

THE UNION COURIER

Union Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
The Rev. Gail Miller, Pastor

P.O. Box 233, 218 Main St.
Groton, Massachusetts 01450



January 2009

New Year's Message FROM THE PASTOR

As we put away our 2008 calendars and get out the 2009 calendars, I thought we might reflect on the Church Calendar (sometimes called the Liturgical Calendar).

Just as a typical calendar has four seasons, 12 months, 52 weeks, and 365 days that include holidays, solemn days, commemorative days, and days that are just "average," the Calendar of the Church uses similar terms and measurements.

The Liturgical Year is also marked by special seasons—Advent, Christmas, Lent, The Three Days, Easter, Pentecost and Ordinary Time. The year begins on the first Sunday of Advent, which usually occurs around the beginning of December or the end of November (Nov. 30th in 2008), and ends on Christ the King Sunday (Nov. 22, 2009).

However, the purpose of the Liturgical Year Calendar is not to mark the passage of time, but to celebrate and understand more fully the entire mystery of Jesus Christ, from his incarnation and birth until his ascension, the day of Pentecost, and the expectation of his return in glory.

The Liturgical Year Calendar also tells us what Bible readings to use on Sundays in worship (This schedule is put together by scholars and pastors and is called the Lectionary.) Occasionally I'll choose readings not from this list (if we're having a special Sunday or celebration in the church which has a theme not reflected in the readings); but, for the most part, I choose from the four assigned readings for each Sunday, which we'll read in worship; and then my sermon is based on those Bible passages.

The four readings for each week are from: 1) the Old Testament, 2) the Psalms, 3) the Epistles (New Testament letters) and 4) a Gospel (Matthew, Mark, Luke or John). The Lectionary readings change every year over a three-year cycle, and each of the three years focuses on one of the first three Gospels. This year is the year of Mark, which means we'll have more readings from Mark than the other Gospels.

I love the church calendar—especially this time of year. From the beginning of Advent through Pentecost (May 31st) the seasons and readings loosely follow a chronology, which walks us through Jesus' birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension, and then the birth of the church after that.

The Christian life is a journey, and the liturgical year is a journey as well. I find that, as I try to follow Jesus, it helps to have something of a road map, pointing me in the right direction, keeping me on track as the weeks, months and years go by. Life is unpredictable, and so I find the predictability of the seasons of the church comforting. I know that, no matter what is swirling around in the news and the culture *du jour*, Christ will be born, he will die, and he will rise again; and that I will hear these stories and have the opportunity to reflect on my life in light of these timeless truths of the Christian faith.

And best of all, because we are the church—the body of Christ—we make this journey together! We are not alone - we have each other, and we have the Holy Spirit guiding us. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

With you on the way,

The Reverent Gail Miller, Pastor

Our Church Family



Ongoing Prayer List

Hobert Barnard
 Joey Behre
 Evelyn Bishop
 Joe Donlan
 Marlene Fraehmke
 Fraehmke Family
 Hoggard Family
 Trent Kelley & Family
 Kueter Family
 Camilo Malgeri

Martina Malgeri
 Winnie Marsh
 Middlemiss Family
 Naree Noonan
 Sarah Quimby O'Neil
 Becky Poulton
 Frederick Reynolds
 Betty Ruh
 Karen Sands
 Sheerin Family

Bob and Diane Piacentia
 Sweeny Family
 Jamie Robredo
 Kenn Thompson
 Dagmar Van Doren
 Beverly Vogel

Prayers this Month



- ◆ Donna Tetreault, in the death of her father, Delbert St. Onge
- ◆ Jill Guidetti, hospitalized for her gall bladder; Stephanie and family who had to cancel their trip to Italy.
- ◆ Leon Avey, and his family, in the death of his mother, Marjorie Avey.
- ◆ Naree Noonan, Bonnie Marchesani's daughter-in-law, who has a breast cancer diagnosis.
- ◆ Erica Davenport, and her family, in the death of her father, Carl Ruh.



January Birthdays



1/1 Peg DeBruyn	1/25 Olivia Teh
1/2 Madeleine Bugbee	1/26 Erin Smith-Miller
1/5 Marvin Caldwell	1/27 Margaret Davey
1/6 Bonnie Marchesani	1/27 Taryn Emerle
1/9 Gordon Platt	1/28 Katie Scheve
1/12 Margaret Howe-Soper	1/30 Wendy Jones
1/12 Cara Lavigne	1/30 Owen Teh
1/12 Casey Sjoberg	1/31 Caroline Noonan
1/13 Andrew Mahoney	
1/16 Catherine Daly	
1/16 Matthew Plausse	
1/21 Bill Shute	
1/24 Toni Bond	
1/24 Dick Hanks	



Congratulations to Anne and Jeff Larsen, who have a new son, Korbin Jeffrey Larsen (8 lbs., 9 oz., 23 inches), born on Thursday, December 18th.



If we missed your birthday, it is not in our database. Email unioncc@uccgroton.org to give us your birthday. Also we would like to recognize significant anniversaries. Please share that information also.



Our Church Family

Thank You!



Dear Friends:

I would like to give thanks to all of you at Union Congregational Church who have been so gracious to Janet, myself and our family with your cards, prayers, and overall support. I know in my heart this glorious response for my health and well being has helped to create the Miracle that has happened to me recently.

Your acts of love and affection demonstrate "That You Care Enough To Send The Very Best," and we are thankful to you all. Our journey progresses with my continued recuperation and your prayers are still very much appreciated.

With Gods Love,

Kenn Thompson

The family of Erica Davenport would like to thank everyone for their cards and expressions of sympathy following the passing of her father, Carl Ruh. Your hugs, prayers, and genuine concern were much appreciated.




UCC Good Shepherd Network



Calling All Bakers!

There is always room for anyone who would like to be on the email list to bake

for those in need of a meal. Contact Julie Platt.

Please contact Julie Platt at  or email (juliensp@charter.net), if you have any questions or interest. Thank you.



Provide a Ride List!

There is an occasional need within this church to provide rides to and from church for those who are can't drive for any reason. If you would like to be on this list, please contact Julie Platt.



Our Church Community

Cookies and Carols Report

Even with the December 21st snowstorm delaying our deliveries to December 28th, we were still able to visit nearly 63 homes on your behalf. The money earned will support the Youth Mission trip next summer. We would like to thank all those who contributed cookies and voices for this wonderful event, and Filho's for donating the plastic containers we used.



- Julie Platt and Gail Miller



Undecorating the Church Party Saturday, January 17th, at 10:00 a.m.

Please join the Deacon's for an "undecorating" party at the church. Many hands make light work and we'd appreciate all the help we can get to take down the greens and put them away for next year.

New to the Church? Want to Know More? Wondering About Membership? Sunday, January 11th or 18th 3:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

- ◆ Would you like to get to know a handful of folks here without the pull of children and rush of Sunday morning?
- ◆ Would you like to regroup after the busyness of the holidays to think about and explore the Christian faith and how it gets lived out in the church?
- ◆ Do you want to know more about our church?
- ◆ Are you interested in membership?

Please join Pastor Gail Miller and some of our Deacons as we spend a couple hours together in fellowship and faith. Attending this gathering in no way obligates you to become a formal member. This is an opportunity for you to learn more about the church in a small group setting. If you do want to join as a formal member, we will do that in worship on Sunday, January 25th.

Childcare and refreshments are provided and all are welcome.

R.S.V.P. to the church office: 978-448-2091 or email to unioncc@uccgroton.org so that we can plan food and babysitting. If you are unable to attend, but are interested in joining with us in membership, please call Gail at the church.

Committee and Ministry Openings

The Church Council welcomes people interested in serving on Committees and Ministries to let us know in January as we prepare for our Annual Meeting on February 1st, when the "turnover" of committee members occurs. Committee positions require formal membership in the church and Ministry positions allow for anyone to serve.

We are looking for church members to fill several committee and ministry vacancies. The list of openings include:

- ◆ Music Committee (1 member needed)
- ◆ Stewardship and Finance Committee (4 members needed)
- ◆ Kitchen Ministry (1 individual needed) (Does not have to be a church member.)
- ◆ Harvest Fair Ministry (1 individual needed) (Does not have to be a church member.)
- ◆ Youth Ministry (1 individual needed) (Does not have to be a church member.)

If you are interested in serving or would like additional information concerning these positions, please contact Megan Mahony (Moderator) or Pastor Miller with your questions or to express interest.

Megan Mahony, Moderator



Join the Choir?

We hope one of your New Year's resolutions is to join one of the choirs of the church. There is always room!



Organ Restoration

These next few months will sound different as our wonderful organ undergoes mechanical restoration. We hope and expect it will be back in full voice for Easter! In the meantime, worship will be led from the piano. Literature for piano is quite different from organ literature. While organs are associated with church music, pianos tend toward solo concert music. This is not to say that the music is not appropriate for church; only that hymn-based pieces and prelude and fugues are simply not part of the piano repertoire. Enjoy the difference and experience the beauty of piano solos and ensembles. Preludes will include solo pieces by Lubeck, Scarlatti, Tomasek, and Chopin. A Johann Christian Bach piano duet and a viola solo will also be featured. Senior choir anthems will include works by Purcell, Gevaert, and Sibelius and a delightful arrangement of the black spiritual "Little Innocent Lambs" by Bartholomew. Mark your calendars now for February 8th, when we will present an exciting major work by Hammerschmidt based on the Lord's Prayer and John 16:23-24 with instruments. The Junior Choir will lead worship on February 1st and the Bell Choir will play late in January.

We are very excited about the organ restoration. It has been an adventure never quite knowing what will work on any given Sunday. We enjoyed showing off the instrument to the many of you who came to see the open console in early December, and we invite any who couldn't make it that day to visit us at the organ most any Sunday.

Finally, our thanks and great appreciation to all singers who so faithfully rehearse and sing with us. Truly your reward is knowing you sing unto the Lord a fine song!

David and Permie Sears



Winter Fun!

**Family Ministry
Sledding on Sunday, January 25th
2:00 - 4:00 p.m.**

Let it Snow, Let it Snow, Let it Snow....

On Sunday afternoon, January 25, weather permitting (snow, snow, snow), we will meet behind the library to go sledding and have hot cocoa. Bring your sleds! Drop by anytime between 2:00 and 4:00 p.m. for some family sledding fun! Contact Julie and Halsey Platt at



**Groton Community Event
Martin Luther King Day—Monday, January 19th**

Join Groton Local in a potluck dinner celebrating our community in action. Let's enjoy together good food, good music, and good conversation as we continue to work toward our common goals of community and sustainability. Taking place at the Senior Center: 5:30 p.m. meeting, 6:00 p.m. dinner and music, 7:00 p.m. program. If you have any questions, you can email Chris Thompson at cthompson56@charter.net or go to their website at www.grotonlocal.org.





Youth Mission Trip 2009

There are nine slots available for the mission trip to Port Jervis, NY on June 28 – July 4. During this trip, youth (entering grades 9 – 12) will help to paint and repair homes in this community. The cost is \$450* per person, with a possible church contribution of \$200 each. We will join with neighboring churches, including Shepherd of the Valley, Christian Union Church, and Sacred Heart/St. James.

The sponsoring organization is www.groupworkcamps.com.

*A deposit of \$50 is needed immediately to secure your spot. Please make your checks out to UCC (Union Congregational Church), with a note in the memo line "youth mission trip". Scholarships are available—see Gail Miller in confidence. If you have questions, call Michele Dilley at



Missions Update

Mitten Tree

Thank you to everyone who helped to make Christmas special for the patients on the psychiatric units at Tewksbury Hospital. We increased our giving this year and, as a result, we were able to provide gifts for the patients on one and a half units. Our help was particularly needed this year as a church that had given for sometime was not able to do so this year. Many of these people had no one else to give them Christmas presents.

Loaves and Fishes

We were able to give 20 filled backpacks for school children; over 120 bags of groceries and personal care items; and, with our Christmas Angels collection, we were able to provide monetary support as well.

Special Offerings

As of this writing, we do not have a total yet as to what we took in for the selected Christmas Angel charities or for the Christmas Eve Offering for the Veterans of the Cross; but we took in \$475 for Neighbors in Need in October.

United Church of Christ

Instead of taking another special collection, we will contribute \$1,300 from our Missions' budget to Our Church's Wider Mission. The Christmas Angel charities will also be supplemented from our budget.

Blanket Project

Coming up in February we will once again be selling Valentines to provide blankets to those in need through Church World Services. This is a way to give a gift of love which gives to others in great need.



Knitting Group and Prayer Shawl Ministry

Knitting — Sundays at 7:00 p.m.

We need your HELP...

In the past year the Knitting Group has not only made items for the church fair; but also has been making prayer shawls for people in need of prayers – some due to having surgery, others due to illness or just extra support during difficult times. What started out as an idea from one member of the knitting group to give a member a prayer shawl, which was circulated to several friends to knit and pray over, has grown faster than we would ever have guessed. In the last 1-1/2 years we have made and given about seven prayer shawls. The need seems to be increasing and we are having difficulty keeping up with it. We would love to have more people join us for our Knitting Group on Sunday evenings at 7:00 p.m. In the month of January, we will be meeting at Barbara Avey's home, but we usually meet in the church parlor. If you can't join us on Sunday nights but could help us knit or crochet some prayer shawls, please feel free to call Cassie Sampas . Also, you are always welcome to join us for fellowship and to work on any project of your choosing.



Scrapbooking — Fridays at 7:00 p.m.

For the last couple of years, a small group has been meeting on Friday nights at 7:00 p.m. in the church parlor to scrapbook. We get ideas from each other and often share tools. New members are always welcome. There are times when, for one reason or another, we move our group to a private home or cancel for an evening; so if you plan to attend please just let Cassie Sampas () know so you can be kept informed of any change.



New Office Administrator

Carol Zaiatz is on board and getting accustomed to the way things work here. She may periodically need assistance from volunteers during “crunch” times (Newsletter mailings, Annual Reports, etc.). She has already received calls from two people who may be available at times if she needs assistance. If there is anyone else who periodically has extra time on their hands and would like to lend a hand, please contact Carol at 978-448-2091 so she can add your name to the “list of volunteers.” She appreciates the offers of assistance received so far — and she may need to take you up on that sometime soon! Thank you.



Church Annual Report and Annual Meeting

Our Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, February 1st. Most of the Annual Report material should be to Carol Zaiatz by now. If you have not turned yours in, please contact Carol Zaiatz as soon as possible. We must have the completed Annual Report together in time for distribution two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting (which would be Sunday, January 18th). Please email your report as a word document attachment to Carol in the church office at unioncc@uccgroton.org. Also, it will streamline our record keeping if, at the same time, you email the meeting minutes from the entire year (12 separate documents) to her. In this way we can easily archive the material for the calendar year.



Christian Education

For All Roman Catholics

Were you raised Roman Catholic?

Are you married to a Catholic?

Do your children go to Sunday School and CCD?

Wondering if we do "First Communion" at UCCG?

You are not alone! There are many in our church who have a connection to the Roman Catholic Church, whether by marriage or by tradition. In February, we will offer an evening forum to discuss these questions and more. Our guest speaker will be the Rev. Dr. J. Mary Luti, Visiting Professor of Worship and Preaching at Andover Newton Theological School in Newton. (Just prior to this position, she was the Senior Minister of First Church in Cambridge.)

Mary Luti was raised Roman Catholic and for 19 years was a member of a women's religious community. She received her Ph.D. from Boston College in the late 1980's. She discovered the UCC while teaching at Andover Newton and joined a UCC church in 1990.

She has co-authored a short book, *Catholics in the United Church of Christ*, which examines the issues involved with living and growing as a Christian in both the Roman Catholic and Congregational traditions.

You may purchase this book through the church office for \$5, which I recommend for all who are interested in this topic whether or not you can attend the forum in February. Call Carol or Gail at church and we'll take your order (with a deadline of January 12th). The forum will be the second week in February at a date to be determined soon.



Thursday Bible Study

Join 10:00 a.m. at the home of
Us Rev. Marvin Caldwell

for Bible Study 26 Court Street, Groton

Tel #

We have begun our final study in the book of Genesis, the story of Joseph. Joseph's story tells of a spoiled, bratty young man who becomes a very important person in Egypt in charge of agricultural production. We will look at Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Alfred Lloyd Webber's modern take on this ancient story. The hand of God is not easily discerned in this pivotal story. How does God work in your life? As always, there are cookies and tea, deep conversation and laughter. Come and join us; everyone is welcome.



January Sunday School

Theme
Follow the Star
January 11th, 18th, and 25th

No Classes
Sunday, January 4th

Just So You Know

Union Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
P.O. Box 233
Groton, Massachusetts 01450
978-448-2091
www.uccgroton.org



The Reverend Gail Miller
Cell phone: 978-877-2177
gail@uccgroton.org

Tuesday – Friday, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Or you may meet with her by appointment
(Please call the church office.)

Office Administrator
Carol Zaiatz

Monday, Wednesday, Friday
9:00 a.m.—3:15 p.m.
Tuesday 9:15 a.m.—3:30 p.m.
Thursday—Off
978-448-2091
unioncc@uccgroton.org

Ministers of Music: David and Permie Sears

Cherub Choir: Bonnie Marchesani

Handbell Choir: Cheryl Townsend

January Deacon of the Month
Greg Balligan



Prayer List

Feel free to call the church office to add or remove names from the prayer list.

Booking Events

When planning meetings, fundraisers, etc., please call the church office to be sure the space is available.

Sermons

Copies of Rev. Miller's sermons are available in the wooden rack in the downstairs hallway.

Weekly News Email

Gail prepares the email to be sent from the Office Administrator's account, usually on Thursday afternoons.

Name Tags help us become friends. Please wear yours. Sign up on the nametag list on the small table in the vestibule, call or email the church office.

Courier Deadline

The February Courier deadline for material will be Thursday, January 15th. Please e-mail any material to Carol Zaiatz (unioncc@uccgroton.org) by that date. Thank you!



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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

**DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE DO NOT DELAY**

PLEASE REMOVE ME FROM YOUR MAILING LIST
Please return to your mail carrier.



The Annual Meeting

*Will be held on Sunday, February 1st
in the Sanctuary immediately following Worship.
All are encouraged to attend!
(especially church members!)*

*The agenda is as follows:
Annual Reports
Nominations for Committees and Ministries
Financial Reports*