

Abby's
sabbatical
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Time to sign up
for the women's
retreat!
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Healing
everywhere
you look
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Concern In Action

Jan. 2009 The monthly newsletter of Union Congregational Church newsletter@churchbythepark.org

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55 Rhoades Ave., Walpole, MA

Worship 10:30 a.m.
handicap accessible

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Tuesday-Friday 8 a.m.-2:15 p.m.

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Annual meeting

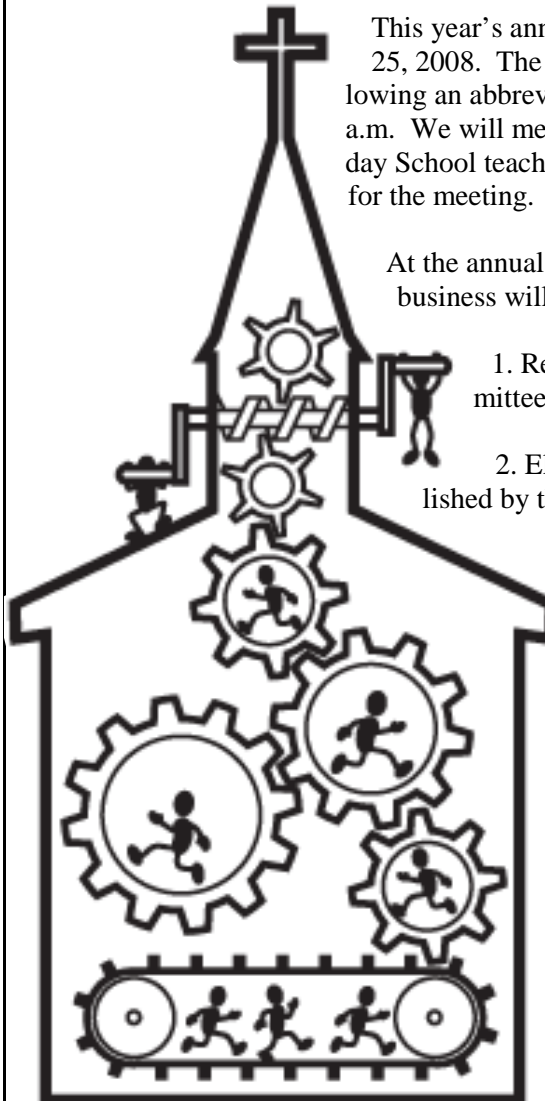
Your church, your meeting

This year's annual meeting will be held on Sunday, Jan. 25, 2008. The meeting will take place immediately following an abbreviated worship service beginning at 10:30 a.m. We will meet while still in the Sanctuary and the Sunday School teachers will return following Sunday School for the meeting. Child care and activities will be provided.

At the annual meeting the following items of business will be conducted.

1. Review and acceptance or rejection of committee reports required by Bylaws.
2. Election of personnel to positions established by the Bylaws.
3. Review and acceptance or rejection of a church financial budget.
4. Other business which has been properly processed in accordance with The Bylaws. Other items of business may be brought before the congregation by members of the congregation.

Mark your calendars now and plan on joining us for what promises to be a day of fellowship, accomplishment and knowledge of how we need to go forward as a church family. You must be a church member to vote, but all are invited to attend.



Healing in a myriad of ways

With every New Year comes the hope of something better. This year in particular many of us are yearning for positive change.

While systemic change may come through regulations, financial incentives and the like, few of us have control over these economic mechanisms

We can't fix the world, but we can work on healing ourselves, or more accurately, we can develop our relationship with our God whose love heals us.

At the recent annual Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ in Worcester, I attended a workshop on "Healing as a Faith Practice", led by the Rev. Dr. Dirkje F. Legerstee.

As the Rev. Dr. Dirkje says, "We become partners with God's spirit as instrument of grace, but it is the Holy One, the Living One, the Risen Christ, and the Holy Spirit, who is the source of all healing energy."

Here are some of the highlights of the experience:

The first step in healing is to increase our own capacity to notice what is going on around us: this means keeping our senses wide open to life; taking the time to observe the beauty of snow lining a branch, the antics of squirrels, the grace of birds in flight, the joys of our families and the companionship of pets. Grace can break out anywhere: it's available at all times to those who are open to wonder and are open to receive it.

Healing can and does come to us through many sources. The church is one place where God has promised that the Holy Spirit will dwell. So attending worship opens us up to the potential of healing. Sometimes there are moments in church when we are *moved*: healing may come through

being in the gathered community, through listening to scripture, preaching, music, communion, the specific words in a pastoral prayer or a look on a young acolyte's face as he or she lights a candle.

Healing is not the same as "curing." This distinction is sometimes difficult to grasp, because, naturally, we so yearn for quick cures for most of what ails us. In our congregation, our many requests for prayers illustrate our inclination to go to God with our petitions for health for those we love: we want cures for our loved



ones and for ourselves, especially when we are confronted with a sorrow or loss so enormous that it seems to threaten our capacity to enjoy our lives. As a chaplain in the hospital and as a pastor I have seen families confront the inevitable death of a beloved member, yet a new grace orders the experience so that love deepens, sustaining relationships and connections, creating within the experience of shared grief a greater capacity to appreciate the goodness of life.

If healing is needed from experiences of war, violence, sexual abuse hate crimes, or other traumas, specialized and confidential support from therapists can help create a safe space,

and the church community can help you recover from wounding experiences. While pastors are not therapists, sharing sorrows with your pastors in confidential conversations can create new opportunities for the Holy Spirit to enter and reframe the experiences

Rituals of healing are important, which is why the church liturgy includes confession, and why the church year includes services of healing. These opportunities to name what needs healing can be powerful experiences: many of us have experienced this power in our Lenten services when we have given our wounds and frustrations over to God by nailing them to the cross.

As the flower comes from the bulb, so does God desire goodness and meaning to come from our own experiences of life. There are many spiritual practices to open up this channel of connection, fasting, walking a labyrinth, Lectio Divina, meditation, hospitality, and of course, prayer. If you desire healing in your life, you might ask the Spirit to lead you on the journey this year, beginning with this prayer from the Book of Common Prayer:

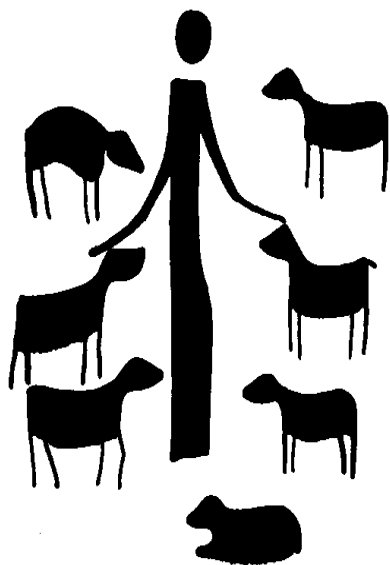
O God, the source of all health; so fill my heart with faith in your love, that with calm expectancy, I may make room for your power to possess me, and gracefully accept your healing though Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Rev. Judy Swahnberg
revjudy@mac.com

Our church family



JOYS

Our church family loves babies. Its a fact — just watch faces light up when someone brings a baby to worship. In March we will have a new baby boy join our family. Cheryl Greens daughter Nichole is waiting patiently for his arrival. Nichole needs “everything” from onsies to a crib. Can you help? If you can offer anything call Nicole at 508-668-2538. We will welcome him with loving arms (If Jen Wagner doesn't get to him first!)

CONDOLENCES

Our sympathies, thoughts and prayers are with Barbara and Peter Carroll on the death of Barbara's aunt, Gertrude West Revoir, who passed away at the age of 100.

Our sympathies, thoughts and prayers are with John Humphrey, who just recently lost his older brother, Bob.

Outdoors

Think camping

Save the dates now; make your reservations in Feb.

This August's camping trip will be our church's seventh annual at Nickerson State Park on Cape Cod.. Watch for more details. Save the dates: Aug. 28 through 30. (Though some people come a day or more early.) Reservations are accepted starting exactly six months in advance.

Our Father...

Hear our prayers, Lord

Please pray for these members of our extended church family:

Peter Carroll, Penny Murdock, Peggy Cain, Peter Nixon's mother Louise, Jeff DiNicola's father Dan, David Senatore's father Andrew, Susan Challis' brother Charles Lawry, “Smitty”(Monica Smith's husband), Abby Henrich's “Uncle Jake”, Donald Simpson (Becky Nolan's dad), Ken Myers' sister Shirley, Judy Hamilton's mother Henrietta, Donna Gearty's mother, Mary Jane Lucas, Kate Richer's sister Sarah, her husband Tim and new baby, Lucy, Kim Talbott's uncle George DuBois. and Mary Dugdale's niece Corey Dugdale, Leila Joseffer's grandmother Olga Accola. Please pray too for Genie Newton, Fran Scott, Vida Mudgett and Betty Anne Wissman.

Please pray for friends of the congregation:



Leila Joseffer's colleague Barbara Cook, Kristin Syrek's friend Amy's father, Marge Rawson Vignoni (Podgie's friend), Joe Mahoney's friend Kevin, and cousin Kerri

O'Brien, Sherryl Rudolph (friend of Cheryl Cain), Sr. Anne Carabino (friend of Melissa Hubbard), Laura (friend of Anne Cimone), Helen (friend of Cindy Hanifin), the Arcieri family (friends of Kristin Mirliani), Anne Cimon's friend Laura Wahlberg, Carolyn (friend of Lauren Durso), and for Matthew, who has mitochondrial disease.

Each month, we at Union Church lift up the names of friends and colleagues who are experiencing illness, grief or other challenges. The monthly CIA lists those whose continuing needs are pressing and long term.

Please update with specific information on the well-being of those we pray for, or with additions or deletions to this list, by calling or emailing Rev. Judy Swahnberg (revjudy@mac.com) or Lois in the office – 508.668.1355.

Newsletter items go in the mailslot by the chapel or to newsletter@churchbythepark.org

DEADLINE: THE 20TH OF EACH MONTH

2008 poinsettia dedications

Given by:

Abby Henrich & Jon Paul Sydnor
Carol & Ken Sandahl

Given by:

Grace Earl

Abby Henrich & Jon Paul Sydnor
Ben, Emerson & Noah Kerns
Lisa LaDew, Bill Morris & Family
Podgie Weissent

Given by:

The Earl Family

The Farris Family

Anne Fisher & Lisa Gervish
Cathy & Doug Gustafson
Helen & Dick Glencross
Judy Hamilton, Dennis & Adam Riegel
Abby Henrich
Leila Joseffer
Laurie Kerns
Mary Ellen & James Kresel
Al Miller
The Family of Dennis Murdock
Phyllis & Peter Nixon
The Nolan Family
Alexis Paul
Greg Paul
Alice Pilling

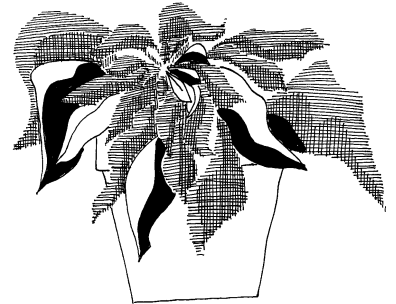
Judy Rummell
Carol & Ken Sandahl
Fran & Al Scott
Judy Swahnberg & Carl Novotny
Lester Tarbell
Mona Tighe & Betsy Higgins
Martha & Horace Thayer
Mary & John Thayer
Lynne & Bill Wassel
Paul Williams

To the Glory of:

The Incarnate Christ
The Celebration of the Birth of Christ

In Honor of:

The Miraculous Voice of Paul Williams
The Most Supportive, Devoted Husband Ever!
Karen Boover, A Very Special Friend
Alice Kiesling's Friendship
Janet and Victoria
Grandma Helen Glencross
Family & Loved Ones
My Family



In Memory of:

Helen Ammidown, Grace Coyne,
Grandpa Mony, G.G. Pa-Pa Earl,
Marguerite (Clarke) Earl, Nena Clarke,
Linda Earl, and Brian Walker
Hazel Tarbell, Gus Farris, David Farris,
George Farris, Linda Farris and Bill Richard
Roy Fisher
Raymond Gustafson and Edgar & Theresa Lacroix
Loved Ones
All Parents & Grandparents
Baba
Margaret & Mitchell Joseffer and Robert Accola
My Mom, Betsy Kendall
Our Parents, Veronica & James Kresel and Marjorie & Louis Coburn
June
Dennis Murdock
Ralph & Evelyn Cramer and George Nixon
Helen Simpson
Simon & Helen Flynn
James & Jessie Paul and Ed Higgins Sr.
My Daughter, Susan Christiansen and
My Parents, Ernest & Cora Coleman
My Parents, Peg & George Rummell and Margo Rung
Our Parents
Our Parents & Grandparents
Louise and Loved Ones
Hazel
Our Father and Mother, Hubert & Ann White
Our Parents, Horace & Ruth Thayer and John & Christine Clarke
John Langley
E. Curtis Domina and Sotir & Sophie Wassel
Kay Williams

Abby's sabbatical

Pastor grateful for time to reflect, relax

Is she really going on sabbatical?

Oh, yes I am! Do you remember that contract I signed seven years ago? Well in it, you generously granted me a three-month sabbatical after seven years of service. The first Sunday of advent marked the beginning of my eighth year at Union. This just doesn't seem possible to me.

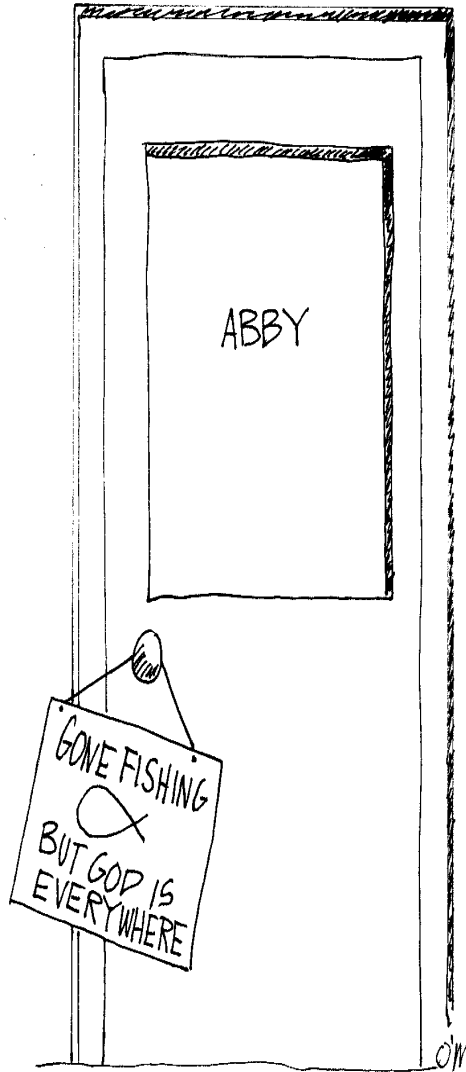
If I were without children I might consider taking three months off in a row or traveling or somehow coming up with some plan to stay (free of charge) with all the people I know who live in wonderful places. That said, this is not a reality. Instead, we have two wonderful boys whose lives will con-

tinue as normal even though I will be on sabbatical.

In addition, they love our church. Hence, figuring out my sabbatical has been a bit tricky.

So here is the rough plan: I will take a month sabbatical first and see how it goes. I will be on sabbatical starting the Monday after annual meeting for one full month.

My plan is to accomplish very little and do absolutely no church work. This is hard, because the truth is that there is much I could do *and want to do* for the church, but in order to truly rest and get some distance from my vocation, I can't come to worship and I can't visit folks. (My boys however,



may miss church so much that they may make appearances with adopted Sunday families.)

My goal is to be a mom: to read in Josiah and Isaac's classroom, to

bake cookies, to go for walks, to make dinner without feeling rushed, to enjoy my boys.

My second goal is to worship passively and let God's Holy Spirit come and rest

with me for a while by going to other places of worship on Sunday.

So what will happen at the church? Some things just won't get done. And that's OK. Things won't fall apart because a few emails weren't returned. Any pastoral emergencies will be handled by Judy. That said, please do not overload Judy with work. While I am on sabbatical she cannot become a full-time pastor. And lastly, we have already made arrangements for a guest preacher to come and lead

worship for three Sundays.

I'm looking forward to these weeks away from the demands of the church. In no way does this reflect my commitment to, nor my love of, Union Congregational Church. In fact, the opposite is true; I love my vocation and I love this church. But being a pastor can be exhausting and lately, within the last year, I have felt the wear and tear of the pastorate more acutely. For these reasons, I am deeply grateful for the time you have offered me.

Grace and Peace,

The Rev. Abigail Henrich

Unioncongregationalchurch@msn.com

BOOK

The founding fathers were neither evangelical Christians nor wholly secular, despite the raging custody battle partisans have waged over them, writes Steven Walman in [Founding Faith: Providence, Politics and the Birth of Religious Freedom in America](#). The journalist and CEO of Beliefnet.com traces the complex and sometimes surprising history of early America's deliberation over the role of religion. Random House.

FACT

From 1963 to 2000, the inflation-adjusted average wage of college-educated men increased by 37%. During the same period, the average wage of men who dropped out of high school fell more than 23%.

**PRAYER BEFORE
A MEAL**

O loving God, you nourish
and sustain us.
We thank you for the gift of food
Which nourishes life.
You continue to be with us
In so many wonderful ways,
Nourishing and sustaining us always
With food that gives life to
all the aspects of our being.
All us to grow in sensitivity
To the plight of those who
are hungry,
Alone, frightened, shut out,
uninvited, unwelcome.
Amen.

-Carole Garibaldi Rodgers

Union Congregational Church Family Covenant

The Diaconate, with approval of Cabinet, will ask our church to accept this covenant at annual meeting. We ask that all committees read this at each meeting and that it be read each year at annual meeting and occasionally be incorporated into worship.

We, the congregation of Union Congregational Church of East Walpole, recognizing that we are a church family and wish to be treated as family, make these promises, to God and to each other, to govern our actions in the future.

We promise God:

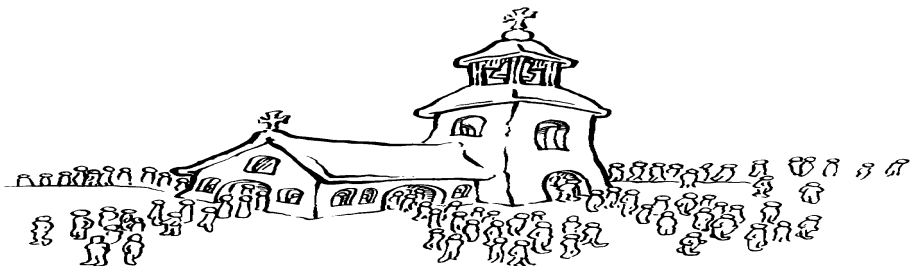
That we will ask for God's wisdom and guidance through our prayers
That we will accept failings, in others and ourselves
That we will follow the principles of Christianity in our daily life

We promise each other:

That we will listen, be respectful and be nice to one another
That we will speak only for ourselves
That we will focus on the issue, not the person
That we will both forgive and ask for forgiveness

We promise to work with others:

Without judgment or gossip
By expecting the best of everyone and helping everyone to do their best
By taking responsibility for our own actions
By reaching beyond our own comfort zone.



Green corner

What kind of impact do you really have on the environment? American Public Media's Consumer Consequences (sustainability.publicradio.org/consumerconsequences) will tell you. Using information you supply about your daily habits, this interactive game adapts its background visuals, from removing trees and adding factories to showing a clearer sky and more wildlife, to represent the ecological impact of your lifestyle. It also determines how many Earths would be needed to sustain the world's current 6.6 billion population if we all lived like you. For those who might need more than one Earth, the game shows you how you score in each area so you can pinpoint habits that need improvement. This is great for all ages — do it as a family!

January 2009

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
*HHH is Herbert Harrison Hall at Union Congregational Church				1	2	3
4 9:15 a.m. Junior Chr; 10:30 a.m. Worship with communion; 11:30 a.m. Deacon's Meeting - Parlor; 7:30 p.m. OWL	5	6	7 7-9 p.m. AA Mtg. - Youth Room; 7:30 p.m. Choir	8 7-8 p.m. Cub Scouts Pack Mtg. - HHH	9	10
11 9:15 a.m. Junior Choir; 10:30 a.m. Worship	12	13 7:30 p.m. Cabinet Mtg. - Parlor	14 10 a.m.-Noon Cabin Fever - Youth Room; 7-9 p.m. AA Mtg. - Youth Room; 7:30 p.m. Choir	15 4-6 p.m. Cub Scouts Den Mtg. - Youth & Preschool Rooms; 7:30 p.m. Outreach - Parlor	16	17 St. Paul's - Team B
18 9:15 a.m. Junior Choir; 9:15 a.m. Questioning Faithful Adult Ed - Parlor; 10:30 a.m. Worship	19 7:30 p.m. Prudential Mtg. - Parlor	20	21 7-9 p.m. AA Mtg. - Youth Room; 7:30 p.m. Choir	22	23	24
25 9:15 a.m. Junior Chr; 9:15 a.m. Questioning Faithful - Adult Ed - Parlor; 10:30 a.m. Worship and Annual Meeting; 7:30 p.m. OWL	26	27	28 7-9 p.m. AA Mtg. - Youth Room; 7:30 p.m. Choir	29 4-6 p.m. Cub Scouts Den Mtg. - Youth & Preschool Rooms	30	31

The summer mission crew will continue to collect recyclable cans and bottles as long as the box is outside the door by Herbert Harrison Hall. Thanks for all your help with and other fundraisers.

Union Congregational Church
55 Rhoades Avenue
East Walpole, MA 02032-1128



Getaway



A new event for women

Join us at Rolling Ridge (www.rollingridge.org) in North Andover on March 27-28 for a women's retreat. If you are interested, please let the church office know. We promise this will be a wonderful renewing and relaxing time. It will cost less than \$100 per person. Financial aid is available.

When: March 27-28

Where: Rolling Ridge Retreat Center in Andover

More info: contact Judy or Abby

Deadline: March 1

Worship

November altar flowers

Nov. 2

In celebration of
Charlie's 5th birthday
by Mommy, Daddy &
Lainey Grant

Nov. 9

In celebration of
Josiah's 5th
birthday by
Abby & Jon Paul

Nov. 16

In celebration of
Adam's 18th birthday
by his parents,
Judy & Dennis

Nov. 23

In celebration of
our wedding by
Jacqui & Don Ruhl

Nov. 30

In memory of my
brother, Joseph Gearty
by Peter Gearty, Sr. &
his children

Want to purchase the altar or piano flowers? For a birthday, remembrance or other occasion? Flowers are \$40. (Or, if you'd like to donate flowers without the flowers, and instead give the money to the Deacon's Fund, this is now an option. Your dedication for the donation will still be printed in the bulletin, listed as something like "in lieu of altar flowers, the NAME HERE family, made a donation today to the Deacon's Fund.") Call church office manager Lois Thomas at (508) 668-1355.