



United Congregational Church



VOICES Newsletter

September 2020



Message from Pastor Julie L. Cedrone



My dear United,

The edges of leaves are tinged with crimson, signaling the first hints of Fall. This is a gorgeous time of year as we relish summer's final burst and prepare for the pace of life to change, for a string of holidays and traditions, rituals and cozying up after traveling....or, maybe not. Fall 2020 doesn't quite have that feel, does it?

We already learned that church is not a building, and community is not about geography. We now know that worship can be celebrated on Zoom and the Holy Spirit can travel to your living room while you are still in pajamas, and that a laying on of hands prayer can still be felt miles away. We are Falling into Faith, trying to follow Jesus and find fellowship without the usual compass. The pandemic endures, and our community continues: how do we continue to carry the cross at this time? How do we remain a body of believers when our bodies are possible contagions? It's a disorienting time, for sure. Thankfully, our church community has ways of spreading love and faith with far more power than any virus, and we'll move through this time, emerging stronger.

We spent the summer digging into the Gospel of Matthew: the miracles of Jesus and how we continue to create them, the tiny bit of faith needed to create a movement, understanding the cross that we carry, and how to embrace conflict through the ministry of listening as we move forward. This gives us the tools to be a church with imagination as we brave the next chapter, committed to serving and loving and living in new ways. Church is needed more than ever in a pandemic, and we'll respond, safely carrying hope and connection where it is most needed.

Our outdoor worship with Trinity Church in Northborough on Sunday, **September 13th** will be a celebratory event, and offer us ways to share our faith with another congregation as well as garner ideas for our own outdoor worship events. We have a Fall hike coming up on the Sunday after that, conversations on the trails with special attention to the changing leaves around us will certainly be a way of praying together. Little bursts of brainstorming about Thanksgiving and Christmas have begun, and I have no doubt that we will anticipate the birth of our savior with a new kind of wonder and relish our gratitude by feasting together, somehow. Your ideas are welcome!

Finally, a few of you have asked me how I came to United and how long I am staying, and that certainly merits a response for the wider community. I have served as a hospice chaplain in San Francisco, then an associate pastor at Pilgrim Church in Southborough, and then had a new chaplain position at VNA Hospice in downtown Worcester, blocks away from United. When the pandemic began, visiting hospice patients at home presented all kinds of challenges – for staff as well as our patients and families. Given that the public schools were closed and my three children were at home, juggling it all become impossible, and it seemed that stepping away from my full-time hospice work was the best option. I wasn't exactly looking for a part-time bridge position, but a few phone calls in a whirlwind period of time landed me with United. And, I am grateful. I am a bridge pastor, with a six-month contract, so my role is to do just that, bridge you from your beloved Pastor Nancy to your next leader. I have no idea what is on the other side of the bridge, but we'll get there with faith and a rock-solid foundation.

**With love,
Pastor Julie**

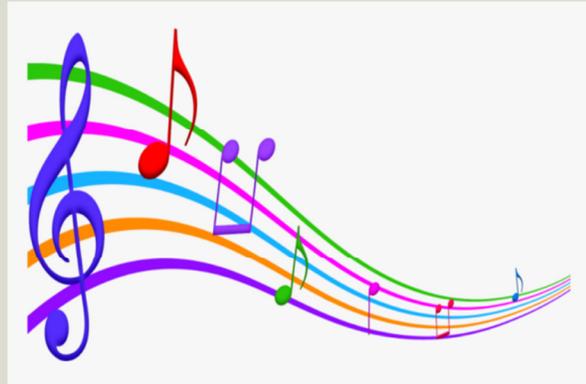


IN MEMORIAM:
James R. McCorison

Our church fondly remembers James R. McCorison, who passed away peacefully after a long battle with cancer on August 7th, surrounded by his family. James was a life-long member of United Congregational Church, and was active in many of our church's ministries. Along with supporting our Sunday School and helping United host First Night activities, he also drove the church van which transported members to our worship services. When our building offered temporary shelter for homeless families for the Interfaith Hospitality Network (before I.H.N. obtained a permanent residence at 90 June Street), James regularly served as an evening host, welcoming the guest families.

Those of us who had the privilege of knowing James McCorison will always remember his friendliness, kindness and willingness to help others. Our condolences go to his wife Karen, and his children Melanie and Samuel. With them, we celebrate the life of James, who was devoted to both family and faith.

A memorial service will be held at a later date, and the family requests that donations to honor James be made to the McCorison Book Fund at the American Antiquarian Society, or the McCorison Fund at Preservation Worcester.



MUSIC NOTES

Hello Friends!

It's been hard to feel connected by Zoom, but we're all trying!

The music has been difficult because there are so many variables - audio settings, sound levels, and venues. I'll do my best to inspire and uplift you with the hymns!

We've had lovely videos of our children singing and dancing for the Gathering Music, and we hope to do more. Also, I invite anyone to share their music during worship.

Until then, let's "praise God and sing!"

~~ **Mae Stroshane, Music Minister**



[Broad Meadow Brook Conservation Center & Wildlife Sanctuary](#)

Hello United,

Let's stay united, United, and get creative about spending time together!
Here's an invitation for fellowship and fresh air:

September 20th at 1:00pm at Broad Meadow Brook Wildlife Sanctuary (address and info in the link below). We'll meet in front of the visitor center for a fall stroll for all ages! Bring the kids! If the weather is rainy, we'll try for the next Sunday.

Looking forward to meeting many of you in person and enjoying a lovely afternoon.

Peace,

Julie

<https://www.massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/wildlife-sanctuaries/broad-meadow-brook>

INFO ABOUT BROAD MEADOW BROOK

Broad Meadow Brook in Worcester is the largest urban wildlife sanctuary in New England, with over 400 acres cooperatively managed or owned by Mass Audubon. Interpretive signs will guide you along well-marked trails through woods, fields, streams, and marsh.

Location: [414 Massasoit Road, Worcester, MA 01604](#)

Phone: 508-753-6087

Hours: Tuesday-Saturday, 9 am-4 pm; Sunday, 12:30 pm-4 pm; Closed Mondays

Trails daily, dawn to dusk

Please Note:

Broad Meadow Brook trails are open to local visitors; buildings & restrooms closed.



Here are two ways you can help the Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) mission of supporting local homeless families...

1. With school restarting, there is an urgent need for clothing and back to school supplies for children of IHN guest families.

Gift cards to Walmart or Target and/or checks made out to IHN can be sent to John Owanisian, 8 Stillwater Heights Dr., West Boylston, Ma. 01583.

(If you prefer John could come to your residence to pick up gift cards or checks)

2. **Calling on Volunteers: IHN Volunteer Week – October 4 – October 10**

United Congregational has partnered with the First Unitarian Church to provide IHN at 91 June St. with volunteer support on various dates throughout the year.

The next week in question is October 4 - 10, with our United team hoping to cover two days within that week.

Here's a link that provides greater insight regarding IHN's longstanding mission of supporting local homeless families....

<https://www.ihnworchester.org/>

The task of recruiting volunteers has always been challenging and is now even more difficult during the COVID19 era, but please note this encouraging update from the IHN Director...*"We have not had anyone sick nor anyone tested positive with COVID. We have been doing extremely well in this area."* Note that IHN has implemented policies to help ensure that guest families and volunteer hosts are safe. They typically house six families, but now have only four families and encourage volunteers to remain on the first floor.

So here's the request...Could you cover either an evening or overnight shift on any day during the week of October 4?

Evening coverage (5:30PM-9PM):

Overnight coverage (8:30PM-6:30AM):

If you'd like to sign up for this important outreach effort or have any questions please contact John Owanisian.

jowanisain@charter.net

Submitted By: John Owanisian on behalf of the Mission Outreach Ministry
508-404-4939

THANK YOU!



On behalf of the congregation, I would like to thank The Reverend Julie Cedrone, who is currently the Bridge Pastor at United Congregational Church. In the two short months since Pastor Julie began serving here, she has already made quite an impression! In addition to doing an excellent job leading our Sunday worship and our Tuesday night prayer services on Zoom, Rev. Cedrone has also been instrumental in encouraging innovation at United, including a joint outdoor worship service this Sunday at Trinity Church (AT 10:00 AM!).

Pastor Julie's strengths don't just include thinking outside the box, though. Her concern for others, and her desire that United keep the close fellowship which has always characterized our faith community, is evident in Julie's visitations of our less mobile members, and her planning of fun events like the Sept. 20th walk at Broad Meadow Brook sanctuary.

In these trying times, our church constantly has to make adjustments so we can continue to serve God, and all of God's people. United is blessed to have a Bridge Pastor like Rev. Cedrone, who is proving so adept at helping us navigate these new circumstances, and in return we offer Julie our thanks and our prayers!

~~ Tim Camp



PASTOR SEARCH UPDATE

The search for United Congregational Church's next Settled (Permanent) Pastor is continuing! Currently we are working on a Church Profile for United which, when completed, will be posted by our denomination (the United Church of Christ) in hope of attracting suitable candidates for the position. The Profile is a VERY lengthy document detailing many aspects of our church, including its history, finances, ministries etc. Even more importantly, the Profile is our opportunity to state our collective vision for our church, and the kind of Pastor desired.

Due to its importance, we want every member of United to participate in the crafting of the Church Profile. Later this month, a questionnaire will be sent to every church member, asking them to state future developments they would like to see at United, and also describe the characteristics they believe are necessary in a Pastor. We will also try to give everyone to participate in discussions, either through small gatherings on Zoom, or by phone conversations.

We cannot overemphasize that the search for our next Settled Pastor will be a communal process; one that every United Congregational Church member should be involved with. God will give each one of us some unique wisdom about our church and the path it should take, and when we combine these insights together, we will make the right choice about our next Pastor!

More information about the survey and discussion groups will be sent to everyone soon. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me through e-mail (timbcamp@aol.com) or by phone (508-798-6997) if you have questions or concerns.

God Bless,

Tim Camp

United Calendar & Prayer Intentions



CALENDAR:

SEPTEMBER 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, Sept 6th: Gerry Miller, Ingrid & Tim Miller, Kit & Tom Murray.

For Sunday, Sept 13th: Katherine Orcutt, Lisa, Laura & John Owanisian, Judy Page.

For Sunday, Sept 20th: Joanna Pickering, Barby-Jean Porter, June & Steve Quarfordt.

For Sunday, Sept 27th: Carissa Rodriguez, Ann Rokosky & Alisa Villarreal, Robin Rosinsky.

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/>)