



THE UNION SPIRIT

UNION CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
105 PLEASANT STREET
EAST BRIDGEWATER, MA 02333

JULY 2016

From the Pastor...

As we were winding down the program year in late June, I had a reflective conversation with Meg on how it has gone. I was saying how good I feel about how things have gone. It has not been easy. We've had more than our share of deaths and grave illnesses. My view is that painful times for individuals and families have brought our church closer together. We talk about being one in the Lord. I believe Union Church is just that. As your Pastor, that makes me feel pleased and proud. I think we now are better prepared for whatever adversity is in store for us.

We've also had many wonderful things this program year. The Confirmation class was excellent. The program was top notch and the confirmands are a great group of young people. Their presence blesses our congregation more than they know. The Youth Ministry also had a wonderful year. Albeit small in the number of kids, it was another successful year for the Sunday school.

I had two new initiatives that I started last fall, Tuesday afternoon Bible study and 'sermon talk backs.' I'm considering both successful and will continue them in the Fall. A group has already formed and met to start a 'church vitality' program. That will include a church discussion of Open and Affirming. I've been asked about doing an adult Confirmation program. I think I'll do that in the Fall as well.

We hope to see you at the Wednesday evening (7 PM) worship sessions in the Vestry. They start on July 6. The first cookout/worship will be at the parsonage on July 13; starting at 6 PM. If you are going to be away for the summer, I remind you that God does not take the summer off. I encourage you to find a house of worship wherever you are and worship there.

Enjoy the summer and don't forget the sunblock.

God Bless,
Pastor Jim

WORSHIP SERVICE NEWS



- ❖ **First Wednesday service will be on July 6th**
- ❖ **Last Wednesday Service will be August 31st**
- ❖ **First Sunday Service will be on September 11th**

Summer Office Hours

Monday – 9:00 am – 12:00 pm
Wednesday – 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Trustees

The Trustees are happy to report that the front steps to the church have been repaired and a solar-powered security light has been installed in the back of the church. Also, the Trustees are once again planning to wash and wax the floor in the vestry during the summer.

Trustee on Duty are:

July – Dick Gleason
August – Gary Martin



Women's Ministry

Please complete the following survey to help us determine the kind of programs that should be offered in a Women's Ministry group. Hard copies of the survey can be picked up in the mailbox. (not sure if there is a women's ministry mailbox).

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LK5D2KC>

MISSIONS



A Message from Lu....

Missions have decided to revitalize our church's commitment to Heifer Project International. First, "Heifer" as it is called, is a charity organization working to end hunger and poverty around the world by providing livestock and training. Started in 1944 by Daniel West using the "teach a man to fish" philosophy, it continues to empower families here in the US and abroad. (Please visit www.heifer.org for more information.)

The element that appeals to us is the family and community approach to giving. With that spirit in mind, we are asking all our members to help us donate a cow or a pig or a gaggle of geese or whatever we choose as a congregation. Our target date for this donation is Thanksgiving. So, what do we do???

Well, it is up to you as an individual or a family. How about a closet cleanout before school starts again and having a yard sale for Heifer? Or, try a cold drink stand if you live in a really "hot spot". Or, do small jobs for hire in the neighborhood (yard work, errands, babysitting).

There are many great stories from others who have found creative ways to raise money and awareness for Heifer. (One nine year old boy gave cello concerts.) We know what a creative congregation we have at Union Church, so go wild. Also, there is no shame in writing a check or donating the "loose change" jar to this cause.

Our intent is to try to create a community of learning how interdependent we all are in God's world. Also, we want our younger members to see how small acts and contributions on their part have a large impact on people whose lives are very different from their own.

Please study the Heifer website. It is full of statistics, history, great stories and inspiration – too much for us to share here.

If you are not inclined to support Heifer, may we please recommend that you find some other mission project for you family to share in locally or globally. Let us know what imaginative things are happening in your home.

We will talk more about this in September. Until then, enjoy the sun and fun of summer – God's gift to us "hardy New Englanders!"



Music



A huge thank you to all the members of the choir, and to our choir director/organist, who have been so dedicated to the Music Program here at Union Church. You have done a wonderful job of providing inspirational music week after week. Your contributions to Worship are very much appreciated.

Without Music Life Would Be

There will be special music on each Wednesday evening service. We still have a few openings, so if you are willing to help out, please see Parnel.

The Music Committee will be sponsoring a Dining for a Cause evening in the fall. Stay tuned for the location and date.

Christian Education



Sunday school has come to end for the summer but we will keep God in our hearts! Thank you to all of the Sunday school teacher, those ladies who work tirelessly under the stairs to build our children's character and love for God. Thank you to Heather Doucette, Mary Beth Poulin, Jennifer Repeta, and Jacquie Rose! We hope to see all of the families at the church picnics on July 13th and August 10th at 6 pm. This is the perfect way to encourage your son or daughter to attend church. We will start Sunday school again on September 11, 2016.

Blessings from Christian Education
Emily Oliver

Church Vitality

We began our discussion at our annual meeting introducing the topic of church vitality and what we may do to ensure that our church remains strong and active for years to come. We had an enlightening meeting in the spring with Rev. Don Remick who explained a program the Massachusetts Conference of the UCC has launched to help churches in this process of dealing with a changing demographic and a church that needs to engage and serve multiple diverse generations.

Our church leadership has met and we are launching a comprehensive vitality program that will be made up of three core areas.

1. We will pursue the [UCC Church's Alive program: A journey of discernment](#). This program can run several months and covers understanding where we are and where we came from. It includes an internal and external assessment of what we value and how we are viewed. The program then goes into a very introspective phase of exploring and answering the question why our church exists. Don Remick referred to a great [Ted Talk](#) from Simon Sinek describing the Golden Circle that explains the importance of defining the why. The next phase is that of alignment - focusing our efforts on what is most important and defining our path followed by an adjustment phase to tune the model.

You can expect several opportunities to engage in this program. While there is a core team, we will also need a prayer team to support the program. We will have surveys and have meetings focused on each phase of the program.

2. On June 12th, Pastor Jim preached on what it means to be a Welcoming Church. The sermon could not have occurred on a more relevant day as our nation came to grips with the deadliest mass shooting by a single gunman, a terrorist attack on a gay nightclub that was the deadliest attack since the September 11th attack.

As discussed at our annual meeting, the UCC has a designation of Open & Affirming for congregations that go through a process to adopt it which includes an explicitly welcoming mission statement and have a congregational vote on it.

Our congregation went through a modified process over 10 years ago right after Massachusetts legalized same gender marriage which resulted in a vote by the diaconate that authorized the pastor, at their discretion, just as with any marriage, the ability to marry same gender couples in our church.

Much has changed in 10 years and many of our current members did not go through the process. You can expect sessions in the Fall to learn more about the Open & Affirming process and to have the dialogue about what it means to us. It is time for our congregation to declare where we stand and to share that we are a welcoming and safe church that will not tolerate hate on any minority group.

3. Finally, Engagement will be an area of focus. We will look to opportunities to reach out to our community and young families. We are a member of the East Bridgewater Business Association and recently participated in their Scavenger Hunt and will participate in their Fall Fair. We continue to engage the community at the Mainspring House and the Food Pantry. We are looking for more ideas to engage our community.

We hope that you will engage in one or more of the areas of the program. Our core team will be meeting over the summer preparing for the fall sessions. Please feel free to reach out if you have questions or preferences in areas of the program you would like to participate in.

Sincerely,
Jamie Mitcheson
Moderator



Thank you to everyone who continues to support the East Bridgewater Food Pantry! Hours of volunteer time makes this pantry possible. We are still looking for some help in the month of August. We need one more person to volunteer on August 10th and 2 more people on August 27th. The small amount of time spent volunteering in this project has a huge impact on those people needing our help!

The food pantry is always looking for donations but particularly needs shaving cream and paper goods like paper towels and toilet paper. Thank you!



YOGA

By Rachelle Croteau

When: Thursdays from 8:30 am – 9:45 am
Where: in the vestry
Who: Ages 13 and up
How much: \$5 per class or donation
Kids under 18 are free

All proceeds go to Workcamp
Bring your own Yoga mat, towel or blanket

Celebrating July Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 2 - Meg Clapp's Birthday
- 2 - Laurie Mitcheson's Birthday
- 8 - Judy Cicierega's Birthday
- 8 - Chance Martin's Birthday
- 12 - Pat Martin's Birthday
- 13 - Savannah Hoyt's Birthday
- 14 - Al Ciri's Birthday
- 15 - Jeff Godfrey's Birthday
- 24 - Emily Oliver's Birthday
- 30 - Katie Martin's Birthday



If you would like to add and of your family members birthdays and anniversaries to the newsletter just email the office (office@uccofeb.org) or put a note in Laurie's mailbox and provide these dates for your family.
Thank you!!

Any changes or additions to this calendar
 please see Laurie.
 You can email her at office@uccofeb.org ,
 call 508-378-2874 or leave a note in her mailbox.
 Thank you!

July 2016

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3 AA – 6:00 pm	4 Office Closed – Happy 4th	5	6 Office Hours 9-12 pm Food Pantry Delivery - 10 am Worship – 7 pm AA – 7 pm	7 Yoga – 8:30 am	8	9
10 Workcamp Mtg – at the Mitcheson’s house AA – 6:00 pm Venturing – 7:00 pm	11 Office Hours 9-12 pm Workman Room Rental – 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm	12 Trustee Mtg – 7:15 pm	13 Office Hours 9-12 pm Food Pantry – 12:30 – 2:00 pm Worship & Picnic – 6 pm AA – 7 pm Finance Mtg – after worship	14 Yoga – 8:30 am Fair Crafting – 6 pm Boy Scout Committee Mtg – 7 pm	15	16
17 AA – 6:00 pm	18 Office Hours 9-12 pm	19	20 Office Hours 9-12 pm Worship – 7 pm AA – 7 pm	21 Yoga – 8:30 am	22	23
24 AA – 6:00 pm Workcamp – Woonsocket, RI	25 Office Hours 9-12 pm Workcamp – Woonsocket, RI	26 Workcamp – Woonsocket, RI	27 Office Hours 9-12 pm MainSpring Meal Worship – 7 pm AA – 7 pm Workcamp – Woonsocket, RI	28 Yoga – 8:30 am Workcamp – Woonsocket, RI	29 Workcamp – Woonsocket, RI	30 Food Pantry 9:30 – 11 am Workcamp – Woonsocket, RI

