



Vestry News

FEBRUARY 2024



OPEN AND AFFIRMING
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

IN THIS ISSUE

Pastor's Letter	2
Ash Wednesday	
Sunday Worship	3
Lenten Program	
Congregational Meeting	4
Rev. Small	5
FIA	
Veg. Potluck	
Lent Workshop	6
Scholarships	
Music	7
Color of Compromise	8
Prayer Shawl	9
History, Bible Study	
Generosity CBE-Dialogue	10
Birthdays	11
Sit & Sew	
Thank You	



Fabulous photo of our church after a snowfall by Ginny Harris

Annual Congregational Meeting

Kellie is operating the slides as Glynis presents all the ways we are helping our neighbors via the FIA (Faith in Action) Ministry team.

See more information on the meeting and our votes on page 4.



Pastor's Letter

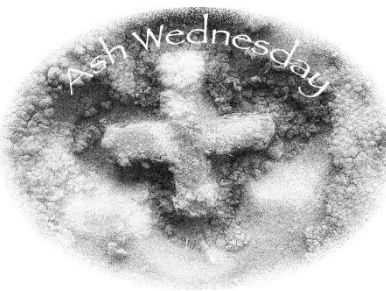
During the season of Lent, we prayerfully and intentionally walk alongside Jesus as he journeys to the cross. At Christmas, we sang songs like angels, listened for miracles like shepherds, visited like magi. The beautiful story of the birth of God's son amazed us. God loves humanity so very much that God became one of us to live and love and laugh.

And yet in our human way, we build powerful systems of oppression and corruption in our government, in our religions, in our patriarchal society. And of course, Jesus gets caught, arrested, beaten, tried in a puppet court, convicted and executed. God's son, God incarnate, God's love is crucified by humans. Lord, have mercy.

And God does. Have mercy. God knows us, loves us, forgives us. Even now. Especially now. And God engages in this extraordinary act of generosity – God raises Jesus from the dead. The risen Christ continues to be present whenever we meet at the table, baptize a child, sing in worship, tell a biblical story.

It's the greatest story ever told. And UCC Boxborough will provide you with all you need to draw closer to God's love as this story is told again. Attend our Ash Wednesday service on February 14 at 7 pm. Throughout Lent, promise to come to worship in the Sanctuary or on Zoom, log on for Bible study, join in at the Wednesday evening agape meal, take time to pray every day. Lent provides a sacred season in which to strengthen your spirit. If you'd like to meet with me for a spiritual check in, I'm available to listen for how the Spirit is moving in your life today. God loves you. God knows you. God blesses you.

Rev. Cindy Maybeck
Bridge Interim Minister
 774-258-0258
 uccbpastor@gmail.com



Ash Wednesday Service

Plan to begin the sacred season of Lent marking the 40 days before Easter by attending our **Ash Wednesday worship service on February 14 at 7:00 pm**. Rev. Maybeck will lead this service of prayer and song along with the imposition of ashes for any who wish to receive them.

February Worship

Every Sunday brings beautiful music, powerful scripture telling, and interesting stories. You don't want to miss a single worship service! Come to church or sign into Zoom online every Sunday at 9:30 am to share extraordinary worship experiences at UCCB. Here is a sneak peak of what is to come this month.

Communion Sunday, February 4
 James 5:13-16
 Pray without Ceasing
 Rev. Maybeck preaching



Sunday, February 11
 Pulpit swap with the Congregational Church in Harvard
 Guest preacher Rev. Sean Witty

Sunday, February 18
 Psalm 23
 My Cup Overflows
 Rev. Maybeck preaching



Sunday, February 25
 John 14:1-7
 Prepared is a Place for You
 Rev. Maybeck preaching

To worship via Zoom:

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88306753408?pwd=VlIgwZUtYl05JeVU2WklHWGtUWExGdz09>

Meeting ID: 883 0675 3408
 Passcode: 7387

Please note: our worship services are streamed live via Zoom and Facebook, and recorded for posting on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChIayswOH7Ta7LYVK-BcAyA>). Facebook offers closed captioning (subtitles) for those who find that helpful.



Special Wednesday Evening Program during Lent

We will join two of our sibling UCC churches on Wednesday evenings during Lent to *Meet at the Table*. Acton Congregational Church, South Acton Congregational Church, and United Church of Christ in Boxborough will share an agape meal of soup and bread, prayer and song, scripture and conversation. Each church's host pastor will lead one or two of the sessions. **This five-week series begins Wednesday, February 21 at 6:30 pm.** This program is in person only. Stay tuned to *Friday Flash* for the location, schedule, and Sign-Up Genius link.

Congregational Meeting

We had a wonderful congregational meeting on Sunday, Jan. 28, where we passed our 2024 budget. We celebrated a number of events from 2023, including saying goodbye to Rev. Cindy Worthington-Berry and welcoming our bridge interim pastor Rev. Cindy Maybeck, the Merrie Christmas Fair, the Adult Mission trip to downeast Maine, and thanking Gloria for five decades of musical leadership with the junior choir!

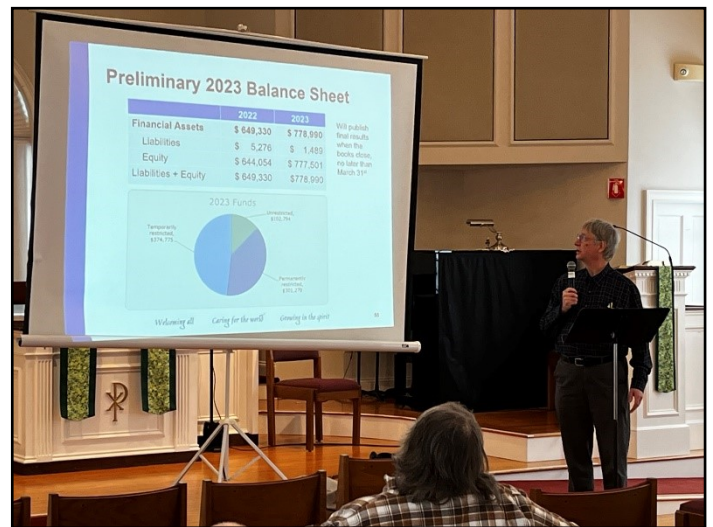
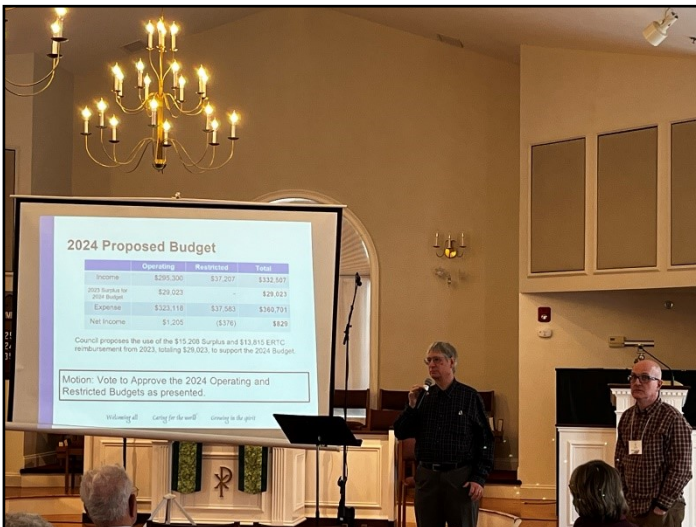
We voted new members onto Council, Finance, Nominating, and Pastor Parish Relations, and gave a hearty thank you to those whose terms are ending. We are living the vision of welcoming all, caring for the world and growing in the spirit!

Members newly elected to governance teams:

Peter Senghas	1 year	Moderator
Mary Pavlik	1 year	Vice Moderator
Tineke Vandegrift	1 year	Clerk
Griet Dehandschutter	3 years	Council
Betsy Waters	3 years	Council
Anne Chandler/Scott Spalding	3 years	Council
Brian Davis	Up to 3 years	Finance Team
Nicolette Wellington	Up to 3 years	Pastor-Parish Relations Team
Teresa Howie	Up to 3 years	Nominating Team

If you missed the meeting or want more detail, below is a link to the slides.

<https://www.boxboroughucc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/January282024CongregationalMeetingSlides.pdf>



2024 Proposed Budget

	Operating	Restricted	Total
Income	\$295,300	\$37,207	\$332,507
2023 Surplus for 2024 Budget	\$29,023	-	\$29,023
Expense	\$323,118	\$37,583	\$360,701
Net Income	\$1,205	(\$376)	\$829

Council proposes the use of the \$15,208 Surplus and \$13,915 ERTIC reimbursement from 2023, totaling \$29,023, to support the 2024 Budget.

Motion: Vote to Approve the 2024 Operating and Restricted Budgets as presented.

Welcoming all... caring for the world... growing in the spirit.

Preliminary 2023 Balance Sheet

	2022	2023
Financial Assets	\$ 649,330	\$ 778,990
Liabilities	\$ 5,276	\$ 1,489
Equity	\$ 644,054	\$ 777,501
Liabilities + Equity	\$ 649,330	\$ 778,990

Will publish final results when the books close, no later than March 31st.



Unrestricted 81% \$630,916

Endowment 10% \$77,750

Permanent 9% \$76,924

Welcoming all... caring for the world... growing in the spirit.

The Peace of Trees



Fred Small, Unitarian pastor, environmental lawyer, author, and singer/songwriter was a guest preacher at the church. In our busy lives, what can we learn from trees?



Here is Rev. Small signing a copy of his book, Everything Possible, for Larry W.

Faith in Action Focus Topic:

Alleviating Food Insecurity in our Community

Sunday, February 11, 10:45am

All are welcome to the next Faith in Action meeting on Sunday, February 11 at 10:45am in the Pipe Room. The meeting will begin with a discussion of the many ways UCCB is working to alleviate food insecurity at the local level. There are opportunities to become involved that require minimal time but have a great impact. We look forward to seeing you!

Save the Date - Second Veggie Potluck

Saturday, March 23, 6pm

UCCB's inaugural Vegetarian/Vegan Potluck Supper back in September was an evening of fabulous food, fun, and fellowship for all who attended. If you missed it, here's your chance to see what all the fuss was about - UCCB's Second Vegetarian/Vegan Potluck Supper will be held on Saturday, March 23 at 6pm in the Community Center. More information will be forthcoming in early March. In the meantime, mark your calendars. Hope to see you there!



A Creative Lenten Workshop: Praying Without Ceasing

4-5:30pm Sunday, February 25, 2024 in the Gathering Room

In this gathering, participants will pause to consider what “praying without ceasing” might mean for them in this Lenten season. Participants will consider what prayer they will place on a one of a kind creation—a wind blessing—that they make. In the spirit of Tibetan prayer flags that continue to pray the desires and intentions of the one who makes them, even when that person is not thinking about what they made, the prayers created during this workshop will continue to pray the hopes of the individuals who create them. Sample quotes will be shared to help inspire participants’ own emerging prayers. These unique wind blessings will be able to be placed in strategic places in the creators’ living and/or work spaces, to remind them of their ongoing prayers.

Participants are strongly urged to rsvp to Sarah at sarahmaker@gmail.com with questions and interest. (Registration is immensely helpful regarding material preparations.) All materials will be provided. There is no charge for this workshop. No previous creative experience is necessary. All are welcome, especially any reluctant creators!

A word about the leader: Sarah Maker is a long time member of UCCB. Once a reluctant creator herself, one of Sarah’s passions has become introducing folks to creative endeavors that bring healing, play, connection and a sense of competency. She has a small private practice in counseling and spiritual direction in Boxborough, MA where she lives with her husband, two daughters, and three cats.



Scholarships

UCCB annually offers two scholarships in memory of former parishioners, Doris Custance Healthcare Award and Eleanor Voorhies Helping Profession Award. Anyone within the broad church family, including extended family and friends of the church, are invited to apply. Eligible applicants can apply for one or both awards.

This year we ask that you **go the link below, provide the pertinent information in an email, and send it to boxborochurch@verizon.net by April 28, 2024** More details are listed in this application.

[Scholarship application](#)

15th Annual Folk Coffeehouse

Saturday, April 6, 7 – 9 p.m.

Save the date! Nothing could be better than shaking off the dark winter chills and enjoying warm, gentle music in the Gathering Room with friends on a Saturday evening (7 - 9 p.m.).

The Music Committee invites you to enjoy the many talents of our community and perhaps offer some talents of your own in a traditional folk “coffeehouse” setting. This event is intended to slow us down, warm us up, and bring us together as appreciators of music.

Please contact Peter Senghas (psenghas@yahoo.com or 978-263-5508) if you would like to participate or if you have a question about this event.

If you would like to help out with preparing snacks, please reach out to Kellie Senghas (ktsenghas@gmail.com or 978-263-5508)



Rev. Maybeck sings

You are welcome to attend a concert, *Voices of Eternal Light*, on Sunday February 25 at 4:00 pm at the First Baptist Church, 111 Park Ave., Worcester. The Worcester Chorus Women’s Ensemble will begin the program with *Anne Frank: A Living Voice* by Linda Tutas Haugen. This haunting piece sets words from *The Diary of Anne Frank* to music accompanied by a string quartet. This performance will be particularly powerful in the aftermath of the Hamas terrorism in Israel, and as we work for peace in Israel and Gaza. However, you will not be left bereft, for the Worcester Chorus will conclude this concert by performing *Lux Aeterna* by Morten Lauridsen, an ethereal grace-filled response of hope in eternal light for any and all who suffer death. Our own Rev. Cindy sings in both choruses. Tickets cost \$35 and may be purchased in advance at www.musicworchester.org or at the door.



The Color of Compromise: Growing our understanding of the role of white churches in institutional racism.



Jemar Tisby - Hawa Images

As a UCC congregation, we don't claim to have all the answers. We take pride in asking questions. Using a historical lens, Jemar Tisby is asking us tough questions. *The Color of Compromise* is inviting us to come together to reflect more deeply on the role and responsibilities of white churches in racism.

Tisby takes us on a historical, sociological, and religious journey: from America's early colonial days through slavery and the Civil War, the tragedy of Jim Crow laws, the victories of the Civil Rights era to today. He discusses the role of evangelical and non-evangelical church leaders and congregations.

Tisby's goal is not to shame or blame. His call comes from a place of love, a place of honest inquiry, and a desire to fight for a more just society for all.

As people of faith in New England, it can be more comforting to think about the abolitionist movement than about the ways our churches have actively worked against racial justice or the role of silence and inaction by faithful moderates.

What choices were made in the past by leaders and congregations of white churches?

What choices are we faced with today?

What are we called to do as courageous Christians in our interpersonal relationships and in shaping institutions and systems?

Join the Nurturing Racial Justice Team for respectful learning conversations for four 75 minute sessions. You can join for one or all sessions.

Session 1 — Early history through Jim Crow

Session 2 — Civil Rights Movement through the 20th Century

Session 3 — Black Lives Matter - racism and the church of the 21st Century

Session 4 — Going forward

Continued on next page

Continued from page 8 - The Color of Compromise

Each session will intersperse small group conversation with video segments. No prior reading is required. You are welcome to read Tisby's book or watch his historical narrative video-series - The Color of Compromise. If you want to watch the entire series (4hr), we can provide you with access.

This is a great preparation for the Black Church History Walk with June Cooper on Sunday, April 21.

When: Mondays at 7 pm - Feb 26, March 4, March 11 and March 18

Where: In person, at church; If there is sufficient interest, we'll add zoom.

RSVP: Ellen Hickey - ellenh102@yahoo.com (share your preference: in person or zoom and if you want access to the video series)

Prayer Shawl Ministry-The History

UCCB's Prayerful Handworks group has a nice supply of shawls on hand. Giving someone a shawl is a way to remind them that people are thinking of them and to send them comfort. Shawls can be given to those undergoing medical procedures, during an illness and recovery, as a comfort after a loss, or in times of stress.

Our Prayer Shawl ministry began in 2006 noting the work of the South Acton ministry. To date we have given away approximately 200 shawls. In 2008 the name of the group was changed to Prayerful Handworks. We wished to reflect our expanding scope. While we continue to focus on prayer shawls, we also knit, crochet and quilt articles for other charities such as Hats for the Homeless, Project Linus, Pocket Prayer Shawls for the Troops, Chemo caps for those undergoing chemotherapy, and items for our own Merry Christmas Fair.

If you know someone who might benefit from a prayer shawl, contact: Reverend Cindy at the church, Ann Marchmont (marchmont922@gmail.com) or Anne McNeece (annemcn@comcast.net). All are welcome to join our group. Contact Ann or Anne for information about meetings.



Bible Study Themes in February

Every Tuesday morning at 10:00 am, we gather virtually on the Zoom platform to spend an hour discussing a particular scripture passage and sharing joys and concerns as we pray together. Rev. Maybeck teaches this class, and it's open to anybody and everybody. There is no experience necessary and no homework assigned!

Zoom Meeting Link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88306753408?pwd=VlgwZUtlYl05JeVU2WklHWGtUWExGdz09>

Meeting ID: 883 0675 3408

Passcode: 7387

Tuesday, February 6 – Matthew 6:1-6, Jesus teaches about prayer

Tuesday, February 13 – Psalm 23, the Lord is my shepherd

Tuesday, February 20 – John 14:1-7, Jesus teaches about heaven

Tuesday, February 27 – Psalm 121, I lift my eyes to the hills



Generosity



Thank you to all those who have submitted a pledge for 2023. As of this note, 50 individuals or families have pledged financial support for the new year, including two new pledges. Pledges total \$173,951 to date with a budget for 2024 of \$175,000, which compares to \$180,000 a year ago.

Your indication of financial support is so helpful and critical as we make plans for the new year. Thank you!

Who can make a pledge? Everybody is welcome to share in the spirit of generosity at UCC Boxborough. You do not have to be a church member. Some people feel UCCB is their church home without becoming a member, and still love to express their support. Click [\[here\]](#) to access the online pledge form or check out the church's website for more information.

And as always, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to any member of the Generosity Team, including Kellie Senghas and Jeff Glidden.

Thank you for your generosity – *on so many levels.* **Because of YOU our church changes lives.**

An Interfaith Dialogue Through the Lens of October 7

Friday, February 9, 7:30pm

Congregation Beth Elohim in Acton is hosting a Scholar-in-Residence Weekend with Rabbi Leonard Gordon February 9 - 10. The theme for the weekend is "How we as Jews interact with the world around us in the aftermath of October 7th and the trauma those attacks unleashed". The general public is invited to participate either in person or via Zoom. On Friday, February 9 at 7:30pm Rabbi Gordon will be speaking on "Interfaith Dialogue through the lens of October 7: Reflections on a recent visit to the Gaza border". For more information, and to register for any or all of the sessions, go to <https://www.bethelohim.org/scholar-2024>.



February Birthday Blessings

Caitlin Erickson, 02/02
 Laura Loverud, 02/04
 Kayla Whitcomb, 02/04
 David Bull, 02/05
 Isobel Brookes, 02/06
 Christopher Migner, 02/07
 Leo Mahood, 2/08
 Max Mahood, 2/08
 Heidi Kidd, 02/10
 Ann Marchmont, 02/11
 Kate Warwick, 02/11
 William Boyden, 02/14
 Ralph DeMent, 02/14
 Jacquie Crimins, 02/15
 Jeff Vandegrift, 02/15

Mary Anne Vogel, 02/15
 Chris Glidden, 02/17
 Emily Shade, 02/17
 Avery Bourdeau, 02/18
 Kathy Cole, 02/18
 Ursula Smith, 02/18
 Rachel Smyers, 02/20
 Kerry Daigle, 02/24
 Sally Hunt, 02/25
 Sam Senghas, 02/26
 Jonathan Smyers, 02/27
 William Spalding, 02/27
 Jenna Sweeney, 02/27
 David Shurtleff, 02/28
 Eleanor Smith, 02/28



"If your birthday doesn't appear in the appropriate edition of the Vestry News, please inform the church office of your birth month and day. We'd love to celebrate you!"

February 2024

Sit and Sew at UCCB

First Wednesday of the Month

9:00 – 3:00

If you have sewing, knitting, needlepoint, card-making? Any kind of handwork is fun to do in good company. Come spend some creative time in the company of friends in the Gathering Room at UCCB. Weather permitting, we continue to meet on the 1st Wednesday of the month from 9:00 to 3:00. You are welcome to join us for all or any part of the day. Hope to see you there! Happy stitching.



Thank You!

Thank you all for your donations to the Little Free Pantry!

United Church of Christ, Congregational
723 Massachusetts Avenue
Boxborough, Massachusetts 01719

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

February 2024

www.boxboroughucc.org

978-263-7387

boxborochurch@verizon.net

Vestry News articles, ideas and submissions are welcome and due the third Sunday of each month. The Vestry News is published prior to the first Sunday of each month.

Please submit to:

hmatthew25@verizon.net

