



# United Congregational Church



VOICES Newsletter

May 2016

## Message from the Pastor



Dear friends –

*Lord Jesus Christ, you are the Light of the world.  
Fill our minds with your peace, and our hearts with your love.*

A colleague offered this prayer at a clergy retreat many years ago, crediting it to Marcus Borg. Since hearing this prayer, I have begun each day with these words ~ praying that my mind be filled with and reflect Christ's peace, that my heart be filled with and offer Christ's love. I offer it to you now, hoping these simple words might guide your prayers through each day...

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the Light of the world....

There is so much – far too much – that is darkness in our world...As this election year continues, we are daily bombarded with angry and hate-filled worlds, with petty insults and lies; we pray for Christ's light to shine into this darkness and light the way to respect and honest discussion, to a vision for our country based in a commitment to justice and compassion and equal rights.

Fill our minds with your peace....

Every day, we hear about more suicide attacks and bombings of innocent people and neighborhoods. We are overwhelmed with news of religious and sectarian violence. Surely, our prayers are for peace: peace for our world, peace between our neighbors, friends and family, peace within our own hearts and minds.

Please join me in praying daily for Christ's light to shine brightly into all places of darkness and fear, for Christ's peace to overcome all violence and injustice, and for Christ's love to fill all our hearts.

Blessings,

Nancy



## Study Leave Note from Nancy

Nancy will be on study leave from June 1-14, most of that time traveling to the island of Iona on a pilgrimage retreat led by the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation. In case of pastoral emergencies or concerns during that time, please contact the church office or Jo-an Bott (June 1-7) or Gretchen Switzer (June 7-14).

**June 1-7: Jo-an Bott**

**June 7-14: Gretchen Switzer**



## **Spirit-Story-Spark: Dodge Park**

The Spirit-Story-Spark Program sparked interest in supplying worship services to Dodge Park Rest Home where two of our church members, Nancy & George Blanchard reside. Rev. Susan Tarantino, Rev. Helen Bross, Dave Maciewski & Katherine Orcutt responded to this call to ministry, and formed 2 teams. Their worship services began in May on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays of the month. The Task Force on the Spiritual Care of the Elderly provided each team with a CD of 100 Favorite Hymns, a wooden cross made of olive wood from Jerusalem and a ceramic chalice and paten for Communion. Each team was also given a sum of money for expenses related to the worship services. The first service on May 3<sup>rd</sup> drew about 20 residents who looking forward to a Protestant worship service. Many thanks to the worship volunteers for their response to the call to this ministry.

The Task Force is also providing services at Tatnuck Park and Eisenburg Assisted Living. Dodge Park will be opening a new facility during the summer so we need more volunteers, both clergy and lay, to extend our ministry to this new facility. Contact Rev. Jo-an J. Bott at 508-755-8207 or email her at [jibcleric@verizon.net](mailto:jibcleric@verizon.net)



## Camperships and Educational Assistance

United has two scholarship funds which we distribute in the Spring. Applications can be obtained at the church office or contact Pastor Nancy or Carolyn Dzaugis. The applications are due by **June 12th**. They can be sent to the office electronically or by mail and can be turned into the office on a Sunday. There is a task team that will review applications and will make decisions by June 26th. If a decision is needed earlier than June 26th please speak with Pastor Nancy and the task team will meet earlier.

- *Thibault Educational Assistance Fund*: Members of the church -- of all ages -- who have been accepted to an educational institute are eligible to apply.
- *Vibber Bryant Knight Camp Fund*: This fund provides scholarships for members (or children of members) who are attending camps or other summer programming.



**CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!!**

We offer our congratulations and blessings to recent graduates: Dave Cote and Sarah Jo Gomez-Lorraine, who graduated on May 14th from Andover Newton Theological School with the Master of Divinity degree. Also, Itiel Febles, who received a certificate from Quinsigamond Community College on May 19th, and Sabrina Switzer, who has graduated from Worcester Technical High School. Please let the church office know of other graduates in our church family!.....*Pastor Nancy Elder-Wilfrid*



## Community & Fellowship News ~

### Progressive Christian Discussion Series

Many people equate Christianity with the Religious Right and assume that all Christians share its beliefs and values on issues like biblical inerrancy, gay rights, abortion, creationism, to name only a few. At United we know there is another way to understand and practice Christianity. It's not enough to say we don't agree with the Religious Right, though. We need to be able to articulate positively what we do believe. So mark your calendar and plan to join us after worship each Sunday in June for a lively and enlightening conversation on how Progressive Christians understand God, the Bible, and Jesus, and how we put our understanding into practice. Questions? Contact Tom McMillan in person or at 978-886-3528 or [trm06238@yahoo.com](mailto:trm06238@yahoo.com) or Katherine Orcutt : [korcutt459@gmail.com](mailto:korcutt459@gmail.com) or 978-884-2466.



### WALK FOR HOMELESS A HUGE SUCCESS!

In his New Testament letter, the Apostle James insisted that all Christians need to show their love for God by doing good deeds, because "faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead (James 2:17)". On Sunday, May 15<sup>th</sup>, United Congregational Church exercised its faith by participating in the Walk for the Homeless, an annual fundraiser for organizations seeking to end the problem of homelessness in our local communities. The donations raised by the Walk allow Central MA. Housing Alliance, the Interfaith Hospitality Network and Hope for Housing (among others) to provide much needed housing services and temporary shelters to those in need.

Ten members of United walked the 3 mile course that started in Worcester's Elm Park, and raised \$1,245 in gifts for the Walk. This generosity from our congregation was then matched by the Missions & Outreach Ministry, which voted to match these donations from its budget. As a result, our church ended up giving almost \$2,500!

A special Thank You goes to everyone who helped make the 2016 Walk for the Homeless so successful. Your kindness and concern for others was evident throughout this event, and showed that our church's faith does indeed still live through its deeds!

In Gratitude,

Tim Camp

### United Calendar

- June 5 Progressive Discussion Series
- June 12 SLDM Meeting
- June 12 TPC Meeting
- June 12 Progressive Discussion Series
- June 13 Carty Food Cupboard

June 19 Mission & Outreach Meeting  
June 19 Progressive Discussion Series  
June 22 BOM 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

# Just Peace Sunday

The Thirtieth General Synod called on the congregations of the United Church of Christ to mark the Sunday preceding September 21 (which the United Nation recognizes as the International Day of Prayer for Peace) as Just Peace Sunday. Commit to observing Just Peace Sunday!

Just Peacemaking expresses our commitment to engage practices to resolve conflict at every level - in ourselves, in our families, in our communities, and in our world - without violence whenever possible; when it is not possible, to then restrain, contain and reduce violence; and finally to work actively to bring it to a swift, sustainable, and just conclusion.

A Just Peace is grounded in God's activity in creation; in the reconciling activity of Jesus Christ; in the presence of the Holy Spirit; in the community of reconciliation; and in hope. Shalom is the vision that pulls all creation toward a time when weapons are swept off the earth and all creatures lie down together without fear; where all have their own fig tree and dwell secure from want. As Christians, we offer this conviction to the world: *Peace is possible.*

More information at: [http://www.ucc.org/just\\_peace\\_sunday\\_resources](http://www.ucc.org/just_peace_sunday_resources)

WHEN

September 18, 2016 at 1am - September 19, 2016

WHERE

Everywhere