



# Vestry News

JULY 2025

## Summer Worship with Harvard 2025

We are excited to be sharing worship locations with the Congregational Church of Harvard on the following dates this summer:

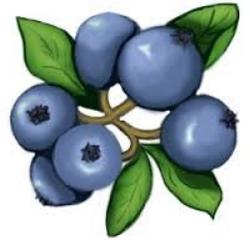
*Please note the worship times.*

July 13 - UCCB @ Harvard, 10:00AM at 5 Still River Rd, Harvard, MA 01451

July 20 - Harvard @ UCCB, 9:30AM

August 3 - Harvard @ UCCB, 9:30AM

August 17- UCCB @ Harvard, 10:00AM at 5 Still River Rd, Harvard, MA 01451



Pastor Fran, the Deacons, and the Music Ministry Team will lead worship on the Sundays we are visiting the Congregational Church of Harvard. This will include our greeters, ushers, and lay readers. We will also enjoy fellowship hosted by Harvard. We especially look forward to Harvard leading a Communion service at UCCB on August 3<sup>rd</sup>. They will in turn bring their ministry team to assist with worship.



OPEN AND AFFIRMING  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

### IN THIS ISSUE

Pastor's Letter	2
Connected	3
Porchfest	4, 5
Racial Justice; Christmas in July	5
Fran's Ordination	6, 7
PPRC	7
Pride Day	8
Great photos	9
Generosity; Box- orough Museum	10
Worship in Action; Summer Hours; Zoom	11

## Strawberry Shortcake at Fifer's Day

Finally, a beautiful Saturday free of rain. Maybe the best profit ever, over \$600! Many thanks to all who helped this year. – Mary Anne



Dear friends,

The word Sabbath has become popular in recent years. As more people focus on living mindful of time and intentional in their daily actions, more have begun to refer to their time of rest as Sabbath. In the Jewish faith, Sabbath means something much more than simply rest. Of course, it has its traditional roots in the creation story; God rested on the seventh day. Sabbath is sacred. A day to turn away from the space and time of the creation. A day to turn toward the divine. The early Christian church saw the importance of this day and claimed their own day of Sabbath, our calendars marked it on Sunday.



The sacredness of the “seventh day” has ebbed and flowed over the last 2000 years. Different societies and communities have adhered strictly or gone very lax in adhering to the practice of the entire community taking a day of rest and focusing on something beyond our toil. Our current American society struggles with the concept of a specific day of rest because we have many different faith traditions practiced in our communities. Each faith tradition has a different sacred day. And the demands of capitalism and consumerism have even challenged specific faith communities from being able to take a community day of rest. And yet, individuals still seem to crave the Sabbath. Religious or nonreligious, we crave the opportunity to lift our eyes from our toil, rest our bodies, and consider things bigger than ourselves. We may spend time in nature marveling at the sea, the mountains, or the natural balance and flow of animals and fauna. We may spend our time reading books to consider the stories of other lives in times and lands far away. We may simply take time to be with family and friends sharing in traditions, memories, and new experiences beyond the everyday. All of these activities bring love into our hearts; open our hearts to more; and let us see things differently. I call that being in relationship with God.

Almost seventy-five years ago, Abraham Joshua Heschel, Jewish theologian, wrote *The Sabbath: It's Meaning for Modern Man*. The entire book is a thoughtful and loving view of the Sabbath tradition in Judaism. His premise holds Sabbath as sacred time recognizing that time was a priority to God over space. In other words, experience is more important than things, “Things created conceal the Creator. It is the dimension of time wherein man meets God, wherein man becomes aware that every instant is an act of creation, a Beginning, opening up new roads for ultimate realizations.”

Heschel noted that Genesis 2:2 states, “On the seventh day God finished God’s work.” Finished God’s work? Heschel reminds us that the ancient rabbis must have concluded that God created something on the seventh day. It was not simply a day of rest. It was the day in which rest, tranquility, peace, and repose were created and therefore, God was finished. This view of Sabbath reminds us that God’s intention was for us to live in justice, love, and peace. Sabbath was created for us, and we give thanks.

I hope that these words give us a moment of pause. Help us to consider our priorities in life. Help us all to see beyond the toil of the everyday and take time to turn to the divine, to enjoy what is being created for you in each moment of time.

Summer blessings!  
Pastor Fran





## Connected Comes to UCCB

UCC Boxborough was thrilled to welcome Connected the Musical to our Sunday Worship service on June 22<sup>nd</sup>. The sanctuary was filled with joyful music from the musical and a trans positive message. Kathryn Denney, composer and choreographer, provided a witness to the work she does assisting trans teens. We thank Kathryn, Thalia Hyland, Sammi Soprano, Lianna Denney, and Bryce Denney for a beautiful hour of worship and community!

If you would like more information about Connected the Musical, please go to <https://www.connectedthemusical.com/home>. They are holding auditions for the fall performance at Nashoba Players. UCC Boxborough looks forward to arranging a night out at their performance between October 24<sup>th</sup> and November 2<sup>nd</sup>.





## Porchfest 2025

Windy but Wonderful. We had many participants from the church and a good audience. Thank you all for topping off the morning with great music.





## A-B Racial Justice Collaboration Looking for Volunteers

The Acton-Boxborough Racial Justice Collaboration, a coalition of Acton-Boxborough Community Compass (formerly the AB United Way), is composed of more than 30 local community groups that are working to advance racial justice. The Collaborative is currently working on ways to support families of people detained during recent ICE raids in Acton and Boxborough. It is assembling working groups to address many areas of support ranging from setting up financial help and finding legal help, to delivering groceries, helping with transportation, and doing laundry. There is a particular need for fluent speakers of Spanish or Portuguese who could act as a “trusted contact” with a family. If you would like to help out in any capacity, please speak to Pastor Fran, Glynis Hamel, or Mary Pavilk and they will help connect you with other people working in that area. Thank you!



**Acton-Boxborough  
Community Compass**

Navigating Needs. Connecting Neighbors.

## Christmas in July- Crafters invited to Make Ornaments



The Merrie Christmas Fair may be a few months away but the Ornament/Decoration Table co-chairs are already looking for crafters to make ornaments and holiday decorations over the Summer months into the Fall. If you already have ideas and are working on ornament projects at home. Fantastic! We have a few needlework project kits available to work on over the summer. Please let us know if you would like to help. Interested? Contact Gloria Roe 978-502-9625/email [gloria.roe@comcast.net](mailto:gloria.roe@comcast.net), Linda Morse at [kcmorse@verizon.net](mailto:kcmorse@verizon.net) / 978-314-3272, or Connie Brown at [conniecmc@comcast.net/978-263-3852](mailto:conniecmc@comcast.net/978-263-3852).

# Pastor Fran's Ordination



June 1st was an amazing and overwhelming day! I am humbled by the experience of being ordained into the United Church of Christ at United Parish of Upton. It was the culmination of 8 years of education and internships. AND it was only possible because we have committed to God's call together. Thank you for all of your support and for everyone who could attend the ceremony. There are a few people missing in the photos, but the love was so much appreciated!! In 2026, UCC Boxborough will host my installation! It will be our turn to host the party and celebrate our ministry together!!

~Pastor Fran.



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## PASTOR PARISH RELATIONS TEAM June 2025

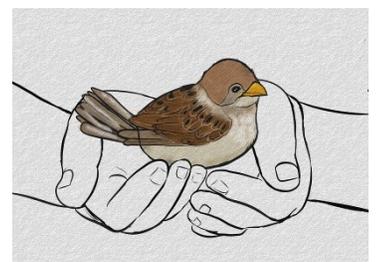
The PPRT had its first official meeting with Pastor Fran on May 22. It was a very positive meeting and an opportunity for us to get to know each other. Members of the team are Ginny Harris, Jim Howie, Todd Waddington and Nicolette Wellington.

At the meeting, Pastor Fran shared with us some resources and insights about how we can work effectively together. The group is currently reading a book about church communications, *Navigating the Nonsense - Church Conflict and Triangulation*, by Doug Bixby. Our role is to foster positive, trusting, and cooperative relationships between the Pastor, the congregation, and the church staff members.

As liaisons, we will work to maintain open communication and mutual understanding. We are always available to listen to congregants' concerns and guide them in healthy communications with the pastor, always holding our conversations in confidence.

Meetings are held monthly and all members adhere to strict confidentiality regarding topics discussed.

If you have any questions about the PPRT, please reach out to Pastor Fran or any members of the team.



# Celebrating Pride—NARA Park



With more than 30 booths, this year's Acton-Westford Pride festival on June 21, 2025 was the biggest since Melissa Settipiani, Acton's recreation director, started the event in 2023.

Once again, we welcomed people to the UCC Boxborough booth with free cookies, stickers, pins, and affirmation cards. Children and adults were invited to help build our "rainbow gardens" with multi-colored modeling clay. Due to the blistering heat, some of our clay actually melted, and a few of our plants and humans wilted ever so slightly. But the music by the Femmes was wonderful and the enthusiasm was contagious. We were all glad to be there, sharing the love, celebrating Pride, getting to know our neighbors, and extending our welcome through food, gifts, and conversation.





Nancy always brings a smile to our faces with her costumes. Pictured with Kellie on Sunday morning.



Fifer's day



## Generosity

**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.

Financial contributions toward our mission comes in many forms:

**Annual pledging (“Run the church”):** Funds that are pledged and provided in a way that helps us plan and operate with confidence. For the 2025 year, we received 53 pledges totaling nearly \$180,000.

*If you would like to pledge to UCCB, you may follow this [link](#).*

**Special Gifts (“Improve the church”):** Gifts that are responsive to specific needs that may take the form of money or a gift of a specific item (e.g., shelving, audio/visual equipment, windows).

*Did you know that the church experienced ~\$2,000 in damage earlier this year related to an electrical surge/brownout?*

*Additionally, we incurred ~\$8,000 to address some sprinkler-related problems. Special gifts to support capital improvements are always welcome.*

**Planned Giving (“Sustain the church”):** Over \$300,000 in financial gifts have been provided to the church over the years to form our endowment. An endowment that continues to grow and generate significant income to support the church now and into the future.

*In 2015, UCCB established a church-wide Endowment Fund. Active members of our community have been contributing to this fund since its founding, with gifts large and small. This permanent fund gives the church flexibility to use income from invested assets where ever it’s most needed—today and into the future.*

[If you would like to learn more about financial stewardship at UCCB, please review the Giving page on our website \(https://boxboroughucc.org/giving/\)](https://boxboroughucc.org/giving/) or ask a member of the Generosity Ministry Team.

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

Yours in faith,

Generosity Ministry Team: Kellie Senghas, Pastor Fran Graveson

## Fran and Duncan Tour the Boxborough Museum

On June 12<sup>th</sup> Duncan Brown gave Pastor Fran a tour of the Boxborough Museum at the old library on Middle Road. The museum is managed by the Boxborough Historical Society. It was a wonderful afternoon of learning. The walls dedicated to specific families show the different paths that brought families to this area. Some families were granted land directly from the king. Others immigrated here to work in a trade or establish a business. The museum is also filled with personal effects of the families. It is fascinating to see the child shoe buried in the wall of the Whitcomb’s house, probably placed there after the deaths of several children to ward off further suffering. So many stories and glimpses into the lives of those who formed the town of Boxborough and built and worshipped in our church. A big thank you to Duncan for showing Pastor Fran around the museum.



## Worship in Action Assembles 50 Hygiene Kits



After a shortened worship service on June 15, the congregation assembled in the Gathering Room to put together hygiene kits for Church World Service (CWS). These hygiene kits promote hope and dignity to people coping with the aftermath of disaster. Thank you to everyone who participated, or who donated items for the kits. (Some of the donated items didn't meet the requirements specified by CWS. If you donated items and didn't see them on the table, please be assured that those items will be put to good use as donations to the Little Free Pantry.) In addition, \$676 was donated on Sunday to support One Great Hour of Sharing, one of the special mission offerings of the United Church of Christ.

Thank you for your generosity!

## New Summer Church Office Hours

The church office summer hours will begin July 1st.

**Tues., Weds., and Thurs., the office is open from 9-12pm.**

On Mondays and Fridays, the office will be closed but the staff is available should you need to contact them.

Please feel free to call: 978-263-7387 or email the church office at [boxborochurch@verizon.net](mailto:boxborochurch@verizon.net) or you can email Pastor Fran at [uccbpastor@gmail.com](mailto:uccbpastor@gmail.com).



**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=VlgwZUtYLO5jeVU2WklHWGtUWExGdz09>

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.



# July 2025

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

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**Vestry News articles are due starting the 24th of each month. Please submit your article or pictures to [hmatthew25@verizon.net](mailto:hmatthew25@verizon.net) and [boxborochurch@verizon.net](mailto:boxborochurch@verizon.net)**

