



United Congregational Church



VOICES Newsletter

May 2017



Message from the Pastor

*And God stepped out on space,
And he looked around and said:
I'm lonely –
I'll make me a world.*

So begins James Weldon Johnson's wonderful sermon "The Creation". This sermon is in a little book my grandfather gave me when I was in seminary: **God's Trombones: Seven Negro Sermons in Verse**. The book was first published in 1927 and the sermons in it are timeless and wonderful! "The Creation" has been republished several times with beautiful illustrations ~ one illustrated with the artwork of Matisse, another with photographs of nature, another as a children's book.

On **May 21st**, our worship will be focused around "The Creation" ~ celebrating God's Creation through word and music. We are delighted to be welcoming three jazz musicians to lead worship with me that morning: Willie Sordillo (saxophonist), Zoe Krohne (pianist) and Marlene del Rosario (vocalist). All three are professional musicians, and Willie is very well known in UCC circles in this area. They have led worship in many churches, and Willie leads jazz worship every Thursday night at Old South Church in Boston.

We are only too aware of how fragile our earth is, and of our responsibility for the care and protection of God's Creation...and what better time to celebrate the gift of Creation and renew our commitment to care for the earth than spring?!

Please join us on May 21st – and bring your friends, your family, and your neighbors ~ one and all are welcome!

Then God smiled,
And the light broke,
And the darkness rolled up on one side,
And the light stood shining on the other,
And God said: That's good!

For the goodness of Creation, for the goodness of God ~ we give thanks!
Blessings,
Nancy



WELCOME CATE ROSE MACGILLIVARY!

On **May 14th** (Mother's Day!) we welcome Cate Rose MacGillivary into the family of Christ through the sacrament of Holy Baptism. Cate is the daughter of Tiffany and Michael MacGillivary, the sister of Chloe, Chase and Cole, and the granddaughter of Judy Casalinouva and Keith Rexford. (Fun fact: Chloe and Chase were both the baby Jesus in our Christmas pageants...Cate was December 24, 2016 – just too late to be the pageant last Christmas!). We ask God's blessings upon Cate and her family, and pray that their home be always filled with love and joy!

PLANNING AHEAD : OCTOBER RETREAT



It is **never** too late to plan ~ here's a date to plan for now and to put on your fall calendar: **Saturday October 28th will be our day-long-all-church-retreat!** Instead of a weekend retreat this year, we decided to gather for a Saturday – easier for many people to get away for one day rather than a weekend. Plans are still under way (obviously!! There are limits to how much we can plan ahead!) but we have the date, and we have the location: St Francis Episcopal Church in Holden. Please plan to join us!



CONGRATULATIONS!!

Our congratulations to **Peter Dzaugis** upon his graduation from Northeastern University on May 4th with a Doctorate in Physical Therapy. We celebrate with him and his family all that he has accomplished, and wish him many blessings in all that is yet to come.

ANNUAL MEETING

PROGRAM ANNUAL MEETING: PENTECOST!

Plan to stay after church on Sunday June 4th for our Program Annual Meeting, which – wonderfully enough – is Pentecost Sunday!



MAY 21ST ~ JAZZ WORSHIP: "THE CREATION"!

You won't want to miss worship on May 21st, when our service will be led by three jazz musicians and our worship space decorated with banners we have all made celebrating Creation! See Nancy's letter for more details, but plan to be at church on May 21st for this special service!!



THE 32ND ANNUAL
WALK
FOR THE **HOMELESS**

Sunday May 21
Elm Park, Worcester
Event Begins at 2pm

JOIN NOW

The complex block contains a green logo on the left with the text "THE 32ND ANNUAL WALK FOR THE HOMELESS". To the right is a photograph of a large, diverse crowd of people participating in a walk. Further right is a white box with green text announcing the event on Sunday May 21 at Elm Park, Worcester, starting at 2pm, and a yellow button with the text "JOIN NOW".

HELP PREVENT HOMELESSNESS!

On May 21, 2017, United Congregational Church will participate once again in the Walk for the Homeless. This annual event raises money for local organizations trying to prevent homelessness in our communities, and also seeks to increase awareness of the difficulty experienced by many people in trying to keep a roof over their head. Central Massachusetts has one of the most expensive housing markets in the country, with rents for a 2 bedroom apartment in Worcester averaging well over \$1,000 a month. Stagnating wages for many, and numerous cuts in social services, have also increased the obstacles to finding decent, affordable shelter.

The organizations funded by the Walk have been working hard to reverse these trends. The Central MA Housing Alliance last year assisted over 9,000 households with various housing services, while the Donations Clearinghouse provided 968 homes with furniture. Friendly House provided shelter to 144 families while they looked for permanent residences, and the Hope for Housing program prevented yet more families from becoming homeless.

We hope all members of United will join this effort to solve the problem of homelessness. Volunteers are needed for the team from our church participating in the 3 mile long Walk, which begins in Worcester's Elm Park at 2:00 pm on Sunday, May 21st. People can also help by financially sponsoring a walker. Donations in any amount will be gratefully accepted, and checks should be made out to "Walk for the Homeless". There will be a sign-up/information table in Merriman Chapel every Sunday beginning May 7th. Anyone wanting more details can also contact United member Tim Camp anytime at 508- 798- 6997, or at timbcamp@aol.com. Meanwhile, we thank everyone who has supported the Walk for the Homeless so generously in the past, and look forward to your involvement again this year!

In Christian Friendship, United's Mission & Outreach Ministry



United Calendar

- May 14 BAPTISM: Cate Rose MacGillivray
- May 14 Spiritual Life and Diaconate Ministry meeting
- May 21 Special "Jazz Worship" with Willie Sordillo
- May 21 Community & Fellowship meeting
- May 21 Walk for the Homeless / Elm Park, Worcester

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/>)



Ohio church's 'Warm Wishes' ministry embraces love of neighbor

April 29, 2017

Written by Connie Larkman

Every Monday morning, the sounds of sewing machines, lively conversation, and laughter can be heard in one of the all-purpose areas of David's United Church of Christ in Kettering, Ohio.

The women of the "Warm Wishes" ministry are at work with the sole purpose of keeping their neighbors warm.

"We do this year round, because we would not have enough to go around otherwise," said Nedra Dalton, the project coordinator. "We put out a nice product. Take a lot of pride in making our sets attractive, comforting, and warm."

The sets she mentions are made up of mittens, a hat and a scarf. Fleece cut and sewn with care every week for the past 14 years. All the cutting is done at the church. Volunteers who can't bring their machines in can sew at home. There is always a lot to do. In 2016, the ministry distributed 3,945 items, to help 1,315 people.

"We concentrate on men," Dalton said. "Everybody wants to help children and women get a lot of assistance too. They ignore the men."

Dalton has just started a Sunday evening sewing session once a month, so folks who work or can't be on hand Monday mornings can help too.

"Warm Wishes" was started by Marilyn Cartwright in 2004, after she walked into the church office on a cold day, and decided she wanted to do something for the people out on the streets. She started cutting scarves from fleece in her kitchen and reached out to other members of David's UCC for help.

The ministry grew and the congregation's support did too. From scarves cut for distribution to homeless people to fleece sets created for anyone who might need one. Now under the guidance of Nedra Dalton, who stepped into the role of coordinator in 2010 when Cartwright moved to warmer climes in California, the mission continues to grow.

The turnout Easter Monday, Dalton said, was the biggest she ever had. With 12 people, a lot of cutting and sewing was accomplished that morning, in a time when they usually see about 8. In all, there are about 20 volunteers doing different things for "Warm Wishes." One person sorts and

stores, keeps track of the inventory, another helps purchase the fleece and assists the sewers.

Community members at homeless shelters, food banks, outreach ministries and schools all benefit. As Dalton said, "They just sort of come to you when the word gets out there. It's not just for homeless people...it's for people a paycheck away from having to decide whether to buy food or something warm."

Since the inception of "Warm Wishes" David's UCC has given 34,654 items to people in the Dayton area. That's a lot of fleece.

"We are a line item in the budget for the church," Dalton said. "David's has stepped up and really embraced this project."

"It's really important for my folks to do this for others in the community in a spirit of graciousness and friendliness," said the Rev. Brian Newcomb, pastor of David's UCC. "What's beautiful about it .. the fleece is really bright colors. When we display these gifts in our sanctuary before we send them out in the fall, it's really an amazing thing that they've done."

The Warm Wishes ministry is this congregation's way of working toward a just world for all. It is exactly the type of project UCC General Minister and President John Dorhauer envisions as part of an all-church mission initiative that will be introduced at General Synod: 3 Great Loves: Love of Children, Love of Creation, Love of Neighbor.

"Our church really responds to these types of hands-on ministries that help people directly," Newcomb continued. "This is one really significant way to reach out to people who have great need."

