

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



May 2011

FROM THE PASTOR

Joy dawned again on Easter day...

These are the opening words from an Easter hymn that many Congregationalists grew up with. Having worshipped our way through the dark days of Lent — past Palm Sunday — through Maundy Thursday and Good Friday — I was craving the joy of Easter morning, which is now still ringing in my ears and heart.

I am struck by that opening line from the hymn, “Joy dawned again on Easter day.” Actually I am struck by a word — *again*. Joy dawned *again*. Perhaps a way to find Easter joy is to find it again. To remember that we have known joy before. To remember that God has been with us; God has blessed us and will bless us again.

During my years of work with teenagers in previous churches, we had a saying we employed with great regularity — “Choose Joy.” Mostly, we used it when we heard complaining. But perhaps there is a deeper exhortation here as well. Perhaps we can keep this saying out of the realm of the cliché by realizing that we can choose joy, because God has given us joy, by giving us something — someone to be joyful about.

Perhaps it is as much *remembering* joy as it is choosing joy. Do you feel Easter joy? I hope so. If you can't, try remembering it. And if that too is difficult, know that joy will dawn again.

Because Easter is not just a day, it's a season — ending this year on June 12 (Pentecost). And even more so the church believes that every Sunday is a “little Easter” and ought to contain in it the joy of the resurrection.

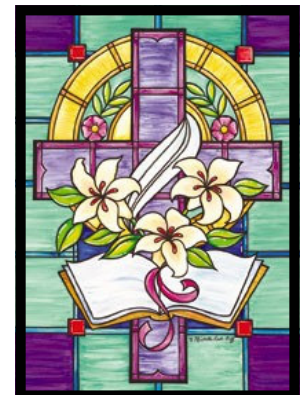
A colleague of mine writes this about Easter and the resurrection:

Now, by virtue of his resurrection, our risen Lord gives us a new life in his fellowship. We can know that this life in, with and through him is our future and that nothing — no darkness, no sin, no evil, no death - can take it from us. This is the sure and joyful confidence to which Easter holds out to us....You and I can get a life today....Easter is not the celebration of facts long ago and far away, nor it is about delayed gratification, a postponement of joy into an ultimately distant future. Easter is for now, Easter is for you, and Easter is for keeps. (Dick Olmsted)

That, in the midst of any terrible thing, one can be grateful and find even a moment of joy, is proof enough that Jesus lives. Joy does dawn again....and again....and again...

Rejoicing with you,

Gail



Ongoing Prayer List

Our prayer list this month reflects your updates. Feel free to contact Pastor Miller or Carol at any time with further updates or additions (978-448-2091 or unioncc@uccgroton.org).

George Ashenbrenner
Jacqueline Biron
Bob Canaway
Jasiela Chaves
Rhoda Curtis
Sloane Ferrara
Charles Girard
Katherine Hallett

Thelma Hamilton
Pat Hoggard
Judy Hause Kowesky
Norman Leech
Winnie Marsh
Donna Martin
Lt. Colin McNulty
Lindsey Meyer

Joey Middlemiss
Howard Misselhorn
Holly Norton
Anders Pedersen
Diane Piacentini
David Pratt
Irene Putman

Carroll Quinn
Valerie Rowe
Betty Ruh
Matt Spain
The Santos Family



- ◆ Alyssa Leigh Roy, Barbara and Leon Avey's great granddaughter, who has pneumonia.
- ◆ Ellen Hargraves, recovering from knee replacement surgery.

God and Family

Pastor Miller has been meeting with three Cub Scouts and their parents once a month as they complete their *God and Family* badge. They will be recognized during worship on May 8:

Caleb Brennan
Robert Houde
Jimmy Robinson (from Littleton UCC)

May Birthdays



Birthday Blessings to You All!

Daniel Evans	05/01	Joel Hughes	05/15
Anne Cahill	05/03	Kelly Sullivan	05/16
Monique Meehan	05/04	Meredith Dille	05/18
Jocelyn Byron-Kelly	05/05	Mike Smith	05/20
Charlotte Caiozzo	05/05	Ginny Fraser	05/21
Amy Harrington	05/06	Emily Hanson	05/21
Cristina Davy	05/06	Drew Davenport	05/24
Deb Shields	05/08	Bill Gale, Jr.	05/24
Ella Louise Brannan	05/08	William Thompson	05/24
Rob Chase	05/10	Caleb Brennan	05/28
Margaret Sullivan	05/10	John Fortier	05/30
Nancy Huguenin	05/12	John Brooks, Sr.	05/31
Kyle Plausse	05/14		

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



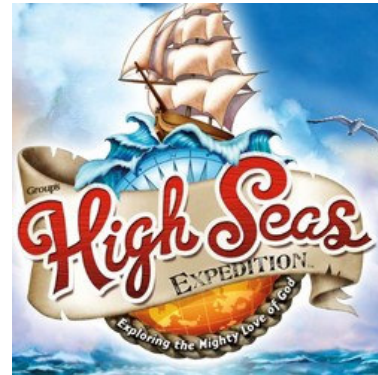
June Courier

Please submit items for the June Courier by Sunday, May 15, in order to be sure they get into this issue. All submissions to the Courier should be emailed to Carol Zaiatz at unioncc@uccgroton.org. Thank you.

Sunday School News

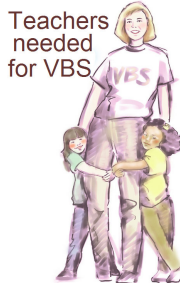


Coming this Summer



Vacation Bible School July 18-22

We will be collaborating with Shepherd of the Valley this year and “setting sail” together on a High Seas Expedition through the book of the Acts of the Apostles. We will travel back in time to the days of the early church and learn about the believers’ lives and journeys of faith. What happened to the disciples after Jesus went back to heaven and the Holy Spirit arrived? Do you think their experiences might have included imprisonment, shipwrecks, snake bites, miraculous healings and sharing all their earthly goods with one another? Please join us in July to learn the answers! We will welcome children from preschool (age 3) through 4th grade — bring your friends! Did we mention that it will be FREE? Registration forms will be available in the June Courier and also on the tables at the back of the Sanctuary later in May. Be sure to mark the dates and find your sea legs!



Call for Volunteers

We are looking for a Co-Director to work with the Director from Shepherd of the Valley, as well as teachers and helpers. Please contact Gail Miller or Chris Clinton (CE Committee), if you would like to be a part of this new and exciting partnership.

Christian Education Committee

—Chris Clinton, Chair
—Pete Hnath

—Carla Carleton
—Julie Platt

—Michele Dilley
—Jen Quinn

Bible Study

Wednesday Evening

7:30 p.m. in the Pastor’s Office

In May we’ll reflect upon the final weeks of Lent progressing into the Easter season reading scripture from Jude, Mark, Matthew, and Philipians. The focus will be on praising Jesus Christ.

Thursday Morning

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

Thursday Bible study will meet May 6, hopefully, and then be on vacation until September, when we pick up the last of John.



Scavenger Hunt
Sunday, May 1, at 2:00 p.m.
Meet at the Church

Put on your thinking caps and walking shoes and join us for an outdoor scavenger hunt. We will be looking for answers in many different places within a few blocks of the church. All ages welcome. Contact Julie Platt () if you have any questions.

Spring Fair

Fall Fair

6th Annual Spring Artisan/Craft Fair Results

We would like to thank all who helped set up and rebuild; the bakers, crafters, and especially the kitchen crew. Very generous food donations from the kitchen work pushed our profit to \$1,345 (including the “after church” sales). Thank you!



Harvest Fair
Saturday, October 1

Not Free Money!!!! Some areas of our fair have major expenses and, hopefully, the sales exceed the cost:

- ◆ *Food:* kitchen and grill
- ◆ *Children’s Fair:* rental of Moon Bounce \$100; prizes \$75-\$100
- ◆ *Publicity:* Computer paper, posters, postage, re-numbering, and hanging of the banner, decorations, table coverings, balloons, seasonal décor (inside and out), cornstalks, mums, etc.
- ◆ *Dumpster:* The dumpster itself is a donation; we pay the “dumping” fee.

Last year generous donations covered many of these costs. Still, the fair expenses run about \$1,000. So, as your family/friends/neighbors do spring cleaning and yard sales . . . Collect for us!!!

The sign-up poster is coming soon!

Fair Ministry: —Bonnie Martin —Kristin Ansted —Mary Hanson —Lorrie Morgan



Big House Youth Group
(for High School Youth — Grades 9-12)
7:00—8:30 p.m.



bighouseyouthgroup.org

Join the
High School
Youth Group

Sunday, May 1—Captive Free Christian Rock Band, at The Grange
Sunday, May 15—UCC

More details can be found at Big House Youth Group on Facebook or at bighouseyouthgroup.org

Summer Mission Trip Fundraisers

Car Wash



Saturday, May 14
9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.
(Rain Date May 21)

AND

Saturday, June 11
9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
(Rain Date June 18)

Where: Along the street side of the church (Willowdale)

Come contribute to the summer Mission Trips, and get a clean car too! We appreciate your support.



Treat Someone Special to a Box of Chocolate Covered Strawberries!

The Middle School students are offering hand-dipped chocolate covered strawberries, artfully packaged in a gift box. Pre-order your strawberry gift boxes in Fellowship Hall on May 8, May 15 or any time **before May 18** and pick them up on Music Appreciation Sunday, May 22, after church. Only \$15.00/box — all proceeds from the sale of the strawberry gift boxes will offset the cost of the Middle School Mission Trip to Washington, DC from August 13 – 21. For further questions or to place an order, please contact Stefanie Lempp or at

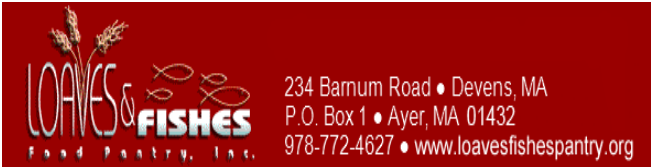


New Members Class
Sunday, May 22, 12:00—3:00 p.m.
Parish House Front Room

New to the Church? Want to Know More? Wondering About Membership?

A group of us will meet Sunday afternoon, May 22, to talk about the Christian faith and how it gets lived out in a local congregation – this congregation. Childcare and refreshments are provided and all are welcome. R.S.V.P. to the church office (978-448-2091 or unioncc@uccgroton.org) so we can plan for food. Questions? See Gail or any Deacon. (If you are interested but cannot make this date, please let us know.)

Missions & Outreach



One Great Hour of Sharing Offering/ Japan-Specific Details

Four months into the year we are a little over 20% of our goal having collected 58 bags of groceries to date. Knowing that donations during summer months often decline, please consider purchasing a few extra items for Loaves and Fishes when you do your grocery shopping this month and next. Most needed items are: salad dressings, canned pasta, crackers, pancake and baking mixes, canned pears and fruit cocktail, pasta sauce, peanut butter and jelly, tea, deodorant, shaving supplies and toothpaste.

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the UCC One Great Hour of sharing offering. We had a very generous response, collecting a total of \$862 to support health, education, refugee, agricultural, and emergency relief initiatives in more than 80 countries. For more information, on-line donations and regular updates regarding the crisis in Japan, please visit the following UCC website: <http://www.ucc.org/disaster/japan-earthquake-2011/>

The Heifer Project

Thanks to everyone who participated in the Heifer Quarter Drive (which officially ended on Easter Sunday). We collected \$331 so far and will accept donations for another couple of weeks. The children loved filling the tubes during coffee hour!

Church World Service Hygiene Kits

Last month the Missions and Outreach Committee began accepting donations for hygiene kits to be distributed through Church World Service. Last year we had a very successful hygiene kit project. Since that time there has been a need for many more kits, especially with the recent disaster in Japan. These kits are sent to areas of need in times of crisis in the United States and around the world. The following supplies are needed and will be assembled into kits for Church World Service. Please donate any of the following items in the basket at the Missions and Outreach table during coffee hour through the month of May.

- Hand towels measuring approximately 16" x 28" (no fingertip or bath towels)
- Washcloths
- Wide-tooth combs
- Nail clippers
- Bars of soap (bath size in individual wrappers)
- Toothbrushes (in original packaging)
- Standard size Band-Aids®

Relay for Life June 24-25

The *Faith in Action* team has raised \$2,558 to date toward the goal of \$5,000, which puts us at third place for team totals. The Relay this year will be held June 24-25. Additional donations and/or more team members are certainly welcome. If you are interested in joining please contact team captains Brian and Cathy Keese at _____ or _____. In addition, Brian is co-chairing the survivorship dinner at the Relay. It is a completely free dinner for cancer survivors at the start of the Relay and leads into the Survivor lap, which kicks off the relay. Registered survivors will receive a gift and a chance to be honored during the most special lap of the relay. Anyone interested can contact Brian to sign up.

On-line donations can be made at www.relayforlife.org/ayerma - look for the *Faith in Action* team page under Top Teams. Let's work together to get *Faith in Action* at the top of the leader board!

**Missions and Outreach
Committee:**

—Marvin Caldwell, Chair
—Charlene Kelly
—Cassie Sampas

—Susan Houde
—Anne Larsen
—Liz Smith

Music



Ring in the Spring Handbell Concert ***The New England Ringers*** **Sunday, May 22, 4:00 p.m.** **Sanctuary**

This concert is a fundraiser for our handbell choir to raise funds for more equipment (handchimes and additional bells). We are very excited to have them come again to Groton. Please tell your friends, family and neighbors, as we would like as much of the community to attend as possible. Tickets (\$15.00/adult; \$10.00/seniors/children) will be on sale on Sundays during coffee hour (starting May 1); and also through the Church Office (978-448-2091) or through an Advance Ticket form on our website at www.uccgroton.org. For more information about the New England Ringers, go to www.newenglandringers.org.

Cherub Chatter

What an exciting Easter Sunday we had! So many beautiful children joined us to sing *This Little Light of Mine* – even Hasi, who is briefly with us from Sri Lanka.



We will sing the hymn *Fairest Lord Jesus* on Music Appreciation Sunday (May 22), and we will also sing the beautiful benediction song Mrs. T. has been teaching us. (We will have only three rehearsals before May 22 – so I will have written versions for you to take home for practice.) I cannot believe our Cherub year is nearly over!

We practice in the parlor from 11:15–11:45 after church. See you there!

—Ms. Bonnie and Mrs. T.

UCC Faith Ringers are going to Festival in June! The Handbell Choir has had a busy year so far, playing in church, performing in the Groton Christmas Concert, accompanying the Jr. Choir play, playing at Seven Hills and the Unitarian Church, and ultimately preparing music for FESTIVAL 2011. **The UCC Faith Ringers will head out to UMass Amherst on Thursday, June 23, through Sunday, June 26.** We will play Massed Ringing pieces with the other 600+ ringers there and also play pieces geared to our level of play. We will be inspired by the advanced handbell choirs attending and, hopefully, absorb much to bring back to our church family.

On Sunday, June 19, our Handbell Choir will lead worship and play all of the music that we have prepared for Festival, for which rehearsals began back in August. We hope you can join us on Father's Day for church and enjoy a lot of handbell music. And, if you would like to drive out to Amherst on Sunday, June 26, you can enjoy the big concert from 3:00 - 4:30 p.m. We would love to have you there.

—Cheryl Townsend () or ()

Our Music Ministry

We are always looking for voices and musicians and welcome new talent! Please join us in making music for worship on Sundays. For information on participating, please contact people as follows:

Senior Choir Edie Tompkins (Director)
Bill Dean
Ellen Hargraves

Junior Choir Edie Tompkins (Director)
Betsy Bridge

Cherub Choir Bonnie Marchesani

Handbell Choir Cheryl Townsend

Instrumental or Vocal Soloists* Stefanie Lempp

*We have filled all the Sundays through June with guest organists. But we are still looking for an instrumental or vocal solo or duet for May 29. Also, it's not too soon to start thinking about summer music - look at your calendars and reserve a Sunday to play or sing for us!

Music Committee: —Stefanie Lempp (Chair) —Brian Keese, Sr.
—Janet Kennedy —Lynn Manalo
—Larry Robinson

What Do I Do Next?

A Career Transition and Support Group

Tuesday, May 3 (and every other Tuesday after that)

7:00 – 8:30 p.m. in the Parish House Front Room

Learn or refresh job-search skills, share job leads and search strategies, and provide encouragement and motivation to one another, whether you're unemployed, underemployed, or simply wish to explore what you might want to do next. Initial topics will include:

- ◆ Writing and revising your resume
- ◆ Developing additional job search correspondence, i.e. cover letters, thank-you letters
- ◆ Leaving no stone unturned in your job search
- ◆ Using social media in your search (e.g. LinkedIn)
- ◆ Interviewing skills
- ◆ Thinking about what you want to do and what you can do

For more information contact Jim Brennan at

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, 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Or you may meet with her by appointment
(please call the church office).

Office Administrator

Carol Zaiatz

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday,

and Friday (Tuesday—Off)

9:15 a.m.— 4:00 p.m.

978-448-2091

unioncc@uccgroton.org

Junior and Senior Choir: Edie Tompkins

Cherub Choir: Bonnie Marchesani

Handbell Choir: Cheryl Townsend

Church Officers

Moderator: Leslie Row

Treasurer: Kelli Hnath

Clerk: Erica Davenport

Collector: Phil Pratt

Auditor: Drew Davenport

Deacons of the Month

Cathy Keese/Tom Wickham

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 Pastor 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 Fridays.

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. You can use one of the "temporary" blank name tags in the basket on the table until yours is ready.

Committee Chairs

Buildings & Grounds:

Greg Balligan

Christian Education:

Chris Clinton

Church Council Member-at-Large:

Lori McElroy

Diaconate:

Jeff Kubick

Missions & Outreach:

Marvin Caldwell

Music:

Stefanie Lempp

Pastor Parish Relations:

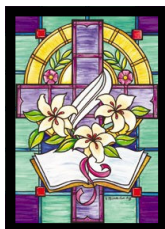
Halsey Platt

Stewardship & Finance:

Steve Boczenowski

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P.O. Box 233
Groton, MA 01450

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May

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May Highlights

May 1

Communion
Sunday School Theme: Breakfast on the Beach
Family Ministry Scavenger Hunt (see p. 4)

Sunday, May 8 (Mother's Day)

Baptism
Cub Scouts receive *God & Family* Badge
Chocolate Covered Strawberries (see p. 5)

Saturday, May 14

Car Wash Fundraiser (see p. 5)

Sunday, May 22—Music Appreciation

Cherub, Junior, Senior and Handbell Choirs in Worship
New Members Class (see p. 5)
New England Ringers Handbell Concert at 4:00 p.m. (see p. 7)