



Vestry News

JANUARY 2024

Congregational Meeting



OPEN AND AFFIRMING
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Following the Worship Service



Congregational Meeting

Sunday, January 28th
10:30am after the Service

Please plan on joining us for our Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 28th immediately following our 9:30 Service. The meeting will be conducted "live" in the Sanctuary, but will also be available on Zoom. We will be engaging with the Congregation on the following key topics:

- A celebration of our key 2023 Accomplishments and Generosity
- 2023 Investment Update
- How we did vs. the 2023 Budget
- Review of and Vote on the 2024 Budget
- Election of Officers and Governance Teams

Your input and vote are important! Please plan on joining us.

Pastor's Letter

What new expectations do you have for 2024? Every time we celebrate a new year, I enjoy glancing back with gratitude and looking forward with expectation. Our Christian faith is one that honors a rich history of tradition and welcomes new visions and endeavors for the future.

Indeed, our future is bright as a church, even as we wait for God to lead us to the next step of hiring an interim minister. We have settled into the new sense of being church together in the absence of Rev. Cindy Worthington-Berry, and yet in the presence of lots of storytelling by yours truly (the other Rev. Cindy!) We sing with praise, we reach out to others in need, we expand our sense of community and friendship together. The United Church of Christ in Boxborough reflects so many gifts of being church together.

For what do you hope for our church? How will your faith strengthen you in the coming year? What new ventures will you begin? What changes face you in 2024? Whatever the year brings, know that UCCB is right here beside you with plenty of laughter, love and care. Thank you for being church in this bridge interim time as we look into the new year with trust in God.

—Rev. Cindy Maybeck
Bridge Interim Minister

Rev. Maybeck thanks UCCB

Thank you to the people of UCCB for the generous Christmas gift you gave me. I am deeply touched. Please know it is a joy and an honor to serve you during this brief time as your bridge interim minister. Happy New Year, to you all!

—Rev. Cindy Maybeck



Spirit Story?



Spirit Story Ministry is where Rev. Maybeck spends her time when she is not working as our Bridge Interim Minister at UCC Boxborough. She uses her gifts of storytelling during funerals, memorials and graveside services at which she officiates. She meets with each family to craft the story of the deceased, and delivers a service blessed with a spirit of love. She works with dozens of funeral directors to provide services in cemeteries, chapels, golf clubs, restaurants, bars, funeral homes, and churches. Rev. Cindy loves the blessing of bringing scripture, story and a comforting presence to those who grieve.



January Worship

Be sure to start the new year with a renewed promise to attend worship in the Sanctuary or on Zoom. Every Sunday, UCCB gathers at 9:30 am to hear stories and scripture and beautiful music. Here is a sneak peak of what is to come.

Communion Sunday, January 7

Revelation 22:1-5

The Peace of Trees: "The rush and pressure of modern life are a form, perhaps the most common form, of its innate violence," wrote Trappist monk and peace activist Thomas Merton. "The frenzy of our activism neutralizes our work for peace. . . . It destroys the fruitfulness of our own work, because it kills the root of inner wisdom which makes work fruitful." As we work together for social and environmental justice, how do we remain grounded in a peaceful spirit? What can we learn from trees?

Guest preacher Rev. Fred Small (See biography below)

Sunday, January 14

Mark 1:9-11

Baptizing the Beloved

Rev. Maybeck preaching

Sunday, January 21

Luke 15:1-10

Lost and Found

Rev. Maybeck preaching

Sunday, January 28

Luke 15:11-32

When Welcome is Not a Doormat

Rev. Maybeck preaching

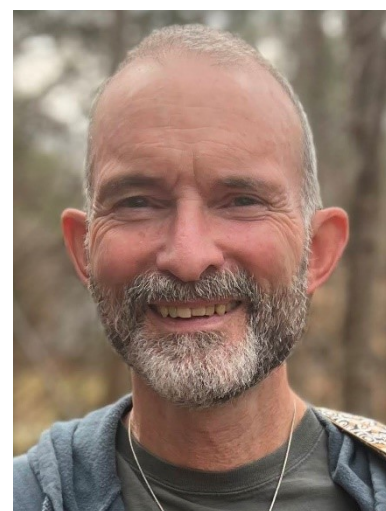


BIOGRAPHY—REV. FRED SMALL

Cited by Bill McKibben as "one of the key figures in the religious environmental surge," Rev. Fred Small is Minister for Climate Justice at Arlington Street Church, Boston.

A Unitarian Universalist parish minister for two decades, Fred is also a singer-songwriter and environmental lawyer. In 2015 he left parish ministry to devote his energies to advocating and organizing for environmental, racial, and climate justice.

In 2023, Nosy Crow published an acclaimed children's picture book based on Fred's inclusive lullaby "Everything Possible."



To worship via Zoom:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88306753408?pwd=VlgwZUtYL05JeVU2WklHWGtUWExGdz09>

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.

Transition Update

The search for an interim minister continues, though it is taking longer than we hoped. Meanwhile, we are looking into creative ways of maintaining the vibrancy of our congregation through the transition. Here are some of the things we are considering:

- looking into ways to begin the interim work in advance of the arrival of an interim pastor. For example, preparing the church history for the settled pastor profile is something we can advance now. A team will be formed in January to organize this.
- reaching out to other congregations in the area to explore opportunities for collaboration in our ministries, such as music and mission. Specifically, we've had a number of discussions with lay leaders and the Pastor at South Acton Congregational Church and will be having interesting conversations early next year with the Congregational Church of Harvard.
- reexamining our interim search profile to see if there are ways that we can make it even more attractive to interim candidates.

Rev. Cindy Maybeck continues to provide engaging worship leadership and counsel. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Peter & Larry

Bible Study Themes in January

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!

Tuesday, January 2 – Revelation 22:1-5, the Tree of Life, a vision beyond the end of time

Tuesday, January 9 – Mark 1:9-11, the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan

Tuesday, January 16 – Luke 15:1-10, the story of the lost coin and the lost sheep

Tuesday, January 23 – Luke 15:11-32, the story of the Prodigal Son

Tuesday, January 30 – James 5:13-16, the promise of praying without ceasing



Called to Care Corner

Remembering God's Love

Thursday, January 18,
11:00AM in the Sanctuary

The Called to Care Ministry Team is presenting a Dementia Friendly Worship Service "Remembering God's Love" led by Rev. Cindy Maybeck on Thursday, January 18, 2024 at 11:00 am. Join us for a short worship service followed by refreshments after. All are welcome. The service is especially for families and their members concerned about any form of mental illness and physical ailments. It will be held in the UCC Boxborough Sanctuary



Guidance for the New Year: Working with Soul Questions

Sunday, January 21 2-3:30pm in the Gathering Room

In this workshop we will use simple collage materials, our own questions, and a touch of whimsy and serendipity to create our own wisdom cards that will offer guidance on our journey into the new year of 2024. Important: Absolutely no artistic background is necessary, just curiosity and a sense of play! Attention will be given to building community, and guiding participants into discerning the questions that are presently emerging for them. The leader will guide the creative experience each step of the way. Participants will leave this gathering with a unique set of questions and collages that they can continue to work with at home for guidance and affirmation in the new year. If you have any questions, please feel free to email Sarah directly at sarahmaker@gmail.com.

In order to plan for the necessary materials for this workshop, registration is strongly urged, though not required. There is no cost for this gathering. Please email or call the church office at 978-263-7387 to register. *Note: Please feel free to bring any magazines or old calendars to share for collage making purposes.*

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.



Joys in December



Many thanks to UCCB's own Karen Wilber and the Christmas In New England musicians for a heartwarming and joyful concert.



Griet poses with a plate of cookies from the Cookie Swap and Sale.

New year, new you?

Do your New Year's resolutions include getting more involved? Giving back? Sharing your talents? Consider volunteering with your church family. There are ways to help during the church service or outside of services for the church and wider community. Opportunities exist both short and longer term, one time only or weekly commitments are available. Just click on this link <https://www.boxboroughucc.org/volunteer-opportunities/> to see how you can sign up.

We look forward to seeing more of you in 2024! Happy New Year!

Hats for the Homeless-Thank You!



Thanks to all who donated to the Hats for the Homeless collection. 142 items were gratefully received by the Worcester Fellowship organization.

For those who like to knit, quilt or crochet, winter is a good time to work on something for the Linus Project. We will be collecting blankets in the Spring.

Thank you! Ann

Little Free Pantry



Happy New Year!

Spread cheer and nutrition in the New Year by adopting the Little Free Pantry for a week or two this winter. Perhaps team up with some neighbors, or with a group you are a part of – book group, scouts, athletic team. You can access the sign-up form via the following link ([UCCB LFP Sign-up](#)) or by contacting Jenn in the church office.

Many folks in our community are benefiting from its presence – following the motto “Give What You Can. Take What You Need.” Many blessings in this New Year!

Questions? Contact Kellie Senghas (ktsenghas@gmail.com), the church office (boxborochurch@verizon.net), or the church’s website for more info: <https://www.boxboroughucc.org/little-free-pantry/>.

Christmas Stars Delivered!

Thirty very full bags and boxes were picked up by Dawn from Framingham Department of Children and Family Services last week to bring to the youth and young adults in care. Dawn filled her car to overflowing and expressed her gratitude to Boxborough UCC for once again making these children feel cared for this holiday season. Dawn even brought cookies in thanks! Thank you all once again for your continued generosity that once again made our Christmas star program such a success!

Mary and Darcy



Generosity



Thank you to all who have pledged your financial support to keep the ministries of UCCB vibrant in 2024. With your pledged support, we are able to plan the year ahead with more confidence as we navigate this period of pastoral transition. Thank you!

Through this pastoral transition, we know one thing holds true: all our actions and gatherings as a faith community are made possible because of you. **Because of YOU our church changes lives.**

As we reflect on the past year and look ahead, we do so with hope, peace, joy, and love, for ourselves and our neighbors, near and far. Thank you for **all** the ways in which you give generously to this faith community, including with your financial gifts, as we look ahead to 2024 and beyond.

New to the idea of pledging? We invite you to participate in the practice of gratitude by making a yearly pledge of financial support to our daily life and ministries. Your commitment in response to God's blessings makes a tangible impact on our worship, community life, and outreach to our neighbors. You can learn more about pledging and giving options, visit UCCB's website (<https://www.boxboroughucc.org/giving/>).

Thank you!

Your Generosity Team: Jeff Glidden, Kellie Senghas, or Rev. Cindy Maybeck

UCCB Honors Eleanor Voorhies with Donation to RIP Medical Debt

For the fifth year in a row, the Faith in Action team is donating the interest accrued from the Eleanor Voorhies endowment to [RIP Medical Debt](#). This year, we're happy to announce that UCCB will be sending the organization a check for \$3456—\$2016 from the endowment and an additional \$1440 donated by members and friends of the congregation. Because each dollar donated buys approximately \$100 of medical debt, **our donation will result in \$345,600 of forgiven medical debt.** We're sure that Eleanor would be pleased to see her bequest used this way. Thank you so much for your extravagant generosity!



January Birthday Blessings

Cindy Blanchard, 01/06
 Bob Wilber, 01/10
 Kristina Habersaat, 01/12
 Brian Sweeney, 01/14
 Tim Allaire, 01/15
 Dan Connor, 01/15
 Ted Roe, 01/19
 Ron Vogel, 01/19
 Eric Hodgman, 01/20



Margaret Stockley, 01/20
 Eric Michnovetz, 01/25
 Mayalin Murphy, 01/29
 Kiralee Murphy, 01/29
 Larry Wellington, 01/29
 George Elenbaas, 01/30
 Roger Allen, 01/31
 James Baum, 01/31

"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!"

Sit and Sew at UCCB

First Wednesday of the Month

9:00 – 3:00



The holidays are behind us and winter is ahead. Although it seems to be delayed this year, I'm sure it's coming. With the start of a new year is it time to start a new project? Or perhaps finish something you started before the holiday rush? If you have sewing, knitting, needlepoint, any kind of handwork 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.

Prayer Shawl Ministry



UCCB's Prayer Shawl ministry has been busy at work, and we have a nice supply of shawls. Shawls can be used for those undergoing medical procedures; during an illness and recovery; as a comfort after a loss or in times of stress.

Giving someone a prayer shawl is a way to remind them that people are thinking of them and to send them comfort.

If you would like to give someone a prayer shawl, contact Reverend Cindy at the church, Ann Marchmont (marchmont922@gmail.com) or Anne McNeece (Annemcn@comcast.net)

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Boxborough, Massachusetts 01719

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

January 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

