



Vestry News

APRIL 2025

Holy Week

Palm Sunday, April 13, Hybrid Worship 9:30am

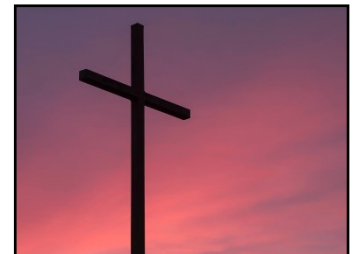
Maundy Thursday, April 17, 7PM, Gathering Room

Easter Sunrise Service, Sunday, April 20th, 6:30am North Cemetery in Boxborough

Easter Community Breakfast, Gathering Room following Sunrise Service.

Easter Worship Service, Hybrid Worship 9:30am

Please see weekly Flashes for more details.



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UCCB's Lent Gathering

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Pastor's Reflection

Dehumanization and the Great Divide

A big thank you to everyone who has welcomed me into this community over the last month. I have enjoyed learning about UCCB; having people stop into my office; and going out to joyful visits during the week. As I settle into the routines, traditions, and relationships of our community, I want the fun and celebration of our new covenant to keep on rolling. I hope we can find different ways and times to get to know each other and begin our work together.

Through this wonderful time of new beginnings, I am also mindful of the fears and concerns in our community caused by the division and harshness we see in the world today. What can we do? Where is God in all of this?

A few years ago, I was called to the psychiatric unit of a local hospital. I was asked to check in with a young person recently admitted for observation who identified as transgender. They asked to go to the hospital because they felt unsafe and afraid. There had been a loud public decree against transgender people. This rhetoric had turned this young person's life upside down. I sat with them for just a short time. They shared their story and some of their favorite Bible scriptures. They shared with me how much their faith provided them with resilience and peace. They knew God was walking with them. I sat humbly listening. I was learning so much from this amazing person. And I thought to myself, I never want my need for security and comfort to be the reason someone else has their life and security turned upside down.

This is what causes me so much pain in our society today. Our country is so very divided. Somehow, we have arrived at a place in our history when half of our country is afraid of specific things and the other half of the country is afraid of the exact opposite things. It is like the great divide that we each stand on one side, unable to reach over to each other. How did we arrive here?

Our two-party political system certainly likes it when the political climate is so binary. It certainly makes political campaigns easier when there are only two answers to every question grouped into two opposite groups of constituents. I also believe the isolating nature of our communities today causes us not live, work, or talk with each other on a regular basis. We don't know each other and that makes it easier to dehumanize each other.

In our scripture from this past Sunday, March 23rd, Jesus warned his followers not to dehumanize others. He told them to stop thinking others were more sinful and to begin to mend their own soil. He called them to work together to produce fruit, because we all have just this one precious life to live. We are not here to separate and judge. We are here to mend the soil so that we all can live and thrive in this world and bring God's justice, love, and peace to all.

And so, as I look around our communities today, I am sad. We are seeing so many lives turned upside down. We are seeing so many of us unable to speak to each other about our concerns. We are seeing more and more dehumanization of others that ensures that the great divide will continue to grow. Dehumanization allows horrible atrocity to occur. It allows us to hurt each other without feeling empathy or even guilt. Dehumanization allows us to take the honor and respect of life away from another human being with righteousness and no accountability for the pain afflicted.

What is the answer to dehumanization? I believe the answer is community and love. Our world needs more of us to dedicate ourselves to sitting together and listening. Our world needs us to see each other,

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truly see each other. And that type of relationship takes time, time together. That is why I have so much hope for church in our world. The church is a unique institution in our community that can bring people together in meaningful ways. At UCCB, we are dedicated to Welcoming All; Caring for the World; and Growing in Spirit. That calling is an invitation for people from across generations, socio-economic classes, ethnic and racial backgrounds, gender and sexual identities, and simply different life experiences to come together.

Church is a place where all of us can worship together, work together, and get to know each other at a deeper level. Get to know each other in a way that allows us to talk about our world and our lives. Imagine that! That is where the divide could begin to be narrowed. That is where we can commit to not dismissing each other's humanity. That is a special place. As church we are called to always stand with those who are being harmed. And we are called to see God in each and every person we meet. I am excited to work together to create a space in this world that can be a place of healing and bringing people together, so that we are all always recognized for our humanity, God's gift to this world.



Blessings.
Pastor Fran

OUR SERVICES ARE SUNDAY MORNINGS AT 9:30 IN PERSON OR ON ZOOM

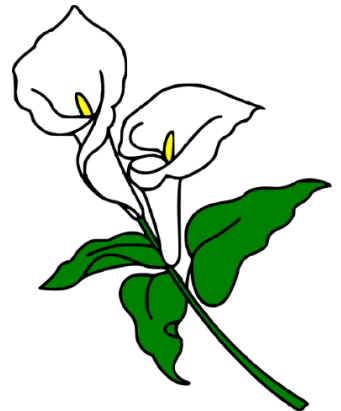
To worship via Zoom:

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

Meeting ID: 883 0675 3408
Passcode: 7387

Please note: our worship services are streamed live via Zoom, and recorded for posting on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChIayswOH7Ta7LYVK-BcAyA>).

Zoom offers closed captioning subtitles for those who find that helpful.



Bible Study



Join us for bible study on Tuesday mornings at 10 am.
Zoom opens at 10:00 am for chatting and connecting.
The Zoom link is: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81402428901>

Meeting ID: 814 0142 8901
Passcode: 7387

From Belief to Experience

Three steps from Pastor Witty to follow:
Find your practice and practice it.
Find your teaching and follow it.
Find your community and enter it.



Sounds of Peace blessed us with their voices



Susan A. sharing in the agape meal.

The next Wednesday Lent Gatherings are April 2 at ACC, and April 9 at Harvard UCC.



Fran and Nicolette welcome people as they find a seat. We had about 54 attendants!



Pastor Sean Witty leads the evening



Meeting Pastor Fran

We continue to plan small social gatherings for Pastor Fran to meet congregants over the next few months.

If you would like to host a gathering or if you would like to attend a gathering, please reach out to Peter Senghas at psenghas@yahoo.com.



Scholarships

Every year UCCB offers two scholarships in memory of former parishioners. Anyone within the broader 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 May 18, 2025** More details are listed in this application.

<https://boxboroughucc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/scholarship-application-UCCB-2025.pdf>

Generosity 2025



Thank you for all of the ways in which you generously bring your ideas, hearts, hands, and financial resources to the UCCB community and the broader world. Through you and with you, we can live out our mission to Welcome All, Care for the World, and Grow in the Spirit.

The spiritual practice of generosity arises from imagining all that God calls us to do as a community. Our financial donations to our congregation make it possible to turn what we imagine into a reality. Through our annual commitments to our congregation, we **imagine together** all that we can do. Whether you are someone who has pledged annually in the past or are new to this practice, we invite you to consider how you may contribute financially to UCC Boxborough to keep our lights on in this corner of the world and continue to invest in our community.

For those who have been considering a pledge, it is never too late to join this practice. Don't hesitate to reach to a member of the generosity team with any questions. You are welcome to submit your pledge at any time by following this [link](#) for access to a confidential pledge form.

Your commitment to this congregation and community helps fuel all we can imagine and accomplish together. Happy Spring and - **Thank you!**

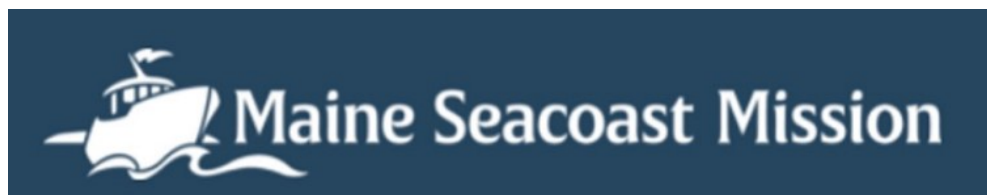
Yours in faith,
Generosity Ministry Team: Jeff Glidden, Kellie Senghas, Pastor Fran Graveson

45th Annual Music Sunday Concert

The 45th Annual Music Sunday Concert was a huge success with a wonderful variety of musicians sharing their music on Sunday, March 30. We give heartfelt thanks to everyone who participated and shared their musical talent. We especially want to thank those who helped make this Spring concert a great success.



Adult Mission Trip to Cherryfield, Maine July 13-18, 2025



For several years, a team from UCCB has been working with Maine Seacoast Mission (MSM) in their Housing Rehabilitation Program for a week each July. UCCB and MSM have developed a close relationship.

Planning is underway for our 2025 trip! We've reserved ten spaces for our group. To join us you only need to be 18 or older. While this has been called a "hammer and nails" experience, we also spend time painting, gardening, and listening. All are welcome, regardless of physical ability or expertise.

Please contact Peter or Kellie Senghas if you are interested in joining us or if you wish more information (psenghas@yahoo.com; ksenghas@gmail.com; or 978-263-5508), even if you are just curious!

More about Maine Seacoast Mission:

Maine Seacoast Mission was started in 1905 by two brothers, both pastors, who realized that the spiritual needs of the island residents of far Downeast Maine were not being met. Today Maine Seacoast Mission's focus includes rural education and healthcare issues. While they provide a wide array of support services, they only utilize mission trip volunteers in their Housing Rehabilitation Program. Downeast Maine has an old and decaying housing stock and the need for repairs and weatherization on these homes is constant. With the support of volunteers, Maine Seacoast Mission is able to help their most vulnerable neighbors.

www.seacoastmission.org

April 2025

www.boxboroughucc.org

978-263-7387

boxborochurch@verizon.net

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

