



United Congregational Church



VOICES Newsletter

October 2015



Message from the Pastor

Dear friends,

As the seasons change from summer to fall (*sigh!*), so there are changes at United! In July, Ann Lewis, our Administrative Assistant *extraordinaire* announced her decision to retire; she graciously offered to continue in the position until December 31st, or until we found her successor. (*She could, of course, never be replaced!*) Pat Keck and Carolyn Dzaugis, representing the Stewardship and Communication Ministry, and I advertised the position through UCC newsletters, local congregations and word of mouth. We were delighted to receive and read the resume from Karen Brough, and even more delighted when she accepted our offer to join the United staff as Administrative Assistant.

Karen has many years of office experience and is currently working as an Activity Assistant at Shrewsbury Nursing and Rehabilitation Center; she is looking forward to returning to office work and to getting to know and work with our congregation.

While we are still working out the details of this transition, we want to thank Ann for seeing us through so many of the changes United has gone through in the past few years. Her organizational skills are a gift to us and she has done a great deal to prepare the office for her successor. We have been blessed by her gifts and her presence in the office, and are grateful that she has said she'll still be available when our inevitable questions of *what is where and why* arise!

In the midst of all that changes and all that is unexpected, we give thanks for what is constant: God's grace and love and presence with us and within us!

Blessings and God's grace,
Nancy

Special Sunday Services

October 25th is Reformation Day ~ a day we celebrate the faith and vision of Martin Luther (even though we aren't Lutheran!) in reforming the church. It was on October 31, 1517, that Martin Luther posted on the door of All Saints Church in Wittenberg, Germany, 95 theses (statements) questioning the practices of the church. These theses became the germ of a movement to reform the Roman Catholic Church, resulting in the Protestant ("protesting") Church. The United Church of Christ has its roots in this early reformation; like the early reformers, we are committed to being a church that is relevant to the challenges of our times while also being faithful to the wisdom of those who have come before us. *The liturgical color for Reformation Day is red – the color of the Holy Spirit – so if you really want to celebrate, wear red on October 25th!*

November 1st is All Saints Day, when we remember loved ones who have died this past year. We will lift up in prayer the names of United members who have died since last All Saints Day, and there will be an opportunity for anyone who chooses to light a candle in memory of a loved one. Chris Vece and Dave Uhl will join Jannatha in providing special music for this service that is both solemn and celebratory, as we honor and give thanks for the blessed and beloved saints in our lives.

Babies and Little Children!



When I first came to United, we looked around at who was coming, and thought we wouldn't be a congregation with children.....So much for that idea! We now have at least five children who come regularly to Sunday school (and are always looking for teachers!!) and two baby girls with a third one soon to arrive.

We take seriously Jesus' invitation to the "*little children to come to him*" and want to make United as welcoming to children as is possible, without a designated space for Sunday school or for a nursery. We are getting movable gates and a kid-friendly rug, and will try setting up an infant/toddler safe area most likely in the back of Merriman Chapel (or perhaps by the pulpit?!?!). We celebrate having these little ones in our church and ask your help as we find the best way to open our space to them as well as we open our hearts!

Welcome to Our Newest Members!



On October 4, we welcomed five new members into our community of faith: Debra Cottis, D.A. Droser, Stacy Heath, Eddi-Jo Magui and Katherine Orcutt. Please take a moment to greet and get to know them!

Debra Cottis is currently in the discernment process for ordination in the UCC; she is a member of Hadwen Park Church and joining United as an associate member. Debra's ministry is as a chaplain to the dying and the mentally ill, and we look forward to supporting her as she moves through the discernment process toward ordination.

If **D.A. Droser** seems familiar to us, it is because she is joining her family (the Dzaugis/Droser family) at United. D.A. (feel free to ask her what the D.A. stands for!) recently moved to Worcester and we are delighted that she is making United her "second" church home. D.A. is joining as an associate, so she can maintain her membership at The Presbyterian Church in Leonia, NJ, where she was involved in just about everything, especially ministries with English Language Learners.

Stacy Heath found her way to United through meeting us at the Worcester Pride event and we are glad that she has chosen to make United her church home! She works as an IT help technician and is interested in soccer, hiking, LGBT advocacy, graphic novels, feminism and technology and, as she says, "The list goes on!".

Eddi-Jo Magui has been coming with her daughter Matilda to United for quite a while, and we are glad to welcome her as a member! Matilda (the only "big" girl in the Sunday School) will be baptized here on October

11 and was thrilled to be the flower girl in Karen Wilfrid's wedding at United this past July.

Katherine Orcutt visited United once and decided this was the church for her! She has an MA in pastoral counseling and studied at Andover Newton Theological School for two years. She is a Physical Therapist and a certified Canine Rehab Therapist, and is interested in exercise, cooking and pastel painting.

Can you cook?? Can you organize?? Can you organize cooks!??!



The Spiritual Life and Diaconate Ministry is looking to find someone who would be willing to organize our “congregational cooks” to help prepare and bring meals to members who could use a little TLC! We all know what a help it can be when you or someone in the household is in the hospital or ill, or even when a new baby joins the family ~ and so are hoping to start a “meal ministry”. If you would be willing to help organize our congregation cooks (AND if you would be willing to be called upon sometime to provide a meal!) please speak to Nancy or someone on the Spiritual Life and Diaconate Ministry.

Neighbors in Need Collection

Neighbors In Need 2015 ucc.org/nin



United Congregational will be participating in the special missions collection for Neighbors in Need on November 1st. Look for special inserts in the bulletin that describes the work supported by this donation. The goals of Neighbors in Need are truly inspiring. Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the UCC that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. Neighbors in Need grants are awarded to churches and organizations doing justice work in their communities. These grants fund projects whose work ranges from direct service to community organizing and advocacy to address systemic injustice. Funding is provided through donations to the Neighbors in Need offering. As a Just Peace Church, we can see how supporting these ministries of justice and compassion can work for us all. Thanks in advance for your support.

The Mission and Outreach Committee.

What is a “Just Peace” Church?



The Just Peace vision was adopted by the UCC over 30 years ago to define its position towards war, peace and conflict. Just Peace is a new way—routed in biblical teaching—that calls on us to actively engage in resolving conflict using non-violence. United Congregational has long been a Just Peace church, committed to seeking out peace in our community and supporting those who seek non-violent solutions to wider conflicts. Many of the actions we engage in as a congregation from collecting food for the hungry to supporting the LGBT community are part of this mission. While Just Peace began in the UCC it has found root in other denominations. In 2013, the World Council of Churches adopted the following calls to member churches:

- For Just Peace in the community – so that all may live free from fear
- For Just Peace with the Earth – so that life is sustained
- For Just Peace in the marketplace – so that all may live with dignity

- For Just Peace among the nations – so that human lives are protected

In this spirit, the Missions and Outreach Ministry has been engaging the congregation through different speakers and topics over the last couple of months. We invited the author Nancy Small to discuss her book about every day non-violence, and in September supported the UCC media violence fast leading to World Prayer for Peace Day. On October 18th, the Rev Tom McMillan will preach on domestic violence, and after the service we have invited a representative from the YWCA to discuss the programs and interventions they run. On December 6th, we have invited the director of a local organization to discuss immigration and refugee resettlement here in Worcester.

For More Info:

http://www.ucc.org/justice_just-peace

<https://youtu.be/0t1-L8x6mqc>

Hope for Housing



One Family's Story - Jacob and his wife came to CMHA during Housing Counseling with their DCF worker. Because Jacob had been out of work for several months, they were not able to pay rent for their apartment and the landlord sent them a 14 day notice to quit. They were ineligible for shelter through the state because Jacob and his family left the apartment before the landlord brought them to court, and were unable to secure a non-state shelter spot.

Out of concern for the health and safety for their two sets of twins under the age of 3 and with no support from friends and family, Jacob and his wife voluntarily placed their children in DCF care. The only barrier to reunification with the children was obtaining housing. Fortunately, Jacob had recently started working again and was able to find an affordable apartment. With HFH funds, we assisted the family with First Month's Rent and the children were reunited with their very relieved parents.

United is one of 27 interfaith congregations that make up Hope for Housing. When you buy the grocery gift cards from Big Y, CVS, Hannefords, Panera, Shaws or Stop and Shop those stores donate a percentage to HFH. The cards have no expiration date and you can carry over a balance on them. I have used mine in NJ and CT and Maine. If you would like to help and are an online Amazon shopper just hit the Amazon smile button and click on CMHA.

I will be subbing for Walter at the welcome table the next 2 Sundays so you can pick up your cards on the way in. Cash or checks made out to Hope for Housing. Other Sundays seek me out. I always have the cards with me. Thanks for all you make possible.

Helen Bross, hwbross@aol.com

Thank you, United, for my Scholarship

(Itiel Febles received a college scholarship from United this year to continue his education at Quinsigamond Community College.)



All glory to God. I began almost two years ago to go back to college and finish what I once started, with the encouragement and motivation of my United Family. Recently I've been blessed to receive a scholarship from United. It means more than just having the funds to contribute to my success in education. It means a lot that people believe in me enough to provide spiritual, emotional & financial support. The positivity helps and it's that

love and positivity that runs into all aspects of my life. I'm appreciative and thankful.

Blessings and Peace,
Itiel Febles

Directory Updates

Changes:

Sarah-Jo's last name is Gomes-Lorraine
Remove the email from Elizabeth Brown
Remove the cell number from Jacob Taylor
Add 'Matilda' under Eddi-Jo Magui
Katherine Orcutt's cell is 978-884-2466

Add:

Stacy Heath, 142 Holden Street, Holden, MA, 01520; email – stacylxheath@gmail.com
Destino (Alex) Santiago, 275 Pleasant Street, Apt. 217, Worcester, MA 01609; email – tudestinocruel@gmail.com

Remove:

Stephen Salmon



In Memorium

We ask for prayers for Elinor Bucklar's family and friends as they mourn her recent death. Elinor was a life-long member of Central Congregational Church until she moved to Florida twenty years ago to be with her daughter. Elinor was active in the Women's Fellowship and was a gracious presence at Central; we give thanks for her presence in this community of faith and ask God's blessings upon her.

Calendar

October 18 - Mission and Outreach
October 18 - After worship Speaker on Domestic Violence
October 20 - Bible Study
October 20 - Women's Religious Book Group
October 24-25 - Church Retreat
October 28 - Board of Ministries
November 3 – Bible Study
November 8 – Spiritual Life and Diaconate
November 8 – Community and Fellowship
November 9 – Carty Food Cupboard
November 10 – Bible Study
November 17 – VOICES Deadline
November 17 – Bible Study
November 18 – Board of Ministries
November 22 – Thanksgiving Pot Luck after Worship
November 24 - Bible Study

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

Going Up River: Working for Systemic Change



**The Congregational Church of Grafton
30 Grafton Common
Grafton, MA 01519
Saturday, November 14th
9:00AM - 3:00PM**

Using the UCC Justice LED curriculum in our time together we will:

- ***Explore** the biblical mandate to "go up river"
- ***Examine** what helps and hinders us from fully responding to God's call to "do justice."
- ***Learn** from each other how we can become more effective advocates for justice and peace while continuing our acts of mercy
- ***Strategize** how justice may be incorporated into the life and ministry of your church.

ReachOut Worcester



December 4 to 5, 2015 & February 26-17, 2016

ReachOut Worcester is an overnight immersion program for Youth and Adults ages 13 and up. Learn more about homelessness from people who have experienced/may still be still experiencing it/ Participate in an intentional, prayerful walk through Worcester at night. Offer clothing, conversation, and lunch to people in need. Engage in reflection and sharing with other youth and adults who share your concern about homelessness.