



# United Congregational Church



VOICES Newsletter

March 2016

## Message from the Pastor



Dear friends,

Alleluia! Christ is Risen! *He is risen indeed! Alleluia!* The joyous Easter season follows the somber weeks of Lenten repentance and reflection, culminating in the betrayal and suffering of Holy Week...and we are more than ready to hear the Good News of God's triumph of life over death, of love over hate! The Easter story proclaims God's power and reminds us that with God, all things are possible. The Easter story calls us to imagine and believe in things that we might otherwise think impossible!

On March 6, at our 3<sup>rd</sup> "Spirit, Story, Spark" gathering, we "dreamed big" for United – *no holds barred dreams* for what could be....We also "dreamed realistic" – naming things we think are within our grasp to do and be as a community of faith. Two hopes/dreams were named more than any others: working with refugee resettlement and study/prayer groups that would build community. Many other wonderful ideas and dreams lifted up ~ some that we absolutely can do and others that are harder to imagine – unless we look at them with "Easter eyes".

Easter challenges us to think big – to not limit our dreams and hopes to what we *think* is possible or realistic! We have been surprised again and again by what God's people (including us!) have done through faith and hope and risking enough to dream. In the coming months, we'll begin to work with the ideas and hopes we gathered on March 6<sup>th</sup>; we'll imagine and consider ways we can bring our ideas to life; my prayer is that we'll look through "Easter eyes" as we dream both for United and for the world in which we live.

Easter Blessings,  
*Nancy*



## ***Hope for Housing***

Just a reminder that gift cards from Shaws, Stop & Shop, Big Y, Hannaford Supermarkets, CVS, Panera Bread and our new addition, Dunkin Donuts are available. Gift cards are in denominations of \$25-100 for food stores and \$10 or 25 for Panera and Dunkin Donuts. This program benefits Central MA Housing Alliance's program "Hope for Housing".

Please contact Nancy McMillan @nmcmillan46@gmail.com for information.

## **The UCC Knitters Club**



**WHO:** The UCC Knitters meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month

**WHERE:** 28 Franconia Street, Worcester, MA @ 10am

**HEADED BY:** Nancy McMillan

All knitters or anyone who would like to learn are welcome.

**\*\*\*\*\*FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL ONLY:\*\*\*\*\***

**WHERE:** 8 Crocker Hill Road, Paxton, MA @ 10am in April

**HEADED BY:** Joanne Pickering

The month of May will resume again at Nancy McMillan's residence.



## **LGBTQ Ministry Meeting**

The LGBTQ Ministry will be having a meeting Sunday, April 3rd after service in the Meeting room to discuss expanding our ministry beyond Pride. It is an all-inclusive meeting and everyone is welcome to attend.



## Holy Week Services:

### Holy Week Schedule:

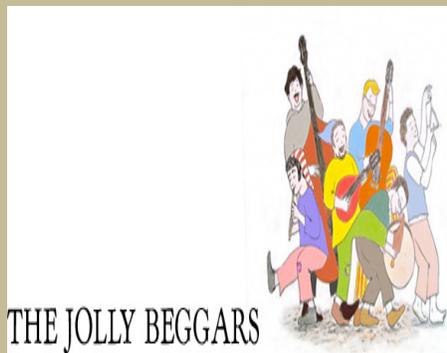
Please join us for worship during Holy Week, as we walk with Jesus from his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, through the betrayal in the garden and the despair of Good Friday to the joyous resurrection of Easter.

Sunday March 20 begins Holy Week with Palm Sunday, as we tell the story of Jesus entering Jerusalem.

Thursday March 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 in Merriman Chapel is a quiet, contemplative, candle-lit service for Maundy Thursday; we gather around the table as Jesus did with his friends, sharing his Last Supper.

Friday March 25<sup>th</sup> at noon in Merriman Chapel is the solemn Good Friday service, remembering Jesus' hours on the cross.

Easter Sunday on March 27<sup>th</sup> will be celebrated at 10:30 in the Sarah Wyman Whitman Gallery (the former sanctuary) with music of trumpet and organ.



**Sunday April 3: Celtic Worship featuring *The Jolly Beggars!!*** Who says the Sunday after Easter is "low Sunday"?!?! Not us!! Join us for a special worship service using liturgy from the Celtic tradition ~ with music by the Jolly Beggars! Wear green - even if you're not Irish (!) and celebrate Creation!

## Calendar - United and the Central MA UCC

March 27	LGBTQ Meeting
April 3	LGBTQ Meeting
April 10	SLDM Meeting
April 10	TPC Meeting
April 11	Carty Food Cupboard
April 13	UCC Knitters Club Meeting
April 27	BOM Meeting
May 8	SLDM Meeting
May 8	TPC Meeting
May 9	Carty Food Cupboard

## 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

### UCC shares open invitation to Dorhauer installation in three-city service

Three locations. Three preachers at each service. An extravagant welcome to all who would like to attend.

The Rev. John C. Dorhauer will be formally installed as the United Church of Christ's ninth general minister and president during a three city worship service in mid-April. The three events, scheduled on April 15 in New York City, April 16 in Chicago and April 17 in Seattle, will include a trio of UCC pastors and leaders who have been invited to offer three brief "vision statements" at each worship location.

But as organizers point out, these three services are not just about the installation of one person; rather they are planned as a pivotal moment for the future and mission of the denomination. That's why everyone in the wider church is welcome to attend any of the three events or watch the proceedings online.

Installation planners also point out that the church is not centered in Cleveland where the national setting is located. "We are called to serve the wider setting," Dorhauer said. "Having this in three cities represents something symbolic — that we are all in this together — and allows us to open

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this amazing moment up to more people."

Since his election, Dorhauer has often shared his belief that the Holy Spirit envisions a future in which the UCC matters. He hopes his installation helps illuminate that vision.

"One of the things about the Installation I am most excited about is this: instead of one preacher, we have nine voices sharing with us their vision of what a renewed and vital mission for the United Church of Christ looks like," Dorhauer said. "Each of them sees something different. We will leave this experience with a variety of voices having lifted up for us an inspiring, hopeful, and challenging vision. That has me very excited."

The Riverside Church in Manhattan, New York City, Trinity United Church of Christ on Chicago's South Side, and Plymouth Church United Church of Christ in downtown Seattle are the host congregations on April 15, 16 and 17. All three services will feature music by Mark A. Miller, the minister of music at Christ Church (a UCC and American Baptist Church) in Summit, N.J., who was commissioned for the occasion

Each service will welcome ecumenical and interfaith guests from communion churches — including the Rev. Sharon Watkins, general minister and president of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) — and other Protestant denominations in the United States.

"An extravagant welcome and invitation has been extended to our ecumenical and interfaith partners to join us, to which we have had a very positive response," said Cheryl Joseph Williams, UCC chief strategic officer. "Some of our ecumenical partners will have active participant roles in the installation weekend, and all have been invited to bring greetings within the context of the services."

The Rev. Sue Blain, UCC curator for worship and liturgical arts, is part of the installation service planning team. She explained that worship is being planned as part of a "progressive installation," with each event meant to complement the others.

"It emerged out of conversations that John had with members of the UCC Board, and he sought from them wisdom on how to do this installation — how to conceive it and engage lots of people. Out of that conversation, this idea of a progressive service emerged," Blain said. "We will begin the celebration with greetings and welcoming guests at each location, covenanting and laying on of hands in New York and Chicago. We'll bring in communion offerings in New York with bread, and in Chicago with juice. In Seattle, we will bring the process to a formal conclusion, where people can partake in communion."

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NEW YORK CITY • APRIL 15 • 7:30 PM (EST)

## **RIVERSIDE CHURCH**

VISIONS BY REV. AMY BUTLER

REV. KENT SILADI

REV. FREEMAN PALMER

CHICAGO • APRIL 16 • 4 PM (CST)

## **TRINITY UCC**

VISIONS BY REV. MARILYN PAGAN-BANKS

REV. HEATHER ARCOVITCH

RAVEN CLARISSA ROWE

SEATTLE • APRIL 17 • 3 PM (PST)

## **PLYMOUTH CHURCH**

VISIONS BY REV. DARRELL GOODWIN

REV. RICH GAMBLE

REV. SUE ARTT