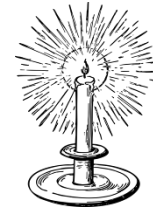




Vestry News

JANUARY 2025

Longest Night



Sounds of Peace bless us with beautiful music



OPEN AND AFFIRMING
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Christmas Eve

Silent Night sung by candlelight



Dear Friends,

Jill and I drove to North Carolina to celebrate Christmas with family and the 50th wedding anniversary of my sister and brother-in-law on January 4th. My sister went to the University of Glasgow in the early 1970s and came home with a husband! This long-term commitment has been fruitful – a joyful, generous, and hospitable home, rewarding careers, two children, and seven grandchildren.

Reflecting on this celebration, I could not help thinking about Frost's "*Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*." You know it. A person is on a journey on the evening of the winter solstice and stops to experience the beauty of the dusk in snow before shaking off the trance saying,

*The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.*

What is true of a marriage is also true of other relationships in life including our relationship with a church community. For almost 200 years the Boxborough congregation has been faithful and fruitful. Jill and I have experienced your common life as joyful, generous, and hospitable. Like a marriage, UCCB is UCCB because people invested themselves, have continued to nurture commitments, and embrace *promises to keep*.

With a successful generosity campaign this fall and with a new settled minister about to be called, UCCB has *miles to go* in a blessed common life together. There is so much to celebrate – praise God!

With you in service,
Richard Edens



Pastoral Search

The search committee continues to work with its candidate for settled pastor to determine when the candidating Sunday will be. Watch for updates.



The senior choir, the children, and the Ding-a-Rings performed *Christmas in the Valley* on Sunday, Dec. 15th. That same day, many volunteers joined the choir and sang *Halleluiah*.



Our bell choir: the Ding-a-Rings



Advent

Thank you for your generosity to our Christmas Stars this year. Two SUV cars were fully packed and ready to deliver your 25 gifts this week. Thank you to Dawn Parra, social worker for Framingham DFS for her coordination of this effort.

With gratitude, Darcy and Mary

Annual Congregational Meeting

Sunday, January 26th

Please plan on joining us for our Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 26th 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 2024 Accomplishments and Generosity
- 2024 Investment Update
- A review of our 2024 financials
- Review of and Vote on the 2025 Budget
- Election of Officers and Governance Teams

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



On Sunday Dec. 15, Joe Camara, our organist, held a well attended concert. He offered an interesting collection of music from Bach, E. Power Biggs, and Handel, Fox and others. We appreciate his talent.

Faith in Action Focus Topic: Habitat for Humanity

SUNDAY, JANUARY 12, 10:45AM

The January meeting of the Faith in Action team will focus on Habitat for Humanity. We're so pleased to be strengthening our bond with Habitat; earlier this year UCCB renewed its covenant with Habitat, and in November North Central Mass. Habitat was the recipient of 10% of the proceeds from our Merrie Christmas Fair. Once again we'll welcome Curt Logee from NCM Habitat's Board of Directors. Curt will get us caught up on the latest developments with Habitat's various projects and missions. Please grab a cup of coffee and a snack after worship, then join us in the Pipe Room at 10:45 on Sunday, January 12. Hope to see you there!

Wanted: Keeper of the Church Sign

After 5 years, Glynis would like to retire her role as the person who posts messages on the church sign. Taking on this task is a great way to do something for the church which is impactful and yet requires a minimal time commitment. For many people in the wider community this is the only window they have into what's going on at UCCB. Sometimes the message is used to advertise an upcoming event, sometimes the message is purely inspirational. If you would like to take over this role, please let Glynis know at glynis.hamel@gmail.com. Thank you!

UCCB Glean Team Celebrates Third Anniversary

December 9 marked the 3-year anniversary of the UCCB Glean Team. This team has made hundreds of deliveries over the past three years, collecting produce, bakery, and prepared food items that are close to their sell-by dates from local grocery stores and delivering the food to area food pantries.

The Glean Team can always use new volunteers. One of the founding members of the Glean Team (the team that originated with the UU Church in Harvard, MA about 15 years ago) is moving away in the spring, and her departure will leave a big hole. Gleaning is a great way to do good, on your own schedule. You can sign up to glean as little or as often as you like - once a week, once a month, or once a year - it's up to you! If you'd like to learn more about the program, please see me (Glynis) during coffee hour, or email me at glynis.hamel@gmail.com. Thank you!



Faith in Action

The Faith In Action team has made three end of the year donations:

- 1) \$500 to Empowering the Girl Child in Uganda. This fundraiser was initiated by Anitta. The goal is to provide impoverished girls in Uganda with hygiene products, necessary for health and welfare.
- 2) \$500 to Kids in Need of Defense (KIND). This organization provides a myriad of services to unaccompanied immigrant children, including legal representation and social and emotional support.
- 3) \$200 to Homegrown National Park. This organization provides education regarding planting native plants and removing invasive ones to support life and sequester carbon. We hope to provide more programming using their materials during April's Earth Day observation. Stay tuned!!

Thank you to the congregation for entrusting us with your pledges. We are always eager to hear suggestions. Peace
- Lee B., Linda S., Kellie S., Joe C., Susan A., Glynis H. and Janet G.

New Year's Eve Game day!



People of all ages gathered for a fun night of food, games, and music to ring in a new year.

Empowering the Girl Child in Uganda

Back in 2022, Anitta N. started an annual fundraiser to benefit young girls in Uganda. Her campaign supports girls from underprivileged backgrounds by providing them with sanitary products and school supplies. Now, nearly three years later and as a member of UCCB, Anitta shared her story with the Faith in Action team. You can read more about Anitta's campaign that helps to empower the girl child in Uganda by visiting [this GoFundMe page](#). Faith in Action is proud to support Anitta's efforts this year with a donation of \$500, and we hope this will jumpstart additional donations by members of the congregation. Thank you for your generosity!



16th Annual Folk Coffeehouse

Saturday, February 8, 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.

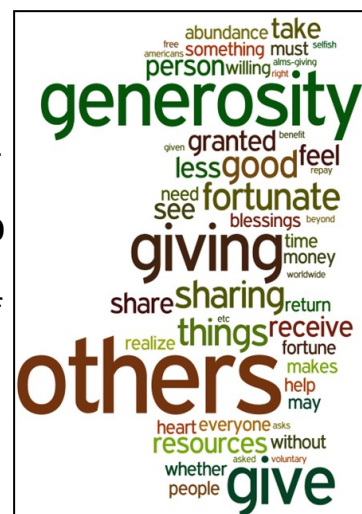
Please contact Peter Senghas (psenghas@yahoo.com or 978-505-5398) if you would like to participate of if you have a question about this event.

We need help with snacks and card tables. If you are able to lend us a card table (with a table cloth, if possible) please email Peter Senghas (psenghas@yahoo.com). If you would like to help out with preparing snacks, please reach out to Gloria Roe (gloria.a.roe@gmail.com).



UCCB Relieves Over \$420,000 of Medical Debt!

The Faith in Action team is happy to announce that UCCB will be sending a contribution in the amount of \$4201 to [Undue Medical Debt](#). The interest accrued from the Eleanor Voorhies endowment accounts for \$3068 of this total, and the rest comes from the generous donations of members and friends of the congregation. Because each dollar donated buys approximately \$100 of medical debt, **our donation will result in \$420,100 of forgiven medical debt**. As a result of our contribution, many people who are in the untenable position of choosing between paying the rent and grocery bill or paying off their medical debt will receive letters saying their debt has been forgiven. Thank you for making this possible!



Generosity



Thank you to all who have pledged your financial support to UCCB to keep our ministries strong in 2025. These financial gifts complement all the other ways you contribute to this faith community with your hearts and hands – thank you!

As we reflect on the past year and look ahead, we **imagine together** the ways we will combine our spirit, energy, and resources to Welcome All, Care for the World, and Grow in the Spirit.

As we plan for 2025, we look forward to:

- Welcoming a new pastor to our vibrant congregation,
- Collaborating with and caring for our neighbors and tending to the earth in all ways,
- Bringing ages together to worship and grow together spiritually,
- Continuing to Open Doors and hearts faithfully in the community as we grow God's love in the world

What will this faith community **imagine together** as we are called to learn, to act, and to support in the new year? If you would like to pledge your financial support to UCCB and are viewing this electronically, you may click [here](#) to submit your pledge directly to the church office. Alternatively, you may speak to a member of the generosity team or contact Nikki in the church office, boxborochurch@verizon.net.

New to the practice 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. Thank you!

Are you looking to complete your financial pledge for the 2024 year or simply donate before yearend? You can do so by:

- Check:** You may mail a check directly to the church or drop it off in person.
- Give+ Text:** Text the amount of your donation to 978-776-3110. You will then be asked to enter your debit or credit card information.
- Online:** You may donate funds online through our church's website, either with a one-time donation or by establishing an automatic, recurring charge directly from your financial institution or to your debit/credit card. There is a processing fee in either case, but it is lower for payments made directly from your financial institution.
- Bill Pay:** If you pay your bills online, you can set up a recurring monthly payment through your bill pay service that can be mailed automatically to UCCB. Please have the payment mailed to UCCB. This option has no fees for you or the church.

Questions or suggestions? Please contact a member of your Generosity Team: Jeff Glidden, Kellie Senghas, Rev. Dr. Jill Edens or Rev. Richard Edens.

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 2025 and beyond. **Happy New Year!**

Endowment Fund



Since its beginning, UCCB has been the beneficiary of endowed gifts, including some dedicated to flowers, education and missions. Did you know that in 2015, UCCB established an Endowment Fund?

This permanent fund allows the church flexibility to use the income from these invested assets where it is most needed in the future. By donating to this Endowment Fund, your gift keeps on giving!

To be good stewards of the lasting gifts that are entrusted to us, the church manages these funds in a fashion consistent with UCCB's endowment and investment policies. At the annual congregational meeting, all perpetual gifts are celebrated (unless you wish to remain anonymous).

If you would like to make a gift to this fund, you can indicate "UCCB Endowment" on the Special Collection line on the church's website or on the memo line. Please visit the church's website to learn more or speak to a member of the generosity team: Jeff Glidden, Kellie Senghas, Rev. Dr. Jill Edens or Rev. Richard Edens.

Thank you for considering a special gift! **Happy New Year!**

Thank you

HATS FOR THE HOMELESS

Many thanks to all who contributed to our collection of hats, gloves, scarves and socks. We donate them to The Worcester Fellowship and they are much appreciated.

Thank you,
Ann

January 2025

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Vestry News articles, ideas and submissions are welcome and due the 24th of each month. The Vestry News is published prior to the first Sunday of each month.

Please submit to:

hmatthew25@verizon.net