) has invited the Rev. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas to be our guest preacher on February 2nd. Margaret is an Episcopal priest, author, retreat leader, and climate activist, who serves as Missioner for Creation Care for both the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts and Southern New England Conference, United Church of Christ. She is the author of several books, most recently a co-editor of Rooted and Rising: Voices of Courage in a Time of Climate Crisis. As a person of deep faith and activism, Margaret's work and witness is grounded in religious activism to address the climate crisis, deepen reverence for God's creation, and create a more just and sustainable society.

We are grateful to Margaret for being with us on February 2nd, when she will preach and then meet with us after church to talk about concrete acts of environmental stewardship in which we could become involved as individuals and a congregation. Please plan to be with us in worship that day and to stay after for conversation.

HAPPY NEW YEAR, ONE AND ALL!



We've had a wonderful holiday season at United. Advent is my favorite part of the season - the candles, prayers, music, and anticipation of the Christ child. I had the joy of providing music for your services each week, and was given a chance to preach for the PEACE Sunday, December 8th. Although it's difficult to feel hopeful in these divisive, chaotic times, we can change the world around us with kindness towards one person at a time.

I owe many thanks to all of you who have made the year's music so special: Althea Williams, Audrey White, Peter Keck, Rich Stroschane, the Sunday School children and their parents, who patiently sang along on our song, "All God's Animals Will Be Friends." You are such good sports! In the coming year, I hope to teach you more songs, perhaps from the tapes that you listen to during Sunday School.

Special thanks to 3/5 of the Jolly Beggars, who shared their music with United on All Saints Sunday. Many notes of appreciation go to Greg and Karen Wilfrid on Christmas Eve, and Chris Vece at Easter.

Last but not least, thank you to the Pickup Choir, who has sung faithfully throughout the year. I hope you'll join me in celebrating the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King on Sunday, January 20th.

*I look forward to worshipping in song with all of you in the New Year!
Musical blessings,*

*Mae Stroschane
Music Minister*



**IN MEMORIAM:
MARILYN KERR**

It was with great sadness that we learned of Marilyn Kerr's death on January 5th. Marilyn was a true Light of God, and a faithful and loving member of United. She loved this church and its people ~ especially the children ~ and even when she wasn't able to be here, her presence was felt. Marilyn's determination and faith and open heart were a gift to all who knew her. It seems no small coincidence that she breathed her last breath on a Sunday morning, just a few hours before church, so that as we gathered for worship, we could share stories of her, lift up the many ways she touched our lives and hearts, and pray her into God. A memorial service is planned for May 2nd, when her family will be able to be here. We give thanks for all the ways God blessed Marilyn, for all the ways she shone God's love and light for us and for all who knew her, and while we mourn her passing, we give thanks that she is now fully at peace in the God she loved.



WELCOME: THEADORA DAWN WIESE!

On January 12th, we welcomed Thea into the family of Christ through the sacrament of baptism! Thea is one of our most faithful candle-lighters and candle-putter-outers, and if you were at church for our pageant on December 22nd, you would have seen Thea as the angel watching so tenderly and faithfully over the baby Jesus. Thea's parents are Rachel and Cleve Wiese, and we are delighted they are part of our church community!

CARTY CUPBOARD NEWS

Exciting news! United will be volunteering for the Carty Cupboard this year for two Mondays a month. On both the second and fourth (last) Mondays.

Everyone is welcome to join the team from United who will be greeting clients, bagging groceries and handing out food.

Carty is located at Wesley Methodist Church, 114 Main Street in Worcester, and is one of the largest food pantries in the area. It is a wonderful ministry supported by our congregation for years, through volunteering, donations of non-perishable food items, and gifts of Hope For Housing grocery cards.

I will be the contact person for the second Mondays and Tim Camp will remain the contact person for the fourth/last Mondays. Please feel free to email, text, or call me with any questions.

~~~Ann Rokosky ([ann.rokosky@gmail.com](mailto:ann.rokosky@gmail.com))

## United Calendar & Prayer Intentions



### CALENDAR:

- January 13 Carty Food Cupboard (Wesley Methodist Church)  
January 15 Board of Ministry meeting  
January 27 Carty Food Cupboard (Wesley Methodist Church)  
March 1 NOTE: Financial & Membership ANNUAL meeting

### JANUARY 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, Jan 5th: Itiel Febles, Peter Fraga, Pat Gibb, Arthur Gill, Ruby Nazir, Karry & Harry.

For Sunday, Jan 12th: Dorista & John Goldsberry, Cherie Grant & Steven Pietrowicz.

For Sunday, Jan 19th: Stacy Heath, Amy Hennig, Angelina & Nick Johnson, Norma Holmes.

For Sunday, Jan 26th: Elisabeth & Darrell Hyder, Peggy Israelian, Pat & Peter Keck.

We pray for them to feel the blessing of our prayer as deeply as they feel the loving presence of God.

### 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/>)