



United Congregational Church



VOICES Newsletter

June 2016

Message from the Pastor



Dear friends –

I am still catching my breath and trying to regain my equilibrium after returning from the pilgrimage retreat I was on to the Isle of Iona....and, as I said to someone, I think it will take a while before it all sinks in, which is good – because it gives me something to look forward to!

You'll hear bits and pieces about my time on this lovely island, known for being a "thin place" where the boundaries between heaven and earth, sacred and ordinary are especially thin and porous....and I can say that is true!

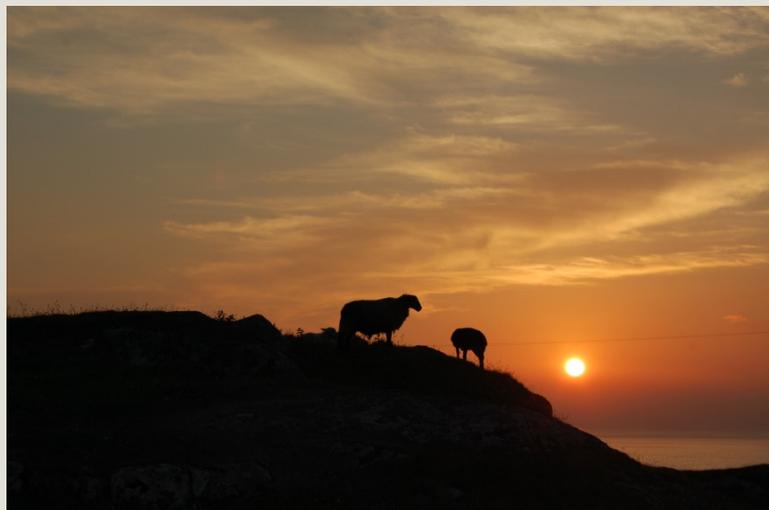
There is a palpable sense on the island of the presence of God and the blessings of creation; everyone on the pilgrimage spoke of it.

A highlight for me was our morning and evening worship with the Iona community in the abbey, parts of which date back to 1200; there are some remnants dating to St Columba's founding of the original community on Iona, in 563. Worship was led by members of the Iona community, many of them young people who covenant to live and work on the island with the community for up to three years ~ ~ ~ and it was wonderful! The old abbey created a beautiful space for music and prayer, and you couldn't help but feel the presence of the hundreds of years of prayers and music and worship there before you.



The island is only about 1 mile wide and 4 miles long; other than the small village where the ferry lands and the buildings around the abbey, it is mostly sheep

farms – with the occasional very friendly highland cow! We spent hours walking the island, dodging “where the sheep and cows had been”, and savoring the beauty of the beaches, hills, rocks and meadows.



Because the sun didn't set until around 10:30, and rose again around 4, the days were long.....Our pilgrimage group worshipped morning and evening at the abbey, and then gathered for a late morning and late afternoon session, with different presentations and discussions on the books we read before the pilgrimage.

You will certainly hear more about this gift of time over the next weeks and months – I'm still a bit jet lagged! But I offer you these words of blessing, which were said at the end of worship each morning:

*May God, who is present in sunrise and nightfall,
and in the crossing of the sea,
guide your feet as you go.*

*May God, who is with you when you sit
and when you stand,
encompass you with love
and lead you by the hand.*

*May God, who knows your path
and the places where you rest,
be with you in your waiting,
be your good news for sharing,
and lead you in the way that is everlasting.
Amen!*

Blessings,

Nancy



SUMMER FELLOWSHIP TABLE

Hosts will not be scheduled this summer for our church's Fellowship Table, which offers food and refreshments after worship. We thank everyone who ran the table this past year, and hope they enjoy their well-earned break until the regular table schedule resumes Sept. 10th.

In the meantime, beverages will still be provided for the table, and the Community & Fellowship Ministry will continue to supply necessary utensils. Members of our congregation are invited to bring a snack to share on Sundays, so we can continue to enjoy our time of fellowship. Anyone with questions can call Tim Camp at 508-798-6997. Let's share some food this summer, and enjoy the great weather!



BOARD OF MINISTRIES MEETINGS SUMMER SCHEDULE

Hello all,

The Board of Ministries has no planned meeting for July. Our next BOM Meeting will be August 24th.

Please let me know if there are issues that need Board Input or a Board Vote during these summer months.

Hope you all will be taking extra time for rest and relaxation. God Bless!

Dorista



PASTOR NANCY VACATION SCHEDULE

Pastor Nancy will be on vacation :

July 18 –August 1

Helen Bross will provide pastor coverage from July 18 – 24, and Sue Tarantino from July 25 – August 1. Please contact them or the church office with any pastoral concerns or emergencies.



HELPING THE HUNGRY

The Carty Cupboard, a ministry supported by our church for the past 5 years, is one of the largest food pantries in Worcester. Right now the Cupboard is helping more families, due to the fact that many children are unable to participate in school breakfast and lunch programs during summer.

In addition to the non-perishable food items regularly donated by our congregation (such as pasta, canned soups & peanut butter), Carty is looking for specific items to help feed kids this summer. Healthy snacks like granola, fruit cups and juice boxes are needed, as well as non-sugared cereal and condiments such as ketchup, mayo, relish and jellies. All food can be left in the donation hamper at the entrance to Merriman Chapel.

Anyone wanting more information can contact Tim Camp anytime at 508- 798- 6997, or timbcamp@aol.com. The Missions & Outreach Ministry thanks everyone in our congregation who has donated food, or helped staff the Cupboard. Your generosity has made a difference!

Tim Camp

United Calendar

July 10	SLDM Meeting
July 10	TPC Meeting
July 11	Carty Food Cupboard
July	NO BOM Meeting in July
August 8	Carty Food Cupboard
August 14	SLDM Meeting

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/>)



UCC NEWS

Gathering in grief, solidarity and in memory of the victims in Orlando

June 15, 2016

Written by Anthony Moujaes

Denominational leaders of the United Church of Christ gathered in grief, in solidarity, in anger, and in memory of the victims and those injured during an attack at a nightclub in Orlando, where 49 people were killed by gunfire early Sunday in the deadliest mass shooting in recent history. Those leaders gathered Tuesday, June 14, in Orlando to express their dismay that members of the LGBT community were targeted and attacked by a shooter with a rifle, and they gathered in Cleveland to express sorrow for those who perished.

Both services included a moment to recognize all of the slain victims, many of whom were part of the Hispanic community, as each of their names were read individually.

"All those beautiful, young people — we grieve their deaths," said the Rev. Susan Blain, UCC minister for worship, liturgy and spiritual formation, at the **service inside the Amistad Chapel**, the UCC congregation on the first floor of the national offices in Cleveland. About 60 staff members and visitors sat quietly in a time of lament and prayer.

"We do not gather as those without hope, because we are a people of the resurrection," said the Rev. Jim Moos, a national officer of the church. "Since we are all God's children together, we gather in community. We reach out to Latino and Latina friends and neighbors who have experienced devastating loss."

The service was also a call to reject any expression of hatred against any particular group for its identity or beliefs — including Islamophobia. The gunman, a US-born Muslim, made a 911 call

before the shooting, pledging his allegiance to the head of the Islamic State.

"We pray obviously for all those affected by this terrible tragedy, and we pray for everyone who has the opportunity to do something so nothing like this may never happen again," said the Rev. Kate Matthews, dean of the Amistad Chapel.

In Orlando, 40 clergy from across the Florida Conference of the UCC gathered this morning with national officers, civic leaders, and families and friends of those murdered at the Pulse nightclub at the conference office, where UCC General Minister and President the Rev. John Dorhauer decried the shooting.

"Once again, a beautiful and innocent people have been violated in this horrible way, and that homophobia continues to threaten the safety and sanctity of another person's right to pursue their happiness," he said. "We are fast growing numb to the experience of processing our collective grief around these mass murders. Political and civic leaders around our country must galvanize our grief and take direct action to regulate a gun industry that has grown too powerful."
