



# United Congregational Church



VOICES Newsletter

September 2019

## Message from the Pastor



Dear friends,

If you were at church on September 1<sup>st</sup>, you probably saw the communion chalice, **filled** to the brim with bright purple grape juice, **mysteriously** take a flying leap – *all by itself* – **right** off the communion table, and splash the afore-mentioned bright purple grape juice all over the altar cloth, the floor, and – not coincidentally – my robe, stole, shoes and feet....

Now the fact that said chalice was in front of **me**, and not Karen Dorshimer-Chaplin, who was at the communion table with me, has **nothing** to do with its seemingly mysterious leap from the table....well, maybe not **nothing** – but I can say without any hesitation that it was

**not** my intention to bathe the communion table and floor, nor my robe, stole, shoes and feet with bright purple grape juice. (As of this writing, I haven't heard whether Faithful Deacon Dorista was able to return the communion cloth to its former beauty....and just in case, if any of you have any helpful hints – please let me know!)

As I was surveying the damage after church, feeling an equal mix of guilt and embarrassment, someone commented that in their home, whoever spilled something by accident was absolved from clearing it up – which seemed to me a most compassionate response! Instead of yelling or blaming the person, who – if they are anything like me, already feels plenty badly enough – they are forgiven, and others immediately step in to help clean up the mess....

What a grace-full way of responding to an accident! What a compassionate way of caring for one another! And what a lovely idea for the rest of us, when we're with someone who spills...or breaks...or makes some mistake!

As I drove home from church, thinking about what I'd heard, I was reminded of the Sufi wisdom that, *"If we are to speak well, our words must pass three gates. At the first gate we ask, 'Are these words true?'; at the second, 'Are they necessary?'; and at the third, 'Are they kind?'"*

Imagine if – before we spoke – we asked ourselves if what we are about to say is true, kind

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and necessary.....Imagine what a difference it would make in our relationships ~ and in our world ~ if we were intentional about speaking only those words that are true, kind and necessary!

Consider this an invitation for us all to be thoughtful and compassionate and truthful in what we say....and know that by so doing, we are bringing light into this world that has such great need of thoughtfulness, kindness, and truthfulness.

Blessings,  
**Nancy**

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## **MANY THANKS....**

...to Helen Bross and Linda Michel for providing pastoral coverage while Nancy was on vacation in August, and to Sue Tarantino and Debra Cottis for preaching during that time. We are blessed to have so many people in our congregation willing and able to provide pastoral leadership and care! Thank you!

### **...and also ~ thank you to:**

...all who helped make our church picnic such a wonderful event again this year! Especially we thank Emerson and Liz Brooks and Danielle Montgomery for opening their home to us (a trial run, perhaps, for a certain wedding coming up soon?!?!), to those who grilled and cleaned up, who cooked and baked, who tossed salads and stirred beverages, who provided entertainment, and who came to celebrate the gift of this time together ~ and our wonderful community of faith!

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## "WALKING TOWARD AMERICA": UPCOMING PERFORMANCES SEPTEMBER 27TH AND OCTOBER 7TH

Several of us were fortunate enough to see United member Rachel Weise in her one-woman show, "**Walking Toward America**" this past June. The show (and Rachel's interpretation of Ilga Katais, the woman whose story is told in the play) is a powerful story and grace-fully acted. A number of people were disappointed to have missed the last performances, so we wanted to make sure these upcoming performances were publicized. Please contact Nancy if you have any questions about the show; tickets can be purchased at the door.

Upcoming performances will be **Friday, September 27th at 7pm**, at the Main Auditorium at Assumption College, in the Le Maison Auditorium (600 Salisbury St; <https://www.assumption.edu/news-and-events/events/walking-toward-america>) and **Thursday October 3rd at 7 pm** at Worcester State University at the Fuller Theatre, 2nd Floor Administration Building (486 Chandler St.)

"**Walking Toward America**, performed by one woman and one musician, tells an intensely personal narrative, laced with warmth, humor, courage, and determination. The play explores all that it means to be an ordinary family caught up in extraordinary circumstances. The central character, Ilga Katais, is portrayed at 4, 10, almost 17, and as a grandmother in order to reveal the remarkable story of her family's flight from their Latvian homeland due to the Russian occupation of their city. They survive a month in a forced-labor camp, escape airstrikes as they walk over 500 miles across war-torn Germany, live for over six years in a United Nations Refugee camp, and eventually sail through an Atlantic storm to America. The action includes a host of characters: family members, soldiers, strangers, and friends."



## JUST PEACE CONVERSATION

~ Submitted by: Tom McMillan

United bills itself as “An Open and Affirming and Just Peace Congregation.” We have a pretty good idea what Open and Affirming means, but what is Just Peace all about?

We'll be exploring that question in three after-church sessions on **September 29, October 6, and October 13**. Among the topics to be discussed are how and why United adopted that designation, the range of Christian responses to issues of war and peace (e.g. pacifism and just war theory), how Just Peace differs from traditional responses, and what it might mean for United to live more intentionally as a Just Peace congregation.

Put those dates on your calendar. And keep watching for more details!



**Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry(CAIM). Two-thirds of this offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through grants. Neighbors in Need grants are awarded to UCC 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. This year, special consideration will be given to projects focusing on serving our immigrant neighbors and communities.**

**The 2019 theme is "Love of Children".**

**Our UCC congregation will receive the NIN offering on: October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019 as part of their World Communion Sunday observance.**

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## **MANY THANKS**

To all the members of our congregation who brought in snacks to share this summer! Because of your generosity, we enjoyed plenty of treats while we also enjoyed fellowship time with each other after worship!

We will resume our regular Fellowship Table schedule this Sunday (September 15<sup>th</sup>), and are looking for people willing to be Fellowship Hosts. Our church provides coffee, tea and juice, so hosts only need to bring whatever snacks they think appropriate, and do the table cleanup afterwards. Everyone is welcome to look at the sign up sheet in Merriman Chapel, and choose a particular Sunday to host. Individuals (or families) can also co-host Fellowship if they want, or work with an experienced host during their first table.

For more information, please see Pastor Nancy, or contact Tim Camp ([timbcamp@aol.com](mailto:timbcamp@aol.com); or 508- 798- 6997). We hope you will consider joining this important church ministry, and thanks again to everyone who helped make it so successful these past months!

## MISSION & OUTREACH MOMENTS...

The Mission Outreach Ministry (MOM) wrapped up the summer season with a busy month of August that included support for the following groups:

- **Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN):** We continued our partnership with the First Unitarian Church to support this vital ministry assisting homeless families. United members contributed approximately 40 hours of volunteer service.
- **Community Harvest Project:** This non-profit farm engages volunteers to grow fresh fruits and vegetables to combat hunger in our area. Our United volunteers planted over 6000 turnips seeds and harvested 130 pounds of green peppers. Thanks to Dave Switzer for organizing.
- **John St. Baptist Church Soup Kitchen:** The Soup Kitchen feeds 50 to 70 people every Saturday morning, and serves an average of over 300 meals a month. United volunteers prepared and served three large pans of Ziti Bake, with salad and drinks.
- **MOM Upcoming Events and volunteer opportunities:**
  - Sunday, September 29: Worcester Fellowship Ministry support. Help needed at 9:30 AM to make sandwiches.
  - Sunday, October 6: Neighbors in Need Offering.
  - October 17-19: IHN Volunteer Coverage. Evening and overnight hosts needed. Contact John Owanisian.
  - Saturday, October 26: John St. Soup Kitchen. Opportunity for servers.
  - Sunday, November 10: IHN after worship session with IHN Director Dave Cote. Soup on the menu.





## MUSIC NOTES

Greetings, Friends!

We've had a wonderful summer of making a joyful noise! Thank you all for making worship happen with your gifts of flowers, food, and song! And thank you to our guest musicians, Rich Stroshane and Audrey White. Their viola duet was just this side of heaven!

Whether you sing in a concert hall or in the shower, you are welcome to join our Pick-Up Choir once a month. We gather at 9:45 to rehearse a favorite hymn to share that very day. No auditions required! For September, we'll sing on the **15<sup>th</sup>**.

I look forward to working with our Sunday School children and parents again as we teach them new songs. I believe it's important for children to be part of our services occasionally and see "what it's all about."

Finally, if you sing or play an instrument, I encourage you to share your gifts with us -just speak to me at Coffee Hour or email me at [musicladymae@gmail.com](mailto:musicladymae@gmail.com)

One final note (pun intended). While I enjoy greeting all of you on Sunday mornings and playing the Prelude, I can't do both at the same time! I'll be happy to chat with you after the service.

Cheers,  
Mae Stroshane  
Music Minister

## MESSAGE FROM DON REMICK

The images of the impact of Hurricane Dorian keep coming in. This storm was a slow moving Category 5 storm as it crawled through the Bahamas leaving whole sections of communities leveled by wind and waves. It continues its progress up the east coast bringing rain measured in feet, storm surges and wind damage in its path. We are keeping an eye on the storm and the rescue and recovery efforts that are only now beginning to be underway. Your gifts to our denomination are already at work as initial aid and assessment are happening through our ministries and ministry partners. Keep an eye on our national UCC Disaster Ministries webpage (<https://www.ucc.org/disaster>) for updates on efforts and on ways you can help.

As a reminder, when we are touched by the images we see, we want to help in as tangible a way as possible. Often that help comes in ways that compound the problems as people arrive without coordination or invitation or people send items that are not needed into a disaster zone that is not prepared to receive, store or distribute them. Disaster response is a coordinated effort between government, non-profit and faith based institutions. They have built relationships and networks over the years that allow rescue and recovery to happen in as fluid and effective a way as the disaster allows to be possible. And the best way to help is to send funds through the agencies and organizations you trust. Your gifts to our national UCC Disaster Ministries can be used immediately. And, because of your ongoing support of our denomination, 100% of your gift is sent where the need is greatest in coordination with all these partners.

You can donate directly on the UCC website listed above. Or send checks to your Conference office with a note in the memo line that the funds are for disaster relief.

Faithfully,  
Don Remick

## United Calendar & Prayer Intentions



### CALENDAR:

Sept 29 Neighbors in Need Insert (Collection is: October 6<sup>th</sup>)  
Sept 29 Just peace Conversation  
Sept 30 Carty Food Cupboard (Wesley Methodist Church)  
Oct 6 Just Peace Conversation  
Oct 16 Board of Ministry meeting

### 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 1st: John MacWade, Eddi-Jo Magui & Matilda Evans, Scott Malia.

For Sunday, Sept 8<sup>th</sup>: Harry Manoogian, Doug McAllister, Michael McAuliffe, Nancy & Tom McMillan.

For Sunday, Sept 15<sup>th</sup>: Linda & Robert Michel, Gerry Miller, Ingrid Miller, Kit & Tom Murray.

For Sunday, Sept 22nd: Katherine Orcutt, Lisa, John & Laura Owanisian, Judy Page.

For Sunday, Sept 29<sup>th</sup>: Joanna Pickering, Barby-Jean Porter, June & Steve Quarfordt.

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/>)