

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

TODAY COMMUNITY CAROL SING: Parish of the Good Shepherd at 5:00 p.m.

We are invited to join our neighbors across the street for a time of carols and readings.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS: Tuesday, December 24th, 6:00 p.m.

In this intergenerational service, we gather around the manger as we hear the story of Christmas through lessons and carols. We wonder at the good news of God with us in the glow of the candle lit sanctuary and we go out into the night as Joy to the World rings forth.

CHURCH MATTERS – SAVE THE DATES

MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION

Sunday, Jan. 26th immediately following worship, and a preparatory session on **Sunday, Jan. 12th**

The Church Council invites all members of the Union Church community to meet on January 26 for three important items:

1. A briefing from our Communications Committee on a Statement of Purpose, an outward-reaching description of who we are that can be used on our web site and in publicity
2. A vote on adding four words to our Church Covenant (our promise to each other within the church) to update our language with respect to being open to all:

“We, the members of the Union Church in Waban, true to our founding principle of being an inclusive church, covenant together to nourish and to sustain in our common life and practice a fully welcoming and affirming church for all persons. Welcoming all persons who seek to join with us in a commitment to love God and our neighbors, affirming the inclusive love of Jesus, we are open to all, without regard to race, gender, sexual orientation, **gender identity and expression**, nationality, ability or economic circumstance. We invite all to full participation in our worship, membership, leadership and life of this church”.

3. A creative and interactive conversation about our visions for the church so that we may set our priorities for our spring stewardship campaign and budget-setting process the coming year. This session will set the context for the spending plan we will vote to adopt in June.

To prepare for this important meeting, members of the community are invited to engage in conversation and reflection on the importance of being open to all regardless of “gender identity and expression”. We will gather on the stage immediately following worship on Sunday, Jan. 12th.

CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

THANK YOU!! CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

We're so grateful to the children and youth who so beautifully and faithfully led us in worship last Sunday. We give a special thanks for their families; our teachers and lay-leaders (especially Cindy, Rob, Jane and Kathy); our music ministers (Kayla and Daon); high school seniors (Luke and Kat), and others in the UCW community who did so much to make the service such a meaningful one!



EXPLORING OUR FAITH AND HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP!

Next meeting: January 5th – EOF, 5:00-6:30 p.m.; High School Youth Group, 6:30-8:00 p.m.

We'll celebrate the New Year; share great conversation and food; and get ready for our overnight with CityReach!

CITYREACH OVERNIGHT SERVICE TRIP - Collection and RSVPs

Friday - Saturday, January 10th-11th

Donations of travel-sized toiletries, used men's outdoor clothes, blankets, sleeping bags, carrying cases/bags, and new underwear or white socks are VERY MUCH APPRECIATED!

Exploring Our Faith students, and other high-schoolers and adults are invited to join this powerful overnight service trip with our partner, Ecclesia Ministries in downtown Boston. We'll learn from and serve with Ecclesia members who are experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity, share meals, and distribute needed clothing, blankets and hygiene items to guests. If you can contribute any of the items above, we would be so grateful, and will have a collection box in the Crocker Chapel. Please let Pastor Amy (amy@ucw.org) know asap (**by Jan. 5th at the latest**) if you can join us

NICARAGUA BAKE SALE: Sunday, January 12TH

Save the date and start looking through your favorite bake-sale recipes (no peanuts or tree nuts please)! In preparation for our service trip to Nicaragua in February, we hold a bake-sale to raise funds for needed school and other supplies for our partners in San Juan del Sur. We hope you will plan to contribute something delicious, and buy something yummy for yourself. We'll need help baking, preparing the goods for sale on Saturday, and selling. If you can help, please talk to Joannie Kelly or Pastor Amy.

TODAY'S FELLOWSHIP HOUR- ALL ARE WELCOME!

Thank you to the Susan Stevens for laying our table and hosting our fellowship time this morning. If you would like to host a future, after-church Fellowship Hour, please sign up through the Sign-Up Genius webpage. The link can be found on the UCW website at ucw.org and in the Friday e-blast.

MISSION OUTREACH

Homelessness and Housing

This year your Mission Outreach Leadership Team is organizing its work (and coordinating with the other areas of UCW life) around seasonal themes. We also hope to coordinate our seasonal special collections around these themes as well.

Themes are as follows:

Winter – Homelessness and Housing

February 2nd – Common Art Show at the Union Church

March 1st – Public Voices Speakers from City Mission will share their stories

March 8th – Potluck and amazing speaker, *Jospehine Mc Call, author of Penalty for Success*. Her book tells the personal story of her father's lynching and how this was used as a common practice used when African Americans became successful.

Spring – Climate Change (and disaster relief)

For more information about these offerings, please see the Friday e-blast. Or please feel free to reach out to Carol Bascom-Slack, Jaap van Reijendam or Julie Heffernan.

UPDATE FROM CATIE'S CLOSET

Last week Julie (our Catie's Closet coordinator) and Brian Heffernan went over to the Russell School to help Sharon Sodergren restock the shelves. While they were doing that, a teacher came in to get a winter coat, size 7, for a little girl in her class who had come to school without a coat. (As you may remember, the temperature last week was in the low 30s.) Also, there was a cart loaded up with clothes. Julie asked Sharon if they also needed to be shelved or hung, and she said that everything on the cart had been put aside because it was going to one family. --- This is such an important project. Thank you for supporting it!

ADVOCATES FOR RACIAL JUSTICE (ARJ) - A new group at The Union Church

The June travelers to Montgomery, Alabama have formed a new group to promote the work of racial justice in our community and nation. We are calling the group ***Advocates for Racial Justice***.

The mission statement of our group is:

Responding to our call as Christians to see the image of God in all people, and to seek justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God, we pledge to each other and the Union Church congregation to be faithful Advocates for Racial Justice. We will engage our congregation and the larger community in continuing study and conversation about ideology of white supremacy at its root. We want to unmask and oppose the racism that divides the people of God from one another, unfairly empowering some and not others, in our personal relationships, community, state, and nation.

Martin Luther King, Jr., said that "true peace" is "the presence of justice." Bryan Stevenson of the Equal Justice Initiative says, "We must acknowledge the truth about our history before we can heal." This is our main purpose: to seek, understand, and proclaim the truth about our history—specifically, about slavery and white supremacy—so that we can be properly reconciled to one another and prepare the way for true peace, which is the presence of justice.

Advocates for Racial Justice is open to anyone who would like to join us in our work and be on the committee. Please contact [Brita Gill-Austern](mailto:bgillaustern@gmail.com) (bgillaustern@gmail.com), if you are interested.

ADULT EDUCATION, SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND FELLOWSHIP

BOOK GROUP: January 28th, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Our next book is "Evicted" by Matthew Desmond.

"In *Evicted*," Princeton sociologist and MacArthur "Genius" Matthew Desmond follows eight families in Milwaukee as they each struggle to keep a roof over their heads. Hailed as "wrenching and revelatory" (*The Nation*), "vivid and unsettling" (*New York Review of Books*), *Evicted* transforms our understanding of poverty and economic exploitation while providing fresh ideas for solving one of twenty-first-century America's most devastating problems. Its unforgettable scenes of hope and loss remind us of the centrality of home, without which nothing else is possible."

(Amazon review)

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY resumes January 5th at 8:00 a.m. in Pastor Stacy's study.

THE WEEK AHEAD

Sun., Dec. 22	8:30 a.m.	Teacher's Breakfast	The Union Church in Waban: 14 Collins Road, Waban, MA 02468
	9:00 a.m.	Choir Rehearsal	
	10:00 a.m.	Worship	
	5:00 p.m.	Community Carol Sing at Parish of the Good Shepherd	
Mon., Dec. 23	7:00 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal	
Tue., Dec. 24	7:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Service of Lessons and Carols	
Sun., Dec. 29	9:00 a.m.	Choir Rehearsal	
	10:00 a.m.	Worship	

For a complete listing, and details of upcoming events, please visit our website, www.ucw.org

COPY DEADLINE: Material for inclusion in the Friday e-blast newsletter or the Sunday Announcements should be e-mailed to the office at ucw@ucw.org, by 9:00 a.m. on the previous Wednesday morning.

PLEASE NOTE: Pastors Amy and Stacy will be away from December 26th to 28th. If you are in need of pastoral care during this time, please call our Deacon of the Month, Debbie McGovern at 857-498-1812.