

Pastor's Letter



Dear Folks,

On Ash Wednesday we gathered in the sanctuary to begin our Lenten journey with the traditional imposition of ashes. The congregation was asked to see the ashes as the result of our failing to follow/act out God's vision and, as a symbol of our crumbling spiritual lives when we disregard Jesus' directives to love one another as He loves us. Upon reading Isaiah 58 the congregation was also encouraged to think of the ashes, these symbols of humility before God, as the building material for healthier relationships with God and one another. Utilizing Christ's spirit mixed with the ashes, we took on the mortar of faith that would help us rebuild as we made our way toward the Cross and, Easter morning.

If you did not receive ashes this year, but wish to work toward rebuilding in Jesus' love, I invite you to read and reflect upon the challenging words offered up by the prophet Isaiah. May that which was broken be healed. May you be known as those who can fix anything, restore old ruins, rebuild and renovate, make the community livable again, with God's help.

Aloha,
Todd

Isaiah 58

Your Prayers Won't Get Off the Ground

1-3 "Shout! A full-throated shout! Hold nothing back—a trumpet-blast shout! Tell my people what's wrong with their lives, face my family Jacob with their sins! They're busy, busy, busy at worship, and love studying all about me. To all appearances they're a nation of right-living people—law-abiding, God-honoring. They ask me, 'What's the right thing to do?' and love having me on their side. But they also complain, 'Why do we fast and you don't look our way? Why do we humble ourselves and you don't even notice?' 3-5" Well, here's why: "The bottom line on your 'fast days' is profit. You drive your employees much too hard. You fast, but at the same time you bicker and fight. You fast, but you swing a mean fist. The kind of fasting you do won't get your prayers off the ground. Do you think

this is the kind of fast day I'm after: a day to show off humility? To put on a pious long face and parade around solemnly in black? Do you call that fasting, a fast day that I, God, would like? 6-9" This is the kind of fast day I'm after: to break the chains of injustice, get rid of exploitation in the workplace, free the oppressed, cancel debts. What I'm interested in seeing you do is: sharing your food with the hungry, inviting the homeless poor into your homes, putting clothes on the shivering ill-clad, being available to your own families. Do this and the lights will turn on, and your lives will turn around at once. Your righteousness will pave your way. The God of glory will secure your passage. Then when you pray, God will answer. You'll call out for help and I'll say, 'Here I am.'

A Full Life in the Emptiest of Places

9-12" If you get rid of unfair practices, quit blaming victims, quit gossiping about other people's sins, If you are generous with the hungry and start giving yourselves to the down-and-out, Your lives will begin to glow in the darkness, your shadowed lives will be bathed in sunlight. I will always show you where to go. I'll give you a full life in the emptiest of places—firm muscles, strong bones. You'll be like a well-watered garden, a gurgling spring that never runs dry. You'll use the old rubble of past lives to build anew, rebuild the foundations from out of your past. You'll be known as those who can fix anything, restore old ruins, rebuild and renovate, make the community livable again.

13-14" If you watch your step on the Sabbath and don't use my holy day for personal advantage, If you treat the Sabbath as a day of joy, God's holy day as a celebration, If you honor it by refusing 'business as usual,' making money, running here and there—Then you'll be free to enjoy God! Oh, I'll make you ride high and soar above it all. I'll make you feast on the inheritance of your ancestor Jacob." Yes! God says so.

(The Message Translation)



Walk for Multiple Sclerosis

Linda Gumlaw and Laurie Smith are walking in two different walks to help fight multiple sclerosis. Contact them if you would like to make a pledge or join them on their journey!
Laurie - Springfield - April 28th
Linda - Boston - April 29th
Thanks!



Relay for Life - BUCC's Angels

A church group is being formed to walk in the *Relay for Life* coming to Belchertown High School on June 22 & 23. If you are interested in participating in this worthy cause, see Laurie Smith.



Prayer Bearer Workshop

There will be a workshop on Sunday, March 25th following our worship service for all people interested in learning to be a Prayer Bearer. It will be held in the chapel and will take about 1/2 an hour. The sign-up sheet is located in the narthex of the church. Please support this very important ministry in our church!

Youth Group to Sponsor Game Night

The Parish House will be filled with the sounds of laughter and strategizing on Friday, March 9th (6-9pm) as the Youth Group offers us a much needed Game Night. Board games, card games and more will be available to all that attend. Refreshments will also be available (for a small fee, proceeds to go toward future youth group projects). So come on down and get to know your pew partners a whole lot better. Game night is for everyone! Let's play!



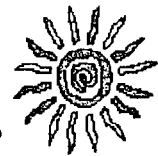
Potluck Breakfast

Communion Sunday Potluck Breakfasts continue on the first Sunday of each month. We will gather again on April 1st. The breakfast begins at 8 a.m. but drop-ins are welcome anytime. Ideas for dishes to bring include breakfast casseroles, fruit, bagels, juice, kid friendly foods, etc. Donations of paper products are also needed. See Audrey Miller for more information and plan to join us on the first Sunday of each month for great food and fellowship!



Potluck Dinner & Program

On March 17th we will host the *Interfaith Walk for Climate Rescue* (www.climatewalk.org). The walkers will arrive for dinner (provided by us!) by 6 pm and we will be treated to worship and a program that describes the work of the *Religious Witness for the Earth* at 7pm. Guest speaker David Arfa (an environmental educator and storyteller) will lead us.



A sign up sheet for the dinner and program is located in the Narthex of the church. Please sign up or call the church office to let us know you'll be stepping up to the plate on this timely program. All are welcome to join the walk at any time over their nine-day journey!



MACUCC President

to Speak during Worship

The Rev. Jim Antal (Conference Minister and President) will co-lead worship on Sunday, March 18. Jim will offer the sermon for the day, and continue the conversation begun at the potluck dinner concerning climate rescue. Please be sure to welcome Jim and all of the walkers who will join us in worship on the 18th.

UNITED CHURCH NEWS

The Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ produces a wealth of FREE resources for leaders and friends of our churches. Subscribe to any of the email newsletters currently offered by the Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ, by visiting their website at www.macucc.org. Also available is *The United Church News* which is a bimonthly newspaper available FREE to everyone in the United Church of Christ! It includes sections produced by both the national and Massachusetts Conference settings of the church and is THE source for in-depth news as well as opinion pieces, letters to the editor and more. It is a great way for everyone to strengthen his or her connection to the wider church. Individuals can also subscribe to United Church News by calling 1-800-363-0575.

UCC Summer Camps

The UCC offers a wide variety of summer camps for all ages. Themes include: buddy camp, horseback riding, performing arts, "extreme" weeks, day camp, single parent camp, and adult getaway weeks are offered, plus many more! Read all about them by visiting www.grotonwood.org or www.oceanwood.org, or call them at 978-448-5763 or pick up a brochure from one of the bulletin boards in the Parish House.

Women Gather for Dinner

Each month the women of the church gather together for food and conversation at Hawley's Restaurant at 5 PM on the second Thursday of each month. See Audrey Miller for more information.



Home Department

The first meeting of the year for the Home Department will be held on March 13th at 1 PM at the home of Jane Gabbie. Plans for the year will be made, dessert will be served and all are asked to bring items for CWS health kits.



The Home Department and CWS Health Kits
The Home Department recently sent 33 Health Kits to Church World Service. Thanks to everyone who contributed!

This is an ongoing collection and all donations can be left in the basket in the narthex. See Jane Gabbie with any questions.

Thanks for your support of this very important ministry.

The items needed are:

Hand towels

Toothbrushes

Band-Aids

Combs

Metal nail files or nail clipper

Bars of soap

Tubes of toothpaste

Wash cloths



A Special Thank You

Dear Fellow Church Members,

I just wanted to thank you for the very thoughtful Valentine's Day package! It made my day! ☺

And, this is also a very much overdue "thank you" for the Christmas package!

Thanks again!

Katie Crutchfield



One Great Hour of Sharing

How many times have we heard of needs or natural disasters close to home; or in far off countries and wished we could do more to help? Well, the UCC's *One Great Hour of Sharing* is our wider churches annual collection, which makes a huge impact around the world on these very issues. The *One Great Hour of Sharing* date is March 18th this year. Special envelopes can be found in your annual giving envelope box and extra envelopes will also be available on March 18th. Fliers will be posted in early March to remind and encourage you to give whatever you can afford to this important ministry. Since 1949 churches across North America have been giving to the annual OGHs offering, expressing God's love to our neighbors far and wide - not just after the major disasters that saturate the media, but also to people affected by chronic disasters that repeat themselves each and every day such as chronic hunger and extreme poverty. The Missions Committee is providing a sheet of daily calendar suggestions, which you can attach to your home calendar. These suggestions are creative and thought provoking; and, only ask you to put aside coins highlighting one particular difficulty each day. You can find these calendar suggestions on the table located in the Narthex. We suggest you take one home. It will add deep meaning and connectedness to your giving. We hope you and your family enjoy your involvement in *One Great Hour of Sharing* this year.

The Missions Committee



**Meetings & Events
this Month:**



- Sunday 4th Potluck Breakfast, 8:00 AM
reckless prayer group after
worship
Flower Committee meeting
following worship
Choir Rehearsal - 7 PM
- Monday 5th - Parish Representatives
meet - 7 PM
- Tuesday 6th - Board of Christian
Education 6:30 PM
Fundraising Committee 7
PM
- Friday 9th Family Game Night
6-9 PM
- Saturday 10th - Board of Buildings &
Grounds Work Day (all
welcome to lend a hand!)
- Sunday 11th - Daylight Savings Time
Begins
- Please set your clocks ahead one hour
so that you get to worship for 9:30am.*
- Monday 12th - Deacons meet at
Jane Gabbie's home - 7PM
- Tuesday 13 - Home Department,
Jane Gabbie's house-1 PM
- Thursday 15th - Food Distribution
4-7 PM
- Saturday 17th - Interfaith Walk for
Climate Rescue, Potluck &
Program 6 PM
- Sunday 18th - Breakfast with
Walkers 8:00 AM
Conference Minister &
President, Rev. Jim Antal in
our pulpit
- Friday 30th - Storyteller, Davis
Bates, 6 PM - Parish House



Holy Week

- April 1, Palm Sunday and Choir Concert
April 5, Maundy Thursday Service at
6:30pm
April 6, Good Friday service at 6:30pm
April 8, Easter Sunday
6am at Quabbin Tower
9:30am in Sanctuary



PLYWOOD PETE SEZ:
The Board of Deacons has decided that we will only
have one service of worship on Sunday mornings,
beginning February 4, 2007.
The worship will be blended (some traditional and
some contemporary bits).
Sunday School will meet during worship.
Communion Sunday will remain the first Sunday of
each month.

Join our Prayer Line

All are welcome to participate in the Church Prayer Line. If you have any concerns or celebrations you would like to share please call Jane Gabbie at 323-7832 Also, if you would like to participate by being a part of the line, please let Jane know. And now, prayers can be shared by email too. Send your concerns and celebrations to prayers@belchertownucc.org



Snow Cancellations

In case of severe weather, please tune to ABC Channel 40 or check WGGW.com for our listing. If worship is cancelled, we will be listed.



Monthly Clean Up

- March - Parish Outreach
April - Finance Board

Choir

The Senior Choir now rehearses on Sunday evenings at 7 PM. Please consider making a *joyful noise* by joining the choir!



Family Fun!

The Board of Christian Education is sponsoring Storyteller, Davis Bates in our chapel at 6 PM Friday March 30th. Contact any member of the Board for more details. Don't miss this great night of fun!

SUPPORT GROUP FOR WOMEN

Is there someone giving you a hard time?

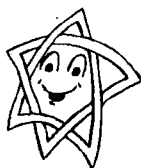
Is your relationship stressful or hurtful?

Do you find yourself needing a place to go to talk – to get advice – to get resources?

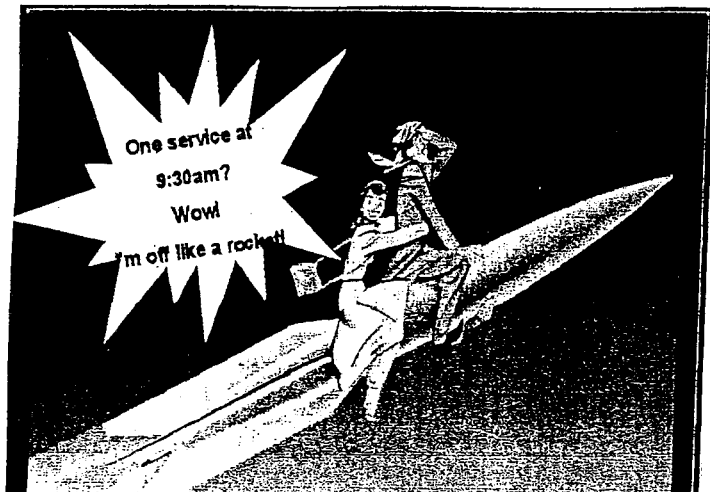
Please contact the church office (Monday-Thursday 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.) for further information on dates and meeting times at 413-323-7442. Free childcare is provided.

Journey to a Hate Free Millennium

A Film Presentation Congregational Church of Needham, UCC Sunday, March 18 7-9 pm Fellowship Hall Discussion and Refreshments Wheelchair Accessible A story of compassion and hope, this gripping documentary tells the stories of the vicious murder of Matthew Shepard, the horrendous dragging death of James Byrd, Jr., and the Columbine High School shootings, told through interviews with the families the victims. The film also features interviews with a reformed neo-Nazi, as well as students, teachers, celebrities and others moved by these events. This film encourages dialogue and action to stop acts of violence and hate. Come be part of the solution. Songs by Elton John and Olivia Newton-John Sponsored by the Open and Affirming (ONA) Committee Congregational Church of Needham, UCC as part of Needham's "No Place for Hate" Campaign



"I slept, and I dreamt that life was joy.
I awoke and I found that life was service.
I acted, and behold, service was joy!"



Events in Our Community and Beyond

The Belchertown Cultural Council will be offering the following FREE FILM EVENT: *The Great Directors Series*. Come view great films and stay for a discussion. The series will be held on the First and Third Fridays of the Month in the chapel of our Parish House at 7pm. This month's director featured will be Robert Altman on Friday, March 2nd, with a showing of *The Player* and on Friday the 16th, with *Gosford Park*. This is a free event but, donations will be accepted.



Church Office Hours

Monday-Thursday

9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Church Phone - 413-323-7442

Please leave a message.

Church e-mail address -

belchertownucc@yahoo.com

Web site - www.belchertown-ucc.org

Submit information for the weekly bulletin by Wednesday at 10 AM.

Thank you.



Church Newsletter

Articles for *The Grapevine*, are due on the 24th of each month. Leave your announcement with the church office via e-mail, answering machine or call between 9 a.m. & 12 p.m. 413-323-7442

Thank you.

The Grapevine is published monthly by Belchertown UCC

Staff: Rev. Todd Farnsworth, Pastor,

Dan Monte Music Director,

Terry Hall, Office



FLOWER COMMITTEE
BELCHERTOWN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Revised 2007 Monthly Schedule



To Provide Altar Flowers for the Sunday of Your Choice
Please Call the Committee Person Listed for that Month

February 18, 25	Dorothy Carmody	323-7559
March 4, 11, 18, 25	Martha Farnsworth	323-8525
April 1, -, 15, 22, 29	Doris Dickinson	323-7052
April 8- Easter plants:	Norma Chartier	323-6857

Single or Double Arrangements Are Acceptable

To guarantee your preferred date, especially for a memorial, please call Committee person at least one month ahead with complete info so she can notify the Church Secretary. You will be expected to pick up your flowers after Church that Sunday. If you cannot, please notify the Committee person before that Sunday.

If you would enjoy bringing your flowers to a shut-in, call Mary Hamilton, 323-0603, for the name & address of someone who is ill or would welcome a little cheer.

We will welcome your suggestions!

More Than Just Ramps

Opening our hearts and our church doors to people with disabilities

A workshop for UCC congregation members, leaders & clergy about welcoming and accommodation children and adults with all types of disabilities.

At this workshop participants will have an opportunity to:

- *Hear the Gospel call to inclusion
- *Re-examine our ideas about people with disabilities and how our attitudes and actions create barriers
- *Learn how others have included people with disabilities in their churches.
- *Learn how to assess how your church is doing regarding inclusion and what steps you could be taking
- *Get information about tools and resources

Sunday March 11, 2-4 PM Hampshire Association, 1st Congregational Church of Hadley

Please pre-register by calling Betsy Krogh, 413-549-2846 or the Western Area office,
413-589-7034



March 2007



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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Please note the change - We now offer one worship service on Sunday morning at 9:30 AM

Looking Ahead.... April 1 - Palm Sunday, Potluck breakfast & Choir Concert

April 5 - Maundy Thursday Service 6:30 PM

April 6 - Good Friday Service 6:30 PM Easter Sunrise at Quabbin Tower 6 AM

Easter Service in Sanctuary 9:30 AM

				1	2	3
4 8 AM Potluck Breakfast 9:30 AM Communion, Worship, Sunday school 7 PM Choir	5 7 PM Parish Representatives	6 Board Christian Ed. 6:30 PM Fundraising Committee 7 PM	7	8 5 PM Women to dine at Hawley's Restaurant	9 6 - 9 PM Family Game Night	10 8 AM Buildings & Grounds Work Day
11 Daylight Savings Time Begins 9:30 AM Worship, Sunday school & Youth Group	12 7 PM Deacons Meet	13 1 PM Home Department	14	15 4 - 7 PM Food Distribution	16 <i>Remember - <u>This Sunday</u> - One Great Hour of Sharing Collection</i>	17  6 PM Potluck dinner with Interfaith Walk for Climate Rescue. 7 PM Program
18 8 AM Breakfast with walkers 9:30 AM Worship with Rev. Jim Antal Sunday school & Y.G. 7 PM - Choir	19	20	21 	22	23	24 Grapevine Deadline 
25 9:30 AM Worship, Sunday school & Youth Group Prayer Bearer Workshop - 10:45 AM	26	27	28	29	30 6 PM - Storyteller, Davis Bates	31

Some thing's never go out of style. Join us each week for worship at our new time, 9:30am



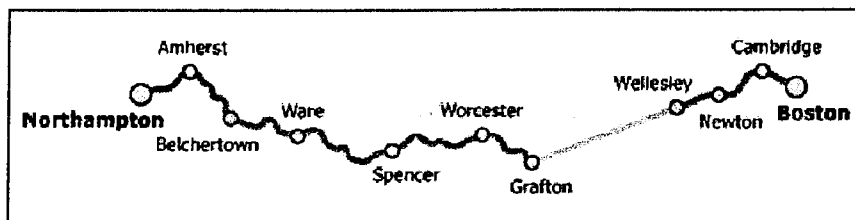
Invites you to join thousands of others in

The Interfaith Walk for Climate Rescue

From Northampton to Boston

This is a moral call for swift, bold, and comprehensive political action to address global warming.

WALK FOR AN HOUR, A DAY, OR MULTIPLE DAYS.



*Friday, March 16, 8 miles Northampton to Amherst;
Saturday, March 17, 10 miles from Amherst to Belchertown;
Sunday, March 18, 10 miles from Belchertown to Ware.*

The send-off service for walkers will be held at Noon on March 16 at the Unitarian Society in Northampton. Speakers will include Bill McKibben, Professor Michael Klare, the Mayor of Northampton, and leaders of many different faiths.

Walk activities will culminate in Boston with an interfaith service and rally. To send our political leaders a loud and clear message, maximum attendance and participation are essential.

For a complete itinerary and other information and to pre-register go to:

<http://climatewalk.org/>

or contact Denise Frizzell: deniseaf@verizon.net/508-397-4056.

The Western Area Leadership Academy (WALA)
Presents

Sexuality and the Church

Three sessions in Lent focusing on the theology and psychology of sexuality, gender-consciousness, marriage, and their effect on how we do church.

Saturday, March 17, 9:00-3:00 Rev. Leanne Tigert
Writer, Activist, member of Andover-Newton Faculty
A Theology of Sexuality: Pastoral Care in Relation to Marriage, Divorce, Premarital Sex, Infidelity, Infertility, and Abortion

Saturday, March 24 9:00-1:00 Rev. Ann B. Day
Pastor, Past Coordinator of UCC's ONA Program
Sexual Orientation and the Open and Affirming Church

Saturday, March 31 9:00 – 1:00 Rev. Nancy Taylor
Pastor of Old South Church Boston, Past Minister and President of MACUCC
Marriage, Sexuality, and the Church

All Sessions at Easthampton Congregational Church,
United Church of Christ
112 Main Street, Easthampton MA

The Western Area Leadership Academy is endorsed by the Leadership Development Commission, MACUCC; supported by the Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden, and Hampshire Associations of the MACUCC; and is made possible through Our Church's Wider Mission and fellowship dues.



To register, please send this form, along with a check for \$120.00* made payable to:
"Western Area Office, UCC" to:
Western Area Office, UCC
P.O. Box 443, Ludlow, MA 01056

Name: _____
Street Address: _____
City, State, Zip: _____
Email Address: _____
Phone Number: _____

*Scholarships are available. Contact Peter Wells at 413-589-7034 for more information