



United Congregational Church



VOICES Newsletter

October 2019

Message from the Pastor



Dear friends,

One of our younger members recently commented to her mother on the way to daycare, "A hand is like the soul for a puppet." Her comment just made my day ~ not only because a 5 year old was actually talking about souls (!), but also because it's such a beautiful way of imagining what exists within us and gives us life!

When my daughter Karen was around 8 or 9, her grandmother gave her this wonderful book with directions on making sock puppets and dolls ~ which she did with great enthusiasm...no unattended sock was safe for a while there....

We've probably all seen sock puppets – usually pretty pathetic looking things until someone slips their hand inside and the puppet takes on form and movement and sometimes ~ even a voice! Amazing how a cast-off sock can become this wonderful creature with just a little imagination...thread, buttons, fabric, glue....and patience.....

"A hand is like the soul for a puppet" got me started thinking about what gives us life....If you've listened to many of my sermons or prayers, you've probably noticed that I often talk about the breath of God, breathing into us life and light and love ~ and isn't it that gift of God's breath that awakens us, stirs us, moves us to action? The difference between us and a puppet, of course (other than the obvious!) is that God doesn't control us the way a hand controls the movement of the puppet....unlike a puppet, we have freedom to move and act as we choose.

There are times we feel powerless – absolutely! We see the chaos and injustice in the world and wonder what difference we could ever make, wonder whether our voice would ever be heard...but know this: what we do and say does make a difference! We are empowered by God, who breathes into us the hope and courage and vision we need to discern how we can most faithfully serve God and serve God's people. While God isn't controlling our movements or thoughts, as our hands control a puppet, God is always at work within us ~ bringing to life through us God's hopes for this world God loves so deeply.

As we move into this new church year and all that it will unfold within it, I pray that we stay always open to the Spirit of God, trusting God is with us.

~ Nancy



CONGRATULATIONS!

We are delighted to celebrate the love shared by **Liz Brooks** and **Danielle Montgomery**, who were joined in marriage on September 21st, at the Brooks' family home! The yard where so many United picnics have been held was transformed for their beautiful wedding with armfuls of flowers, lights strung from all the trees, old chairs reclaimed from attic rafters, rugs carried from the house, and the joy and love of friends and family! Our congratulations to the new Mrs. And Mrs. Brooks!



1942 Baldwin PIANO FOR SALE

Please contact: **Doug McAllister** at: 508-799-7796

OR email: demcalfu@charter.net



OCTOBER 27TH: WORSHIP AND LUNCH WITH THE REV. KELLY GALLAGHER

Our Associate Conference Minister, the Rev. Kelly Gallagher, will preach at United on **October 27th**, and meet with us over lunch immediately following worship. This will be a good opportunity to learn more about what's happening within the church – United and the larger community of faith to which we belong!

NOVEMBER 1ST-2ND: SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCE ANNUAL MEETING

This will be the first meeting of the new conference formed by the merger of the MA, CT and RI conferences, and will be held here in Worcester at the DCU Center. The theme of the Annual Meeting is "Unbound", and the keynote speaker is Valarie Kaur, founder of the *Revolutionary Love Project*. Kaur is a Sikh racial justice activist, civil rights lawyer, award-winning filmmaker and educator. The meeting will be an opportunity not only to hear Kaur, but also to be part of this historic joining together of our three conferences. Tim Camp and Alisa Villarreal are our delegates; Helen Bross, Emily Castner, Celsa Ayala-Coloma, Cesar Coloma and Sue Stevens will be attending, along with Nancy Elder-Wilfrid.

NOVEMBER 3RD.....

November 3rd 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, honoring and giving 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.

RECEPTION OF NEW MEMBERS: NOVEMBER 10TH

We will be receiving new members into the faith community of United on November 10th. If you are interested in joining United but haven't yet spoken with Nancy, please do so!

LOOKING FOR A WAY TO ENGAGE WITH THE LITTLE ONES OF UCC BEYOND FELLOWSHIP HOUR?

The Spiritual Life and Diaconate Ministry is seeking anyone interested in sharing their favorite story, Scripture verse, or a simple craft with the children on a Sunday during worship. We invite you to sign up for one Sunday and take 15 minutes out of worship (you choose which 15), to bring the Light of God to life for them. We also have some simple curriculum activities at church for anyone looking for inspiration!

If you have any questions, for more information, or to be added to the list of volunteers, please send your name to Ann at ann.rokosky@gmail.com. Thank you!

CLIMATE CHANGE

Bill McKibben, climate scientist and activist, says that the most important thing an individual can do about climate change is “stop being an individual”. A task force is forming at United to learn more about how we can work together and with other congregations to take action against the climate crisis. If you have been inspired by recent youth climate strikes or Pastor Nancy's sermon and would like to join, please contact Nancy or Mary Flynn (mary.k.flynn@gmail.com).

HEALING PRAYERS

Spiritual Life and Diaconate Ministry is looking for any church members who are willing and able to offer healing prayers during Communion Sunday. If you are interested in giving your time one Communion Sunday, please reach out to me at villarreal.alisa@gmail.com.



**...LOOKING AHEAD TO NOVEMBER 24TH ~ ~ ~
~ ~ ~ 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 24th! 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!!



NEWS ABOUT THE NEW CHURCH DIRECTORY:

Dear Members,

Our church directory is available to view on any web browser! Instant Church Directory – the program we use to build our church directory – has a free website for church members to view our directory online.

To view the directory online, go to members.InstantChurchDirectory.com to log in.

The first time, click on the "Create a login now" under the Sign In button. Enter your email address and set up a password to be sent an email confirmation. Click on the link inside that email to confirm your email and log in with the password you just created.

Our church directory is also available to view on your mobile device! Instant Church Directory - the program we use to build our church directory - has a free app for church members to download on their Apple, Android and Kindle Fire devices. The app is available through the app store for your type of device.

You will be asked to enter your email address as it's listed in our directory. If your email address isn't listed in the directory, let Tom Murray (or someone in the Community and Fellowship Ministry) know, so it can be added. Once you enter your email address follow the directions on screen to complete the login process. After you login, the directory will be downloaded to your device. Anytime updates are made, they will update on your device too. In the app you will be able to search for families and members and call, email and text right from the app.

More information can be found at www.InstantChurchDirectory.com/app.

If you need a hard copy of the church directory, please add your name to the sign-up sheet on the small table as you enter Merriman Hall.

~Thank you - Community and Fellowship Ministry

United Calendar & Prayer Intentions



CALENDAR:

Oct 16 Board of Ministry meeting
Oct 28 Carty Food Cupboard (Wesley Methodist Church)
Nov 1 & 2 NE Annual Conference meeting ~ DCU Center
Nov 10, 17, 24 Stewardship

OCTOBER PRAYER INTENTIONS:

We are a community of faith: praying for and with each other! Each week in our Sunday bulletin, we list several members of United for whom we pray during the coming week. We are including that list in Voices so that those who are unable to come to church will know who is being prayed for, and can join their prayers with ours.

For Sunday, Oct 6th: Ann Rokosky & Alisa Villarreal, Robin Rosinsky, Nancy Schoonover, Sue Stevens.

For Sunday, Oct 13th: Mae Stroshane, Gretchen, David, Sabrina & Parker Switzer, Susan Tarantino, Kevin Testarmata.

For Sunday, Oct 20th: Monica Thomas-Bonnick, Elsie Wanerka, Sally Whitman, Rachel Wiese.

For Sunday, Oct 27th: Althea, Becca, Zoe & Zander, Virginia Woodbury, Dorothy Wright.

We pray for them to feel the blessing of our prayer as deeply as they feel the loving presence of God.

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/>)