



United Congregational Church



VOICES Newsletter

October 2018

Message from the Pastor

Dear friends –

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

*a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;*

*a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to throw away;
a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.*

If someone asked you what this time is like for you, how would you respond? How does your vision of this time impact how you live your life? And, perhaps even more difficult to answer: do you think this time is in line with God's hopes, God's intentions?

Certainly there are those who see God's hand writ large in all that is happening in our country and world; equal are those who see what is happening as in direct opposition to the life and teaching of Jesus. We cannot help but be overwhelmed and disheartened by the partisanship and violence in word and action by so many of those in leadership. We cannot help but be angered and saddened by the number of women coming forward with their experiences of sexual abuse and assault; we cannot help but be inspired and awed by

their courage and determination to name what has for too long been unnamed, to call for justice and responsibility and change.

We see the effects of pollution and climate change on this fragile Creation; we hear of increasing numbers of people fleeing violence and oppression in their countries, only to be turned away from places of refuge; we know how desperately food and beds are needed in our pantries and shelters, and how many communities and lives are shattered by the opioid crisis.

This is a time of tumult and conflict, to be sure...but we have been in times like this before. As people of faith, we are called to look at the time in which we live through the lens of our faith, doing the difficult and holy work of discerning what God asks of us to heal our world.

We are a strong congregation – I have no doubt about that! We are a faithful congregation as well – no doubts there, either! And I believe we are not only up to, but also passionate about discerning how we are to witness to the grace, justice and radical love of Jesus – a witness this world is in desperate need of experiencing.

Consider this an invitation to come to our fall retreat, October 27th, “*For Such a Time as This 2.0*”, when we will have time to talk, pray and reflect together on what is being asked of us – and what is being given to us – in this time. Consider this an invitation to talk to one another about how the Light and Love of Christ can shine through us. Consider this an invitation to pray – deeply and often – for our church, our country and our world.

Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world's grief.

Do justly now.

Love mercy now.

Walk humbly now.

***You are not obligated to complete the work,
but neither are you free to abandon it.***

The Talmud

Blessings,

Nancy



MANY THANKS FROM THE MISSION OUTREACH MINISTRY (MOM)

Thanks to all for the donation of hundreds of clothing and toiletry items that were delivered to the Thursday Café. Worcester Fellowship conducts the Thursday Café at All Saints Church in Worcester. Each Thursday from October 4th through the end of June they gather at All Saints Church to provide food, spiritual companionship, safe respite space, hot coffee, cold drinks, socks, underwear and clothing to homeless adults in the city of Worcester. Another thank you to the Board of Ministries for endorsing MOM's decision to allocate funding of \$10K to pay off the Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) of Greater Worcester's mortgage on their property at 91 June St. The funding came from United accounts intended for big impact mission projects. This financial assistance will allow IHN to dedicate future fundraising efforts to much needed improvements at the June St. house. IHN has an over 20 year history of providing homeless families with temporary housing and counseling services. At United we've recently partnered with First Unitarian Church to provide volunteers for weeks in August, October, and February.

COMMUNITY & FELLOWSHIP HAS TWO UPCOMING EVENTS.....

Retreat on **Saturday Oct. 27**, 9 to 3 at St. Francis Episcopal Church in Holden. There is a signup sheet on the signup table, or contact Darrell and Elisabeth Hyder, at 508-867-7274 for information.

... the **Annual Thanksgiving Potluck** on **Sunday, November 18** after church. This popular meal usually brings out about 50 of us. With turkey and drinks provided, there will soon be a signup list for you to note what you will bring. Can Thanksgiving really be around the corner this soon?



“SUCH A TIME AS THIS 2.0”: FALL RETREAT!

Join us for our daylong retreat, Saturday **October 27th**, at St Francis Church in Holden, from 8:30 – 3. Using the familiar words from Ecclesiastes, “*To everything there is a season...*” we’ll reflect on the season we are living now, as a country and as a community of faith.

What is this season, this time, we are in the midst of? What is our calling, our challenge, our invitation as the Body of Christ? Where and how do we see God at work?

Our time will be a balance of conversation and quiet reflection; lunch will be included. Cost for the day is \$10/person; please speak to Nancy if you need scholarship for the day. There is a signup sheet on the signup table, or email Nancy to sign up; please sign up as soon as possible, so we can plan for the day! Please indicate, too, if you need or are able to offer a ride.

OCTOBER 28TH 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. We will welcome new members to United on Reformation Day, a wonderful way to celebrate the life of the church! *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 28th!*

United Calendar



- Oct 27 Annual Church Retreat / St Francis Church, Holden, MA
- Oct 28 Reformation Day
- Nov 4 All Saints' Day
- Nov 18 Annual Thanksgiving Potluck
- Nov 26 Carty Cupboard / Wesley United Methodist church

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/>)



NOVEMBER 4TH 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 honor and give thanks for the blessed and beloved saints in our lives. 3/5 of the Jolly Beggars will join us that morning, providing special music for this service that is both solemn and celebratory.



**...LOOKING AHEAD TO NOVEMBER 18TH ~ ~ ~
~ ~ ~ AND OUR ANNUAL THANKSGIVING POTLUCK!!**

More details to follow, but you won't want to miss our annual Thanksgiving potluck immediately after church on Sunday November 18th! The Community and Fellowship Ministry is doing their usual amazing job of organizing this wonderful event ~ we all help transform our worship space into dining space, and by bringing our favorite foods to share! So put the date on your calendar and watch for details!!
