



United Congregational Church



VOICES Newsletter

June 2020

Message from the Pastor



Dear friends,

Who would ever have imagined that we would be living through times like these and coping with the many challenges of this global pandemic?! I know I am not alone in feeling that it has become harder rather than easier, as months, weeks and days have gone by without being able to see each other in person or have the same freedoms and ease in our daily lives that we are used to. As I write this, we are gradually beginning to lessen the physical distancing that has been essential in "flattening the COVID curve", but the path to full in-person gatherings and worship has yet to be navigated. I trust that United has the people and resources to do that work wisely and faithfully in the weeks ahead.

I have written a much longer report that you will receive as part of the Annual Report also coming out this month; rather than being a description of the past year, I have written about this ministry we have shared these past 9 ½ years ~ a summary of our journey to become the United we are today. I hope you will take time to read it, as it is also my farewell letter to you. If for some reason you don't receive a copy of the Annual Report, please contact the church office to make sure you do.

We have continued our Zoom worship on Sunday morning, and are learning something new each week to (hopefully!) make our worship flow more smoothly. All seems to go relatively well, at least as long as The Powers That Be At Zoom aren't testing their server on Sunday morning at 10:30!! Hopefully we will not have to deal with that confusion again! We have been gathering on Tuesday evenings for a time of Gathering and Prayer (again, via Zoom), and this has been a helpful way to stay connected: sharing our prayers and joys and concerns. If you haven't yet joined us on Tuesday evenings, from 7-8, please do! All you need is a computer, laptop or cellphone and the link to join the meeting, which is sent around every Monday (Tuesday at the latest!). I am so grateful to Linda Michel for organizing the links to our Zoom worship and Gathering and Prayer times each week ~ a gift, as it meant I didn't have to learn how to do it!

Our ministries have been meeting via Zoom, so the work and ministry of our church has been continuing. I am grateful to everyone who has been so faithfully stepping up to the unexpected tasks of this unique time ~ making sure birthdays and other significant events are acknowledged; checking in with one another by phone, email or card; reaching out to our community through donations to the Carty Cupboard, Hope for Housing and CMHA. I am especially grateful to the staff at United, who have each done an amazing job of working within the limitations we are all facing. Karen has been in the office and working at home to make sure bills are paid, mailings done, mail and phone messages tended to, and looking after the behind the scenes needs of the church; Peter has been keeping up with the more-than-you-would-think complications of our financial records; Mae has worked in multiple ways to bring music into our worship, and provided links to our hymns for those unable to join our Zoom worship; and Ed has been at church with me Sunday mornings – checking on the building, hanging banners, adjusting pulpit and altar and sound systems so that our Sunday morning worship can flow smoothly. And, last but not least, I am grateful to Tim for his on-going commitment to this church, and for his faithful vision for United and our ministry. We are truly blessed!

It has been difficult for me, to say the least, to not be able to be with you in person as I move through my last months and weeks as your pastor. May 17th was to be my last Sunday with you, and it was so very hard to let go of all that we had planned to celebrate this ministry we have shared; my last service on June 28th will be a very different last Sunday, and there are many losses in that. I especially grieve not being able to be with those of you who are unable to take part in our Zoom worship – and so can't see you (at least your faces!) before I leave. I hope that our plans for a belated retirement celebration will come into place before too long!

Please know that you are often in my prayers, and always in my heart. My time here at United has been a gift ~ more than I can say, and I carry with me a deeper faith, a wider sense of God's grace, and so many blessings and joys ~ and for all this and so much more, I am grateful to you.

Blessings,

Nancy



Pentecost Sunday!

Even worshipping via Zoom, we celebrated Pentecost with a sea of red ~ and the Holy Spirit was alive and vibrant! Our beautiful new Pentecost banners were up ~ adding to the festive spirit, as we celebrated the gift of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the Church. In a time when our country and world are filled with so much fear, anger, divisiveness and worry, it was a gift to be together – even if only with the technology of Zoom – and proclaim our faith in God’s grace, and the Spirit’s empowering us to be the hands and heart of Jesus in this world that has such great need of the justice and peace he came to give us.

MANY THANKS....

...to Ed and Faith Bourgault for all their work preparing our new Pentecost and Creation banners for hanging! Faith ironed them all ~ no small task ~ while Ed adjusted banners and banner stands under the watchful eye of those who will remain unnamed. (wink!) We are grateful to Katrina Clinton, of Magnificat Liturgical Artwork, for these new banners. The Creation banners will go up on June 7th, and pictures of them will be included in our July Voices.





CONFIRMATION: JUNE 21ST!!

Yes ~ you read right! No pandemic can stop us from confirming three young people into the church on June 21st: **Karry Gill, Harry Gill, and Lizzie LaBranche**. Karry and Harry have been very much a part of United since their family first found their way to our door eight years ago; Lizzie is a newer member, and we were delighted to welcome her into Christian fellowship when she was baptized here in our 2019 Easter service.

We're not sure yet what our confirmation service will look like – the service of confirmation I usually do will have to be greatly adapted as we can't be together in person, reaching out to bless our young people. And we won't all be able to sign the certificate of confirmation that each young person will receive....therefore ~ I am inviting (asking?! begging?!) each of you to write a note or card for each of our three young people, and mail it to me, and I will present each of them with a packet of cards from their church family, along with their certificate of confirmation and a new member folder of information about United.

If you are willing and able to send cards or notes, please write the cards to: **Harry Gill, Karry Gill, and Lizzie LaBranche**, and send them to me: **Nancy Elder-Wilfrid, 2 Heather Circle, Jefferson, MA 01522 no later than June 15**; if you would put the name of each young person in the lower left hand corner of the envelope, I can easily sort through the cards. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to be in touch with me.



CARTY CUPBOARD UPDATE

Thanks to the generosity of our congregation, the Carty Food Cupboard has managed to meet the increased demand for its services during the current COVID-19 crisis. Members of United Congregational Church have been very supportive of the Cupboard's mission of feeding the hungry at its 114 Main Street location in Worcester. Today I delivered \$200 worth of pasta sauce to Carty paid for by donations from members of our congregation!

The regular daytime volunteers are now returning, so I won't be working the Wednesday afternoon hours that Carty has been operating on the last couple of months. The evening hours United members used to staff have also not resumed, although the Cupboard hopes to begin these in the autumn. Our church's dedicated team of volunteers will be notified when this occurs.

I will however still deliver donations from our church's members to Carty Cupboard, and alert our congregation of specific needs. Currently Carty is still in need of pasta sauce and personal care items. Grocery store gift cards in \$10 or \$20 amounts are also appreciated, as they will be given to Carty clients with special dietary needs that can't be met directly by the Cupboard.

Anyone purchasing items for Carty can arrange to meet me outside our church building most week days after 2:30 pm., or any time Sunday. I will then make sure these gifts get to the Cupboard. Grocery cards can be mailed to me, as well as financial donations, which I will use to purchase supplies. Please also feel free to contact me if you want more information on the Carty Cupboard. And thanks again to everyone who has supported this vital ministry!

Tim Camp

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## DIGITAL TOOLKIT

The [Mass Poor People's Assembly & Moral March on Washington](#) is going digital! On June 20th, we will hold the largest digital and social media gathering of poor and low-income people, moral and religious leaders, advocates, and people of conscience in this nation's history. A global pandemic is exposing even more the already existing crisis of **systemic racism, poverty, ecological devastation, the war economy and militarism, and the distorted moral narrative of religious nationalism**. On June 20, the 140 million poor and low-income people across this nation will be heard!

Use our sample posts, graphics, and other resources below to help amplify the Digital Mass Poor People's Assembly & Moral March on Washington through your networks!

**June2020.org | #PoorPeoplesCampaign**

Submitted By: Rev. Linda Michel, Pastoral Visitor, Central Association



## **UNITED'S VIRTUAL WALK FOR THE HOMELESS – WE DID IT!**

On behalf of the Mission Outreach Ministry (MOM), thanks to all for surpassing (total raised now at \$2226) our online fundraising goal of \$2000.

Please note that MOM also made a separate donation of \$2000 to CMHA to essentially match your generous donations.

At this time CMHA is very close and will likely meet or exceed their overall fundraising goal of \$30,000.

While we can't physically WALK together, we came together virtually to raise the money needed for programs which benefit from the fundraising effort.

### **Who Benefits?**

The 35th Annual WALK for the Homeless will benefit:

- Homeless Prevention programs of CMHA
- Donations Clearinghouse
- Hope for Housing
- Youth Against Homelessness
- St. John's Food for the Poor
- Interfaith Hospitality Network (a program of Friendly House)
- Catholic Charities Family Shelter

**~ FROM YOUR MISSION OUTREACH MINISTRY**



## **CELEBRATING PASTOR NANCY**

**Our Pastor, The Reverend Nancy Elder-Wilfrid, will lead her final worship service at United Congregational Church on Sunday, June 28<sup>th</sup>. Nancy and her spouse are about to begin a well-deserved retirement, and will be relocating to their property in New Hampshire shortly. We certainly wish Nancy the best, and pray that this next phase of her life is a long and happy one!**

**Our congregation will host an event celebrating the 10 years Reverend Elder-Wilfrid has spent here, and thanking her for all the love, joy and compassion she has brought to our faith community. We originally wanted to hold this party at church after worship on June 28<sup>th</sup>, but have now decided against this due to the current COVID-19 crisis.**

**Instead, we will honor Pastor Nancy's ministry with United at a later date. We are doing this to help ensure the well-being of all church members, since we know everyone will want attend to thank Nancy. And please know that when the right time comes, and with the appropriate precautions, this WILL be a special event!**

**Please check future issues of Voices for any updates on plans for our celebration, or feel free to contact me at any time. Also consider sending Nancy a card or e-mail this month to let her know just how grateful you are for her time here. I know I will!**

**With prayers for your continued safety and happiness,  
Tim Camp**

**E-Mail: [timbcamp@aol.com](mailto:timbcamp@aol.com)**

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## United Calendar & Prayer Intentions



### CALENDAR:

### JUNE 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, June 7th: Ann Day & Donna Enberg, Carolyn Dik, Karen Dorsheimer-Chaplin.

For Sunday, June 14th: D.A. Droser, Carolyn Droser, Andy, Mary, Matt & Peter Dzaugis.

For Sunday, June 21st: Mary Flynn, Olive & James Eakin, Erica Eckenberger & Pam Gurney.

For Sunday, June 28<sup>th</sup>: Nancy Elder-Wilfrid, Kristen & Megan Farrar, Itiel Febles.

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/>)