



# COMMUNICON

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UNION CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, PETERBOROUGH, NH

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## Report from Search Committee

Your Pastoral Search Committee has been busy compiling a 22-page church profile, writing an ad to attract a new pastor, and creating a colorful digital brochure that gives an overview of our church. We owe a huge thank you to Dan Millbauer for creating an extremely attractive design for that brochure, showing our church and our church family at their best. Thanks also to Dan and to Karen Loudon, Ann Preston, and Irv Richardson for contributing photos for the brochure.

By early February, we expect to have met with Rev. Gary Schulte from the New Hampshire Conference to review all of our materials. That's a major milestone in the process—we are moving forward! Of course, once everything's final, we plan to share the profile, brochure, and ad with the congregation—and quickly move on to the next steps. While the Conference is fielding inquiries about the vacancy and sharing our materials with all those interested candidates, we'll be preparing for the interview process and conducting a practice interview.

As always, we appreciate your prayers and your support as we wend our way through this involved but important process.

—Your Pastoral Search Committee:  
Irv Richardson, Judy DeWitt, Sarah Pope, Holly Sanders, Sharon Smith, and Norm Makechnie (alternate)

## Open and Affirming

Open and Affirming (ONA), is the United Church of Christ's designation for congregations, campus ministries, and other bodies in the UCC which make a public covenant of welcome into their full life and ministry to persons of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expression, affirming the full inclusion of gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender persons (LGBT) in the church's life and ministry.

The red dot/green dot event last September, as well as the Search Committee's recent survey results, tell us that ONA is an issue which many in this congregation support. A group from our church—Holly Sanders, Phyllis Scott, Alex Inglis, Martha Dahl, and Jill Small—have met to discuss ways to begin this process. Alex shared some of our thoughts at our Annual Meeting on January 25. At the meeting the next day, the church council enthusiastically supported our request to form an ad hoc ONA committee. Up to now our work has been mostly fact finding. The five of us attended the New Hampshire Conference ONA gathering in Concord in November. There we met Andy Lang, the executive director of the United Church of Christ's Coalition for LGBT Concerns. Andy will also be a presenter at the NH Conference's Prepare to Serve workshops on Saturday, February 21. At least three of us will be attending.

As a committee, our goal is to begin the process to consider an ONA covenant. Our first task is to create some opportunities for dialogue here at church. We would like to gather right after worship on the **third Sundays** of the next several months. We'll begin on **February 15th** with a presentation and discussion about the so-called “clobber texts.” The clobber texts are a handful of biblical passages sometimes cited as evidence that the Bible condemns LGBT people and their sexuality.

Some of us may feel that our church already accepts LGBT people. Perhaps so; but it is important for our community to know that Union Congregational Church is a place of extravagant welcome and inclusion for all. We so seldom, if ever, openly talk about this issue. It is important that we become intentional and explicit in our welcome. We are grateful to Jill for using inclusive language in worship and in helping us in the diaconate and in our ONA group to be more comfortable in our discussions.

We hope to see many of you on February 15th as we begin a time of study, dialogue, and prayer. As someone said at the gathering in November, ONA is the civil rights issue of today.

# Small TALK

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This is the day of "the big blizzard." It's quite pretty, but it looks better through a window than with a shovel in hand. As I watch the snow, two things play in my mind.

The first is that the snow all looks the same. Of course, it's not. When I see the huge fluffy covering over the lawn and street, it truly is awesome to think that no two flakes out there are alike.

Second, this storm makes me grateful for the warmth that I often take for granted. I'm inside a nice house. The furnace is chugging along and I have a log in the fireplace. It's not just a snowy day; it's a cozy day—for me.

I think of the homeless and many more people, including children, who live in a car, or a tent, or a cardboard box. It's never a cozy day for them, even when the sun is shining.

On the surface, Peterborough is a more upscale community than its Grover's Corners image might suggest. That's not the whole story. No two people in our town are alike, and some of them aren't warm and cozy today.

Once upon a time, there was an oil crisis, and the church I was serving decided to open its doors each week for "Warming Hut Wednesday." It was open to anyone, church member or not. It provided a place to get warm, to read, to play a game, to have a cup of coffee or cocoa and a cookie or two. Most of all, it provided a place to be in community. That creates the unique warmth made real by the glow of the human spirit.

We can, and do, offer that kind of warmth to each other at Union Congregational Church. We can do more. We can widen invitation, broaden hospitality, and extend welcome in truly awesome ways to those in and around our town.

There's no doubt that the snow will subside; indeed the sun is shining now, just above all those big clouds. There's no doubt that we could offer a more expansive welcome to neighbors and friends in our town; indeed, we've already begun.

You'll find out how as you read the rest of the *Communicon*! :

Faithfully,

*Jill*

## Ongoing Prayer Concerns

We know there are many people who feel supported and blessed by our continuing prayers, and we understand how important this ongoing prayer is. Including the list in the *Communicon* will help us all to remember those in need of our prayers, even when we're not in church to see the list in the bulletin. Please help us with this by calling the office **by the 4th Tuesday of the month** to add new names or to remove old names on the list. The Sunday bulletin will continue to have a prayer list for new or immediate prayer concerns.

If you have any questions or concerns about this effort to keep our prayer list current, please speak to Martha Dahl or Alex Inglis.



### **Please keep in your prayers:**

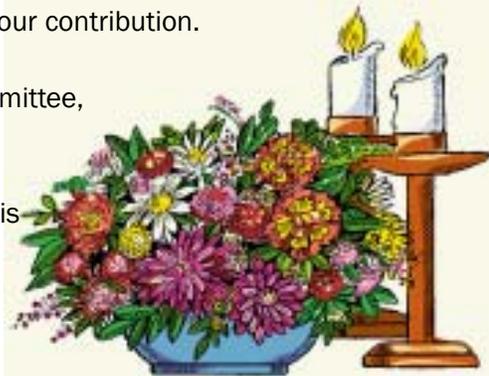
Katherine, friend of Carele Mayer; Larry Mayer; Ruth Comerford, friend of Deb Hanson; Leo Curley, Sarah Holgate's father; Carl and Marilyn Britton; Alfred Whitney; Scott, friend of Dick Freeman; Larry Schongar; Joe Wilson; Mary Ann Fleming's parents; Fred and Ginger Nielson; Jim Suokko; Lorie Snyder; the Pastoral Search Committee; and all in our church community.

*To add new or remove names from this prayer list, please call the church office by the 4th Tuesday of February—the 24th.*

## Altar Flowers Needed

The flower chart hangs in the narthex. Please sign up to provide flowers for our Sunday morning worship services. You may give in memory of loved ones, in celebration of special people or occasions, or just because. A member of the flower committee will call you as a reminder and to ask what you would like printed in the bulletin on your day. Flowers can be ordered from Woodman's (they will deliver) or you may bring in a plant, arrange your own flowers or create an arrangement of any sort to adorn the sanctuary. Thanks in advance for your contribution.

Your flower committee,  
Martha Dahl  
Deb Fredericks  
Kelly Kent-Kiburis  
Luciel Wilson



## Welcoming Bundles Need Your Donations

Mark your calendars! On **February 10th at 7:00 pm** the Women's Fellowship will be assembling Welcoming Bundles for the Midway Boys' and Girls' Shelter. We need donations of the items that go into these bundles. The following list is what is needed:

shampoo	toothbrush
conditioner	dental floss
comb	notebook
brush	pen
roll-on deodorant	journal
bath towel	envelopes
facecloth	socks
toothpaste	

You can leave donations in the box under the Women's Fellowship bulletin board. If you would prefer to give a financial donation, please give it to Judy DeWitt or Margaret McCormack.

Join us on the 10th. I'll look for you!

—Carele Mayer for Steering Committee

***DON'T FORGET to stay for a Special Coffee Hour following the worship service on February 8th. There will be hearty nibbles and some sentimental and fun offerings as we thank Nancy Gorr for her years of service as our Administrative Assistant and wish her Godspeed as she heads into retirement.***

## OFF THE WALDO

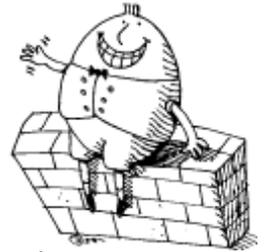
So, what is history all about now—in the middle of our busy lives—as we try simply to live intelligently from day to day? Well, we seem to be in the middle of a big shake-up, don't we? The old categories are breaking down. What seemed to be firm and clear realities are not that any more—for Christians, or for any one.

Christianity: Is it just another religion? Sunday: Is it just another day? Jesus: Is he just another famous person in history? God: Is there a God in heaven any more? Are we Christians just another group among Earth's many groups?

Let's affirm it. All of the old, once-firm categories, for us, are evolving aren't they? And isn't that the way it should be? And isn't that the way it always has been? Change is the only thing that is a firm reality on this planet, isn't it? So, now we say that God is: the Creator of the still expanding universe—not just the little planet Earth. So, now we say that the Bible is the book of our beginnings, not just the every-word-is-true-book for every one.

So, now we say that history is the story of all of Earth's peoples, not just "our" story. So, now we say that no one is safe until ALL of us on Earth are safe. And now we say that no one prospers for long until ALL of us on Earth can prosper. Because . . . it's God's green Earth and not just our green Earth. Because history is His story and not just our story. And, ultimately, we are here to do His will and not ours alone.

And, we've got a long way to go to achieve God's plan for Earth. We won't see the end, will we? But, we may see the way the plan is unfolding and the rules that unfolding follows. And, we may see our lives enriched and blessed when we see and accept what God has in mind to create. So what is life about? It may be as simple as learning what this amazing Creation is all about.



## COMMUNICON

FEBRUARY 2015

Vol. 61 No. 2

Union Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

33 Concord Street

Peterborough, NH 03458

*Interim Minister: The Reverend Jill Small*

Worship Service: 10:00 am

Nursery Care Provided

Church Office: 924-3272

Parsonage: 924-6320

Email: [officeucc@comcast.net](mailto:officeucc@comcast.net)

[www.uccpeterborough.org](http://www.uccpeterborough.org)

*Silent Support Team:*

Janet Brown, Randy Brown,

Carolyn Peacock



I PRAY  
THAT YOU  
MAY... KNOW  
THE LOVE  
OF CHRIST  
THAT  
SURPASSES  
KNOWLEDGE.

EPHESIANS 3:18-19, NRSV