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# Concern In Action

October 2009

The monthly newsletter of Union Congregational Church

newsletter@churchbythepark.org

Union Congregational Church  
55 Rhoades Ave., Walpole, MA

Worship 10:30 a.m.  
handicap accessible

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

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## Fellowship

# Game on

Mark your calendars for game night:  
Oct. 17



Game night is here again. Dominos. Scrabble. Cribbage. And much more. Kids and adults welcome. Plenty of competition to go around. Come join us in Herbert Harrison Hall on Saturday, Oct. 17 at 6:30 p.m. Bring your game(s) and a dessert or snack, if you like. We'll provide drinks.

# An old prayer revisited

The words of Jesus, written in the New Testament in Matthew 6: 9-13 as the Lord's Prayer, or the "Our Father," is most likely the best-known Christian prayer and a central piece of the Christian worship service. The congregation is invited to pray with words such as these: *Let us pray the prayer Jesus taught us.* In response, the congregation recites the prayer. The unison cadence is regular, and reassuring, like a heartbeat. The blending of all our hearts and voices in worship lifting this prayer up can be powerful and holy, it seems to me.

Yet the familiarity can also work against the impact of the prayer, if we slip into "automatic pilot" with our mouths moving but our hearts disconnected.

Let's connect our hearts, and pray the prayer Jesus taught us!

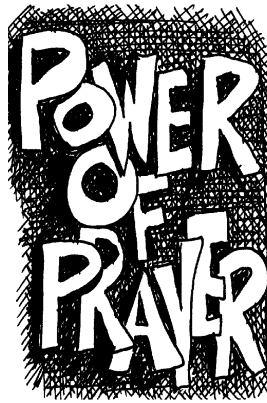
*Our father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.*

The prayer invites us into a unique dialogue. That beginning, "Our father," is the most amazing claim! Jesus addresses God, using the diction of a child to a parent rather than a formal and ritualized invocation asking for attention and the presence of the Most High God of the Universe. In just two words, Jesus reorders the relationship of humanity with God. His focus is on relationship: both with the Creator, and with who ever speaks these words. By using the

word "our," we humans are included in an amazing new constellation of family.

*Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.* Jesus is praying for the gift of a new day, a new kind of power over, a reign of goodness and mercy, where every act of humanity is also an act within the framework of the will of God.

I often think about this request for daily bread. We need food every day, it is necessary to our well-being, and



God knows this. Daily bread echoes the miracle of the daily manna, necessary to sustain the Israelites in the wilderness, and of course also the bread used in the sacrament of the Eucharist. Our everyday hunger means we turn, empty, everyday, to the God who fills with all good things.

Forgiveness too is a daily necessity of life, as we humans are quick to take offense. Jesus frames the mutuality of forgiveness: we are forgiven by God as we forgive others. We cannot separate and hoard our grievances and grudges against others from our own list of transgressions requiring forgiveness. Debts, sins or tres-

passes...whatever word sits in your heart, the command is not to fail to do what is right. We need to take every opportunity to love others.

Temptation not to love is always there: and Jesus asks for the strength of God to prevail so that we make good choices in our lives, the choices that God wills.

And Jesus asks us to be delivered from evil. I think about this sentence long and hard, on Good Friday and every time I read about the twisted and often gruesome realities of evil in this world, of which there are far too many examples.

As a pastor, I pray for the congregation: Deliver us from every form of evil, from drunk drivers, from mutating cells and viruses, from corrupt politicians and greed, from dementias that rob us of our stories and from poverty that robs us of our dignity and our choices. Deliver us from aimlessness, depression, loneliness and addiction, abuse and from neglect, violence and all horrors.

This hope of deliverance is a hope in the goodness of God. So it feels right to end in the tradition of the doxology — *for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen!*

Blessings,

Handwritten signature of Judy Swahnberg.

The Rev. Judy Swahnberg  
revjudy@mac.com

## What do the pastors do when they're not leading worship?

**I**n brief, between the three of us, we teach adult education, teach confirmation and OWL, attend youth group events, lead children's chapel, plan worship, write sermons, pray, attend committee meetings and offer guidance to each committee, support the church's paid staff, perform funerals and weddings, visit the sick and shut-in, counsel, serve on denominational boards, attend UCC meetings, read for professional growth, communicate with the community at large, envision for the church's future, and do a number of administrative duties, like write for the newsletter, answer church correspondence and write letters of recommendation. But these generalities may not give you a sense of exactly what each of our work weeks are like.

When I was a teenager, it dawned on me that I had no idea what my father did. I knew that he owned a company and that he worked from 6 to 6, but I really had no idea what occupied him all day. When I would visit him in his office there were always papers on his desk and he was often on the telephone. In contrast to my mother who taught high school art and had obvious results — her students' art work, my father, for all I knew, performed no clear task with any obvious outcome. This in many ways was an accurate assessment of my father's work — he rarely had any defined tasks. Rather he was struggling to keep a business a float by keeping track of the current market, managing sales teams, crunching numbers, anticipating the future, and caring for and motivating employees. But still, these tasks were not obvious to me as a teenager.

In the same way, the job of a pastor, besides Sunday worship, has no defined tasks with clear outcomes. Instead, we rely on the Holy Spirit for "results." We minister to people in desperate need or in deeply difficult times in their lives, not knowing if we have been any comfort or help, but hoping through God's grace that we have offered some glimpse of God's love. We welcome people into our office and home who have no other place to turn for support. We sort through thousands of resources and journals in an attempt to keep our finger on the pulse of the current religious world and trends. We invest our time and energy into our relationship with youth and the education of adults. None of these tasks have clear results. Maybe one day one of our youth may return and tell us he is considering seminary or that she is an active deacon in her church. We will know then that perhaps we made an impact, but of course it is still not clear.

The business of loving people to God and spreading the good news of Jesus Christ is not a clearly defined job with steps to success, and is not always ease, but *it is* deeply fulfilling.

### QUOTE

"We cannot prove our love of God except by loving our fellow humans. Jesus Christi loved God precisely by loving his fellow men and women."

—Anthony Wilhelm in *"Christ Among Us"*

### SCRIPTURE

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God — not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life."

—*Ephesians 2: 8-10*

### FACT

87% of people in the U.S. who go to church do so because someone invites them. Make sure to invite your friends to our church!

### BOOK

If you are intrigued by American religious history you might love the National Book Award winner, "The Most Famous Man in America: A Biography of Henry Ward Beecher" by Debby Applegate. Beecher was a 19th-century Congregationalist minister whose church in Brooklyn attracted tens of thousands of worshipers each week. He was instrumental in the development of Liberal Protestantism, helped throw the dour shackles of Calvinism off of the Congregational tradition, retained hundreds of churches within the Congregationalist fold when Unitarianism was attracting many converts, and was ultimately undone by a sex scandal. This is an old story of celebrity, inflated egos, media obsession and religious passion. Much of the action plays out in New England.

### MORE BOOKS

There is a new lending library at church. And it's not for kids. Outside the church office there is a small book shelf filled with each of our pastor's top six religious book picks. Come see if you can figure out just who picked which books (we think Jon Paul's are obvious). And after you've browsed, please feel free to borrow a book. There is something for everyone.

## Did you know?

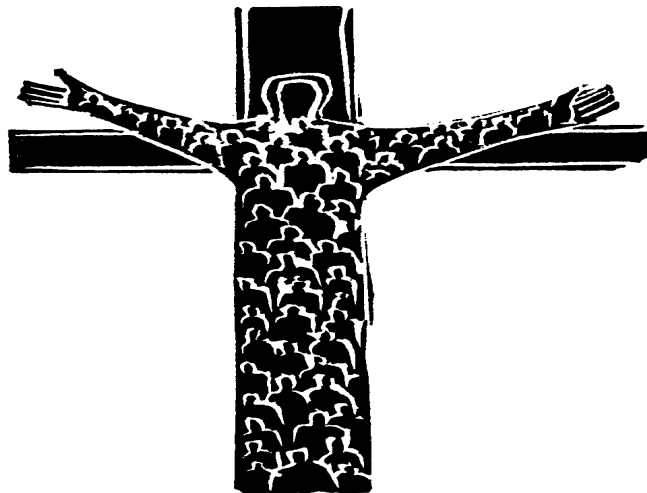
How our church business gets done

### *Eighth in a series.*

The **Assistant Treasurers** shall provide appropriate assistance to the treasurer when requested, is responsible for receiving, securing, and depositing moneys and providing appropriate records to the treasurer, financial administrator, and memorial gifts committee.

The **Auditors** shall provide an annual audit of the financial and accounting system of the church and provide any other audits when requested by the Prudential Committee.

## Our father



Please pray for Dick and Genie Newton, Fran Scott, Vida Mudgett and Betty Anne Wissman.

*Please pray for these members of our extended church family:*

Marilyn May's son Ricky, David Cain's mother Peggy, Cheryl Cain's mother Janet Hurley, Jeff DiNicola's father Dan, Cheryl Greene's daughter Nicole, David Senatore's father Andrew, Susan Challis' brother Charles Lawry, Abby Henrich's "Uncle Jake", Donald Simpson (Becky Nolan's dad,) Ken Myers' sister Shirley, Judy Hamilton's mother Henrietta and cousin Marnie Haggard, Donna Gearty's mother, Mary Jane Lucas, Mary Dugdale's niece Corey Dugdale, Grace Earl's nephew Jaimey and her extended family, Carol Preibis' grandniece Eily.

*Please pray for friends of the congregation:*

Leila Joseffer's colleagues Betty Rothman and Barbara Cook, Kristin Syrek's friend Amy's father, Marge Rawson Vignoni and Byrdie Jackson (Podgie's friends,) Joe Mahoney's cousin Kerri O'Brien, Sherryl Rudolph (friend of Cheryl Cain,) Sr. Anne Carabino (friend of Melissa Hubbard,) Laura Wahlberg (friend of Anne Cimone,) Helen and Greg (friends of Cindy Hanifin,) the Arcieri family (friends of Kristin Mirliani,) Carolyn and Jay (friends 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 us with 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.

## Our church family

### CONDOLENCES

Our congregations's condolences and prayers of hope and new life to Kistra and Ryan Damaso on the loss of his grandmother, Filomena Rotonodo, to David Welch on the loss of his good friend, Mike Fitzgerald and to Ken, Nathan and Rebecca Myers on the death of Ken's father, Norris Myers.

### BAPTISM

The Sacrament of Baptism was celebrated for Sophia Michelle Wassel on Sept. 20, 2009. Sophia was born on Sept. 18, 2008. Her parents are Matt and Rachel Wassel.

### COLLEGE ADDRESSES

Matt Feeley  
#2192 Tulane University  
31 McAlister Dr  
New Orleans, LA 70118

Jimmy Hanifin  
300 Sunset Terrace  
Troy, NY 02180

Chris Lucia  
Bentley University  
Mailbox #2125  
175 Forest St  
Waltham, MA 02452

Adam Riegel  
2211 Harvard  
Yard Mail Center  
Cambridge, MA 02138

### COLLEGE

**From Abby**

# Bring on another

**H**opefully a few days after you read this letter I will be home with a **LARGE** healthy baby and past the miserable end of pregnancy. Maybe even as you read this letter now (since I am writing it in September) I will have already had the baby. Although this is unlikely, as Jon Paul like to remind me and everyone else; I carry my babies for a long time (41+ weeks.)

Whatever the case, I will be at home for three months once this long hoped for child arrives. During my pregnancy with Josiah, I expected I would receive a three month maternity leave, and I did. But what I didn't understand, as a soon to be mother, was that rarely are mothers granted three-month maternity leaves in our country and if they are, they are rarely fully paid leaves. This news shocked me. How could anyone expect a mother to come back after only six weeks off? How could anyone expect a mother to fully establish her nursing pattern, let alone be coherent at work after six weeks of sleepless nights?

Thankfully, I never had to discover the answers to any of these questions. Although returning to work with a three-month-old has never been easy for me, it is something that has been manageable. Usually (please let this be the case again!)



my babies were only waking me up once a night when I returned to work. And both my boys were such good eaters that they were big and healthy and fully established; continuing to nurse them after I returned to work wasn't difficult.

For my two previous maternity leaves, I am deeply grateful. In the same way, I am grateful now, looking forward to the three months off you have granted me to nurture our long awaited child. Although I have always felt a pull between the two vocations God has called me to — the pastorate and motherhood — that pull has been an inward reality, not external. I have felt completely supported as a pastor-mom by this church family.

So thank you for my three months

off. Thank you for supporting my dual call. And not to worry, everything will run smoothly while I am gone. In fact, I think this maternity leave will be a breeze. We've done it two times before. And this time we have Judy! But please, do not over work Judy while I am on leave. Remember she is only part-time!

Now, bring on the pink if it's a girl!

Grace and Peace,

The Rev. Abigail Henrich

Unioncongregationalchurch@msn.com

## The green corner

- **12 percent** — the small fraction of electronic waste that actually gets recycled. Want to change that? Start with your old TV: [takebackmytv.com](http://takebackmytv.com).
- **About 84 percent** of all our trash can be recycled, yet the typical family recycles only **20 to 30 percent** of its trash

# Help prevent kid pick-up mayhem

Our church has a class dismissal policy to prevent our littlest children from wandering alone in our big building.

Church School classes run to 11:45 a.m.. If worship extends beyond 11:45 a.m., church school will remain in session until worship is finished.

Children in Nursery through grade 3 will be dismissed to parents, the student's older sibling or another named adult

(you will need to leave a permission slip with the teacher) only. Students in grades 4 and up can walk to Coffee Hour by themselves.

Please wait in the hallway for your child to be brought to the door; while waiting, try to refrain from peeking in the window, as it is disruptive to the class. Please allow your child to stay for the entire church school class, to minimize classroom.

## Volunteer training date moved

The next safe church training class is rescheduled from after worship on Oct. 4 to after worship on Sunday, Oct. 25 in the chapel. Already 27 church school volunteers, youth leaders and staff have completed the mandatory safe church training class.

This class lasts about one hour and includes all safe church procedures already in place and a few new ones. It prepares all volunteers and staff in children/youth supervisory roles for the upcoming CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) in conjunction with the Massachusetts Criminal History Systems check process.

We are committed to creating a safe and healthy environment in which young people can learn about and experience God's love. In order to ensure this, we will provide supervision for all activities and programs involving children and youth, and employ practices that provide for the safety of children, youth, and those who care for them.

No need to sign up for class — just show up!

We will be checking our volunteer roster to make sure that all church school volunteers have attended one training session. We look forward to this training, and hope you do, too. Questions?

Contact Kathy Hinds,  
Superintendent of Church School  
508-740-0430  
uccchurchlady@hotmail.com



## A lot of kids — help

123 Students ... 8 Classrooms ... 45 volunteers (so far.) ...  
6 staff ... 1 Superintendent

How can you help? *I'm glad you asked.*

- Hallway helpers do a variety of small tasks during church school, for just a few Sundays a year.
- Substitute teachers pitch in for an occasional class or a short-term assignment.
- Teachers or Youth Leaders (Grades 10-12) lead class for one 12/13 week term, taking turns actually teaching and assisting teaching the class.

We still have openings in all three categories — please pitch in and help out. You'll find it's one of the most rewarding experiences you've had in church.

Please call, e-mail, or see me at church to sign up/and learn more about these fabulous opportunities.

Kathy Hinds, Superintendent of Church School  
508-740-0430  
uccchurchlady@hotmail.com

## Bible brainteaser — the answers from one member

Can you find the names of 25 books of the Bible in this paragraph? This is **a most remarkable** puzzle. Someone found it in the seat pocket on a flight from Los Angeles to Honolulu, **keeping** himself occupied for hours. One man from Illinois worked on this while fishing in his **john** boat. Roy Clark studies it while playing his **banjo**. **Elaine** Victs mentioned it once in her column. One woman **judges** the **job** to be so involving, **she brews** a cup of tea to help calm her nerves. **There** will be some names that are really easy to spot. That's **fact**. Some people will soon find themselves in a **jam**, especially since the book names are not necessarily capitalized. The **truth** is,



from answers we get, we are forced to admit **it usually** takes a minister or scholar to see some of the **m at the worst**. Something in our **genes is** responsible for the difficulties we have. **Those** able to find all of them will hear great **lamentations** from those who have to be shown. One **revelation** may help, books like **Timothy** and **Samuel** may occur without their **numbers**. And punctuation or spaces in the middle are **normal**. **A chipper** attitude will help you **compete**. Remember, there are 25 books of the bible **lurking** somewhere in this paragraph!

Thanks for playing, Bill Morris.

### Poverty

## Provide a treat to the world's poorest children

On Halloween Night, we all have the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of countless children. The little orange UNICEF collection box has been carried door-to-door by countless children over the years to raise funds.

UNICEF, established in 1946 by the

United Nations to meet the emergency needs of children in post-war Europe and China, stands for the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund. In 1950, its mandate was broadened to address the long-term needs of children and women in developing countries everywhere.

If you are planning on going trick-or-treating this Oct. 31, please remember to bring your UNICEF box along with you. Don't be shy about using it. Most grownups are happy to give. Your efforts might even help save a life.

As you prepare for Halloween Evening,

it might be helpful if you kept the following in mind:

2¢ will provide eye care to help prevent blindness in a newborn baby

\$1 will supply 40 children with clean drinking water for a day

\$3 will provide a mosquito net to help

prevent malaria

\$5 will provide 10 children with school supplies

\$6 will vaccinate 40 children against polio

Imagine how you would feel if your children were gravely sick or hungry and you couldn't afford the remedy.

**I asked [Senator Kennedy], "Where does this rabid concern about poverty come from?" And he looked at me like I was from Mars. And he said, "Have you never read the New Testament?"**

**—Tom Oliphant, who covered the late Ted Kennedy's career for four decades at the Boston Globe (NewsHour on PBS, August 26)**

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



# October 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 9:15 a.m. Jr. Choir & Questioning the Faithful class; 10:30 a.m. worship; 7:30 p.m. confirmation class	5	6	7 7 p.m. art class 7 p.m. AA meeting 7:30 p.m. choir	8 7 p.m. Cub Scouts — Herbert Harrison Hall	9	10
11 9:15 a.m. Jr. Choir & Questioning the Faithful class; 10:30 a.m. worship	12	13 Cabinet 7:30 p.m. in the parlor	14 7 p.m. art class 7 p.m. AA meeting 7:30 p.m. choir	15 7:30 p.m. Outreach Committee meeting	16	17 St. Paul's Table (soup kitchen) in Brockton — call Leila J. or Jen W. if you want to help; GAME NIGHT — HHH
18 9:15 a.m. Jr. Choir & Questioning the Faithful class; 10:30 a.m. worship	19	20 Your CIA (church newsletter you're reading now) deadline	21 7 p.m. art class 7 p.m. AA meeting 7:30 p.m. choir	22 3:45 p.m.. Cub Scouts in youth and Sunday School classrooms	23 Confirmation retreat overnight	24 Day II of confirmation retreat
25 9:15 a.m. Jr. Choir & Questioning the Faithful class; church school volunteer training after church; 10:30 a.m. worship	26	27	28 7 p.m. art class 7 p.m. AA meeting 7:30 p.m. choir	29 7:30 p.m. Prudential meeting	30	31