



A Cuba Benefit Concert with Sol Y Canto

UCCB came alive on October 25th as more than 120 people gathered for a moving and memorable fundraiser concert to support the people of Cuba, who are enduring their most severe economic depression since the revolution of 1950s. The evening featured a dynamic performance by Sol y Canto, the award-winning pan-Latin ensemble known for their uplifting blend of music, rhythm, and heart. Their songs of hope and resilience beautifully reflected the spirit of the evening.

The event was envisioned by Maricel Lucero. Her vision, personal story, and dedication to helping people in Cuba inspired many people to jump in and make the night a great success. Thank you to those who worked before and during the event, including those who baked, served guests, and managed the technology. Thanks to the generosity of all who attended, net proceeds exceeded \$3,600, which will go directly toward much-needed relief efforts for Cuban families.

The audience enjoyed a special treat when Sol y Canto invited Maricel to join them for a fantastic version of Quizas, Quizas, Quizas (Perhaps, Perhaps, Perhaps). Guests also enjoyed a raffle featuring a basket of Cuban-inspired items, won by Anne and Rob McNeece.

It was an evening of spirit, compassion, and community—proof once again that when we come together in love and music, we can make a difference.

Maricel L., Steve G., Pastor Fran, Peter S., Tineke V., and Todd W. -- Cuba Benefit Event Team



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Reflections on Hope from Hopelessness

How do you define Hope in your life? How does Hope live within your everyday thoughts and activities? I have been thinking about these questions lately. Many people have talked to me about feeling hopeless in recent months. In a world that seems to have increased the intensity of chaos, pain, and suffering, there is a sense that our world needs more hope. What is hope? And where does it come from? In order to define Hope, it seems that we may need to look more closely at our hopelessness.

For some of us, our hopelessness seems to be rooted in the sense that we can no longer trust some basic assumptions and institutions in our society. Our hopelessness reflects our frustration that societal and political decisions no longer reflect our morals and aspirations for this nation and the world. Our grounding trust that the direction of our nation will be driven by our opinions about what is just, fair, and in good faith is being deeply shaken. We are feeling out of control.

For some of us, our hopelessness is more direct. There have been concrete promises broken such as funding for jobs, legal rights taken away or threatened, and safe spaces dismantled physically or emotionally as bias and hatred become more visible. When we experience the removal of our basic needs to survive, never mind thrive, we move into a day-to-day mode of living. Our world is turned upside down and we must address the direct needs now. We are feeling out of control, and we have immediate needs for survival.

And yet some of us are dealing with a hopelessness that also touches our future. There are promises for our future that have been broken. It is difficult to easily define when we began to give up hope that our children's lives would be better than our own; that our unique identity would be respected and loved in the future; that we were safe to dream, grow, and prosper no matter where we were and where we came from. Hopelessness, caused by the invalidation of one's aspirations and dreams, is often not even voiced, but tears at one's heart deeply. We are feeling out of control of our future.

Given that our hopelessness leaves us feeling out of control. Many people would say that taking control back will bring us hope, solve all of our problems. However, there is a different type of **HOPE** held by those who have lived on the margins; lived in financial instability; or lived by moving around societal obstacles and boundaries. It is a hope that is based on one's internal compass; the relationships around us; and our faith in the power of love, grace, and peace. ***This is the hope that we must share in our times.***

I find that kind of hope through the community of church. Although it can be an imperfect place, it gives all of us the opportunity to reflect and discern our path in this life; our decisions; our contributions to this world. In a sacred space, we can stand knowing that we are loved and that we are called to grow, challenge ourselves, and step out into risky spaces to share love, grace, and peace. As a church community we stand together reaching across walls and fences to everyone around us. We trust in concepts and a movement that is more than any one of us. Our actions together can provide basic needs; safe spaces; and hopeful futures during these difficult times. And our community bonds can build a resilience in our hearts and our relationships that can move the world. I trust that God is moving in all that we do in hope and faith. And I trust that no matter what human language we may use to speak about our hope and faith that working together brings more love, justice, and peace into this world.

In the month of November our church community recommits ourselves to our mission and vision. We recommit to our hope and faith. We do that in two ways. First, we share our generosity pledges for the



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next year. This year's Generosity campaign is rooted in Planting Seeds of Hope. When we consider our financial pledges, may we all dare to dream about what is possible in our community. There are many people who need us to expand our reach into the community through relationship and support. During November we are also building our leadership teams for next year. Your time and talents are as important, maybe even more important, during these times. Please consider what moves you, where you are being called to serve and reach out to volunteer.

In the year ahead, we hope that we can build more relationships and increase our impact on the lives of those who live in community with us. We hope to plant seeds in the community that feed aspirations and dreams. We hope to provide a place for people to regain their trust in our future. Let's turn from our hopelessness and recommit ourselves to our hope and faith. I truly believe that Hope Grows Here at UCC Boxborough. It is that belief, that trust, that led me to this community, and it is that trust that will lead us all into our hopeful future together.

Pastor Fran

Looking forward to December

Mark your calendars for our Advent and Christmas Events

- November 30th – First Sunday of Advent**
- December 6th – 7:30 pm Bluegrass Christmas Concert**
- December 7th – Communion – Sounds of Peace singing**
- December 14th – Joint Service with First Parish of Berlin – “Sing Christmas” Cantata**
- December 14th - 3 pm Living Nativity on Church Lawn**
- December 17th - 7 pm Longest Night Service in Sanctuary**
- December 21st – Fourth Sunday of Advent**
- December 24th – Christmas Eve Service**



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=VlgwZUcYU05JeVU2WkIHWGtUWExGdz09>

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.



Christmas Trees

Christmas trees and wreaths should arrive around November 28. Anyone who would like to help with unloading and/or sales could text Rob at (978) 394-6811.





Merrie Christmas Fair 2025: Meet Me at the Fair

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22
9AM-1PM



It's November and fair preparations are in full gear! If you are new to UCC Boxborough, you are in for a real treat! The fair is in its 92nd year, full of gorgeous handmade gifts, amazing Silent Auction items, delicious treats, bustling Attic Treasures and more! Put it all together and as a church we create one of the most festive, creative, and joy-filled traditions of the community. To share in that joy, we've listed opportunities for everyone to become a part of the fun.

If you haven't yet had a chance to join the fun, here are some ways to help:

Before the fair:

Share the news! Take flyers to shops and friends! Share the info via email with family and friends, including the link to the Silent Auction. It's a great way for your network of people to support what you believe in, and easy holiday gift giving.

Silent Auction: We're looking for items, creative ideas, and a few runners to help gather donations. You can browse these items and submit your bids between 8 AM on November 12, and 6 PM on November 22 at <https://auctria.events/UCCBSilentAuction2025>. Contact Mary Anne Vogel for details.

Greens Table: Join one of the evening or weekend workshops — share that greens or crafting experience! Contact Anne Chandler.

Ornaments: Drop in for a workshop or check with Gloria Roe if you'd like to create ornaments from home.

Children's Table: Have any new or very gently used stuffed animals? Or wrapping paper or gift bags? Heidi Kidd is collecting donations.

Attic Treasures: Start setting aside your treasures now! We'll be ready to accept donations once the pod is set up in mid-November.

Baked Goods: Time to bake (and freeze)! Please label items with ingredients. A freezer is available at the church for early drop-offs.

Jewelry: Donations can be placed in the basket in the Gathering Room.

Sign-Up Sheets: Check the Gathering Room for ways to contribute to the Silent Auction, Sugar Plum Café, or Baked Goods tables.

Volunteer on Fair Day or the setup day before. Contact a table chair, sign up in the Gathering Room or email Mary Pavlik (mary.j.pavlik@gmail.com) or Laurel Dickson-Bull (laureldave@verizon.net) and we'll get your name on the list. For table contact info, contact Mary or Laurel or call the church office at 978-263-7387

This year promises to be another epic celebration of creativity, community, and Christmas spirit!

2025 Fair Chairs & Table Leads

- Silent Auction: Mary Anne Vogel
 - Attic Treasures: Kellie Senghas
 - Greens: Anne Chandler
 - Jewelry: Mary Rohwer
 - Gifts & Knits: Marlee Roberts
 - Men's Table: Guy Marchmont, Ron Vogel
 - Ornaments: Gloria Roe, Connie Brown, Linda Morse
 - Baked Goods: Suzanne Boyden
 - Children's Table: Heidi Kidd
 - Gift Wrapping Station: Marcia Nelson
 - Sugar Plum Café: Paul and Debbie Brooks
- *Mary Pavlik & Laurel Dickson-Bull*
Fair Co-Chairs



Silent Auction Opens Wednesday, November 12

We have wonderful gifts and unique experiences for you and everyone on your Christmas list! There is a Cooking Lesson at Sur La Table in Natick, beautiful original paintings, Advent calendars (Lindt chocolate, science for kids), a 1-hour massage, and gift cards for several new restaurants in our area. There are new travel opportunities (Costa Rica, Portugal, Nashville, Cape Kennedy, and Napa Valley) with fun activities included. There are plastic-free products for personal care, a bird feeder with a camera, and a beautiful, highly-rated frying pan that uses no “forever” chemicals for its non-stick surface. There are also theatre tickets, kitchen items, a highly-rated car vacuum, a gift card for video golf, and many, many more.



We have changed to a *new Auction website* this year. You can check out the items on the Silent Auction website even before the Auction opens for bidding. Just go to www.auctria.com then select Public Auctions, which are listed in order by start date. The UCCB Auction starts November 12. Click on “Auction” at the top of the page to view all the items entered so far, or search for a specific item, or search all items in a specific category. When you see an item you like, double click on it to see a complete description of the item, its price, and more/larger photos.

Huge thanks to all the donors in our church and in our community for their wonderful gifts to the Silent Auction!



Ornament Table- Merrie Christmas Fair 2025

The Merrie Christmas Fair is fast approaching and final touches are being made on a variety of Christmas ornaments & decorations. We appreciate everyone who has been making ornaments and decorations at home over the last few months. All home projects are due in and delivered to Gloria Roe by Sunday, Nov. 16. Items can also be picked up at your home before that date. This will allow enough time for pricing and packaging of ornaments/ decorations prior to the Fair. We are seeking people to help work at our table to sell ornaments for an hour or two during the day of the Fair between 9:00-1:00. Please let us know. Any questions, contact either Gloria Roe 978-502-9625 / gloria.a.roe@gmail.com or Connie Brown 978-391-4854/ conniebrownbcmc@comcast.net, Linda Morse 978-266-2836/ kc Morse@verizon.net.



Remember Your Attic Treasures!

Are you ready for some Attic Treasures joy and community at the Merrie Christmas Fair?

We'll be accepting goods that are in clean, working condition beginning Monday, November 17th after the POD is delivered on Middle Road across from Boxborough Town Hall. The POD will be unattended but available to receive your donations when convenient to you. Donations may be also be dropped off at Town Hall Thursday, November 20th from 5-8 or Friday, November 21st from noon-5:00.

Wondering what to donate?

- **Yes, please!** Household goods, kitchenware, small appliances, electronics, toys, games, sporting goods, linens, office supplies & equipment, tools, and luggage are all welcome
- **No, thank you!** Clothing, shoes, curtain hardware, used pet items, and medical equipment
- **Careful!** Any gasoline powered equipment or other items that give off fumes must be left outside the POD

Once again, our goal is to have NOTHING go to a landfill after the Fair so we have identified partner organizations who can benefit from the leftover items.

Would you like to join the Attic Treasures team? We need sorters and organizers before the fair to beautiful the space, cashiers and helpers during, and individuals to deliver unsold items to Household Goods, and other impactful organizations. Should you wish to help, please contact Kellie Senghas, (ktsenghas@gmail.com, or at 508-717-2704). Thank you!

We look forward to receiving your treasures and connecting them with the people of all ages who will appreciate them!

The Attic Treasures Team



Bake Table at the Fair

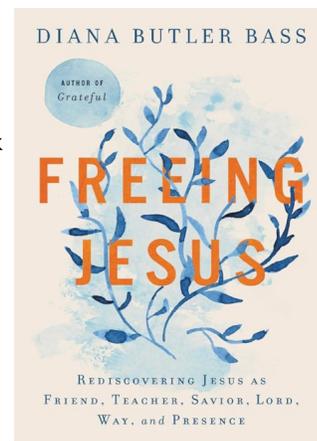


To all bakers! Once again we welcome homemade cookies, bars, pies, cakes, tea breads, fudge, cake pops, etc. Please kindly label your items and note if they contain nuts, are soy or gluten free, etc. If possible, please drop off baked goods afternoon or early evening before the fair in the Community Center kitchen church or the morning of fair by 8:30 am. Contact Suzanne Boyden at sueboyden54@gmail.com, 978-429-4644

Advent Book Study – “Freeing Jesus”

“I would not have spent nearly as much time in jail, nor enjoyed half the friendships I known, if I hadn’t decided to follow the brown-skinned Palestinian Jew from Nazareth.” These are the words of Bishop William Barber II, co-chair of the Poor People’s Campaign in his endorsement of the book “Freeing Jesus: Rediscovering Jesus as Friend, Teacher, Savior, Lord, Way, and Presence.”

For some of us, the word Jesus is more of a question than a statement. There is a lot of history behind the definition of who Jesus Christ was/is within our tradition and in the broader world. And CHURCH should always be about questions. Questions about how we want to live our life. And I love to dive into the difficult questions. Questions like, am I really Christian? How much of this stuff do I NEED to believe to come to church. Is this crazy minister going to all talk about Jesus? Well, let’s dive into those questions!



During Advent we will be reading “Freeing Jesus: Rediscovering Jesus as Friend, Teacher, Savior, Lord, Way, and Presence” by Diana Butler Bass. We hope to offer two opportunities for discussion. First the Tuesday morning Bible study at 10am on Zoom will pivot to this book starting November 4th. Come and join the conversation. Second, we will meet on Tuesday evenings at 6:30 pm for discussion of the book. Please reach out to Pastor Fran, uccbpastor@gmail.com, for more information.

We are looking forward to fun conversations that may take a bit of burden off of the shoulders of Christmas and perhaps bring some healing from past experiences and expectations around the tradition of Jesus Christ.

Book Study Dates

Chapters	Tuesday Mornings 10am	Tuesday Evenings 6:30pm
Introduction/Chapter 1	November 4th	November 18th
Chapter 2	November 18 th	November 25th
Chapter 3	November 25 th	December 2nd
Chapter 4	December 2 nd	December 9th
Chapter 5	December 9 th	December 16th
Chapter 6 and Conclusion	December 16th	December 23 rd or 30th

Preparing for Advent

The deacons would like to invite you (and your family) to light the candles on the Advent wreath on a Sunday during Advent. The pastor will provide you with the liturgy to read, and then you will light one of the candles depending which Sunday you choose. This is a wonderful opportunity to participate in this important part of the service.

You may reach out to Heidi Matthew if you would like to take part. You can contact me after the worship service or email hmatthew252verizon.net.



More of Benefit Concert with Sol Y Canto



Great sounds were heard from Paul Lieberman's saxophone as well as other woodwind instruments.

The first number (above) was an a capella called Ayúdame a mirar.

Maricel joins them for a song and at the bottom a wonderful photo of a packed sanctuary enjoying the music.



Blessing of the Animals

On the final sunny Saturday of the Freebee Market, Fran and Nancy offered blessings to beloved pets—both in person and through cherished photos. Owen Neville stood proudly with his horse, while Laurel brought her own dog along with a friend's pup to receive blessings. Nancy shared a photo of her cat, ensuring even distant companions were included in the circle of care.

Together, we sang a heartfelt song and offered a prayer for all animals, celebrating the joy and comfort they bring to our lives. The deacons baked chocolate chip cookies and shared them with market-goers, adding a delicious touch to the festivities.



Christmas Tree of Stars in the Gathering Room

The Christmas Stars program will continue this year, providing toys, clothing, and gift cards for 25 children and adolescents, arranged by Framingham Children and Family Services. During the week of November 9th, an in-person tree will be set up in the Gathering Room. This tree will be decorated with stars, each representing a child and detailing their individual requests. Church and community members are encouraged to visit the Gathering Room, choose a star, and help fulfill the wishes of these children for the holiday season.



To get a match without coming to the church, we can be contacted directly to collect a “star match” for you and relay the info via email.

Shop and place the wrapped gifts in a large bag/box with your Star’s number and name in the Gathering Room by Sunday Dec. 7th (or sooner). Any questions? Contact Darcy Sidwell, darcysidwell@gmail.com or Mary Pavlik, mary.j.pavlik@gmail.com.



In November, we will kick off the Generosity season, a financial foundation for the church. As we look ahead to 2026, and this season of Generosity, we will reflect on all the ways in which we **plant seeds of hope – together**. This theme ties directly into our churchwide message to all that Hope Grows Here in ways both visible and invisible. See Pastor Fran’s pastoral reflection on hope for a deeper appreciation for our focus and call.

Through the four weeks of Generosity focus, we will reflect together on the vision of UCC Boxborough to Welcome All, Care for the World, and Grow in the Spirit in all we do. Through testimonials, scripture and reflections we will bring these to life.

Here is what to expect:

November 2nd: As we observe All Saints, we will once again share a luncheon and stories of saints who have come before us and reflect on the hopes and dreams that we have for ourselves and our community. We will share the stories submitted in 2024 and encourage new submissions. You may send your personal reflection on a member of UCC Boxborough who was a saint to you to Pastor Fran. Individualized pledging packets will be provided.

November 9th and 16th: Further reflections and opportunities to reflect on hopes and prayers.

November 23rd: Celebration Sunday. We will joyfully receive and celebrate our gifts and pledges during our worship service.

The spiritual practice of generosity arises from nurturing all that God calls us to do as a community. Our donations to our congregation make it possible to turn our mission into a reality. Through our annual commitments to our congregation, we plant seeds of hope - together.

Thank you!

Greetings from D.C.

Hello friends,

I didn't get a chance to say goodbye to everyone before my move to Washington, D.C. right before Rally Day, so I wanted to share a quick update and some first impressions of life here.

I've landed very lucky! I'm now in a charming Capitol Hill home with a small front yard, lovely neighbors, and a tree-lined street near the historic Congressional Cemetery and the Anacostia River. There's a bike-share station just 200 yards from my door, and I've become an almost-daily rider — such a great way to explore the city.

The cemetery makes me smile. [I have long had a fascination with cemeteries, since we lived across one in Wellesley many years ago.] Once quite dilapidated, it's now beautifully maintained and unexpectedly full of life — truly! Dog owners pay an annual fee to let their pups romp freely among the headstones, turning it into a lively community hub. There are benches, weddings in the chapel, death doula classes, a section for beloved pets, and even a small gift shop. It's a wonderful example of how reimagining traditional assets can serve community needs in creative ways.

The nearby Anacostia River Trail has quickly become a favorite. It's a lovely route for biking, walking, or running, always full of people enjoying the outdoors.

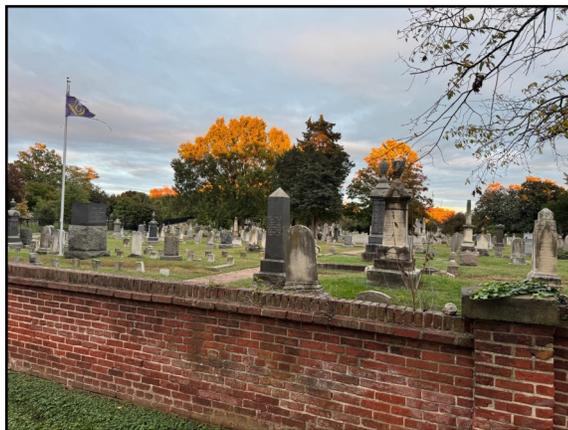
I'm currently "church shopping." There doesn't seem to be an active UCC congregation nearby, so I'm visiting a few progressive churches that are open and affirming. The sermon at the National Cathedral was impressive, though it's quite a drive to get there and the setting felt a bit too grand and formal. I've also visited a local Presbyterian church, the National Foundry Methodist church, and the Capital Hill Methodist Church. I am still exploring.

Of course, all politics are local in DC. My entire street is feeling the ripple effects of recent government actions - one neighbor furloughed, another laid off, and my landlord worried about her federal job. It's a humbling reminder of how closely national policies touch daily life. I've joined *Free DC* and will be organizing and marching. It's quite a shocking experience to live in an "occupied" city.

I live in Ward 7, which stretches across both sides of the Anacostia River. Just a few blocks away, they're developing the new 11th Street Bridge Park — an inspiring placemaking project that aims to reconnect neighborhoods east and west of the river. Until now, I hadn't wandered into Anacostia, and I was stunned to learn that on my side of the river there are nine grocery stores — while the East side has just one. Life expectancy is nearly 20 years shorter on the East side. Oh, we have work to do.

Warm greetings from DC,

Griet



November 2025

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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 and boxborochurch@verizon.net



Don't forget to turn your clock back one hour on November 2!