



# Vestry News

MARCH 2026



## Lenten Dinners with Harvard and Acton

Again, this year we will be joining together with the UCC churches in Acton and Harvard on Wednesday nights during Lent. We will share soup, bread, and desserts and we will consider together "Faith Beyond Belief."

This is the calendar of hosting:  
March 11th – Hosted by Congregational Church of Harvard — 5 Still River Rd, Harvard  
March 18th - Hosted by Acton Congregational Church — 12 Concord Rd, Acton  
March 25th – Hosted by UCC Boxborough — 723 Massachusetts Ave., Boxborough

If you are attending, please click link and sign up [here](#).

Please plan to join us for this time of fellowship, prayer, and discussion.



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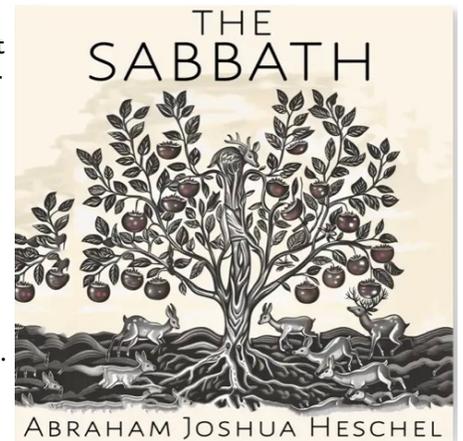
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Several congregation members reminded me last week that many people enjoy the snow and cold of winter. This winter has certainly provided an abundance of joy for those who enjoy winter activities and the beauty of the season. I understand that the beginning of March might be bittersweet for those who hope they can get a couple more ski trips in before the real thaw begins. There are also people who can't wait for the thaw to begin. My heart belongs to spring flowers; vegetable gardens; and the beach. March is a moment of hope that those days are coming soon. Whether you are bundling up for another hike in the snow or bundling up under your blankets waiting for May, time moves on in our seasons. We have come to March. And with an early Easter on April 5<sup>th</sup>, we have also entered into the church season of Lent.

Many of us may have experienced Lent in our childhood as a time of sacrifice, a few weeks a year without some of our favorite treats. As adults there is a complexity to Lent that we carry from our experiences in life. For some, the tradition still holds a sense of guilt from those days when someone told us we need to spend this time repenting for all of our sins during the year. Some of us may not have really been exposed to Lent in our childhood and so we have questions about what its purpose is in our lives.

I have learned over the years that Lent is a good time to simply stop and reflect. We don't do that enough in this busy world. Sometimes, taking a step back helps us realize we need to stop doing things that pull us away from what matters most. On the flip side, there might be new habits we should start for our own good but just haven't had the time. And it's always worth picking up some positive routines we've let slide when life got busy.

Our book study is reading, *The Sabbath* by Abraham Heschel. Heschel reminds us of the sacredness of time. Time is a gift that should be considered with intention. We often try to keep ourselves busy doing things; building up our security in assets; and acquiring things instead of simply being in the present time. When we stop to simply be, we can feel small and insignificant because we cannot control time. It can feel a bit unsettling at first. However, it is in that time of just being that we can find clarity; feel the love that is beyond our things; and feel true connection to the whole of creation.



During Lent, our scripture readings are from the Gospel of John. Each Sunday, we are reading about different encounters people had with Jesus. Traditionally, people call these stories the "miracles or signs" of Jesus' ministry. This year we are looking at them as a diverse collection of experiences with God. In these stories there are many different people from all walks of life with different beliefs and a variety of struggles who have a moment with Jesus that changes their heart and sometimes changes the hearts of those who witness the moment. When one reads those stories with a lens of how we might experience God in our lives, these stories translate surprisingly well to the struggles and pain of our times. As people met Jesus in the first century, they struggled with social structures that stopped them from caring for each other. They struggle with conflict and historical pain that divided communities and caused bias and hatred. They were looking for solutions for problems in their lives that seemed unsolvable.

Too often, our interpretations of scripture have focused on how the story supports certain concrete beliefs about Jesus and/or mandates specific behaviors required to be Christian. During this Lent we have stopped to reflect on how some of those traditional interpretations have harmed people and harmed the reputation of the church. Lent is a good time to stop and reflect, not only on our individual spiritual journey, but also on the role of our church in society. Are we honestly reflecting the teachings of Jesus? Are we walking in this world as he walked: humbly serving, questioning harms done by the powerful, open to changes in the Spirit, and understanding that sacrifice for others may bring hope into the lives of many, even cause a victory over death. Can we see the scripture anew? Can we remove some of the old assumptions of what they mean and look anew at what an experience with God can do in our lives? May it be so.

Lenten Blessings on the journey, my friends.  
Pastor Fran



# Holy Week



**“Death is not the end of living.  
Living is the end of death.”**  
Amy Robertson

**Join us for Holy Week:**

- March 29<sup>th</sup> - Palm Sunday @ 9:30 am**
- April 2<sup>nd</sup> - Maundy Thursday @ 7 pm**
- April 3<sup>rd</sup> - Good Friday Lamentations @ 7 pm**
- April 5<sup>th</sup> - Sunrise Easter Service @ 6:30 am**
- April 5<sup>th</sup> - Easter Breakfast**
- April 5<sup>th</sup> - Easter Worship @ 9:30 am**

  
723 Mass Ave, Boxborough MA

See the Friday Flash for details as we get closer to Holy week.

# Order Your Easter Flowers



There may still be snow on the ground, but Easter is just around the corner!

You are invited to help decorate the sanctuary for Easter! On Easter morning we will surround the altar with lilies, tulips, and hyacinths. If you would like to purchase a plant, you can take it home after worship, or anytime thereafter.

Lilies, tulips, and hyacinths can be reserved through the church office. Plants can be paid for on Easter or by check sent to the church office. Plant costs will range from \$10-\$15. We will do a blanket order and hope to have a variety of colors for you to choose from.

If you'd like it to be in memory or honor of someone, please send the exact language to [boxborochurch@verizon.net](mailto:boxborochurch@verizon.net).

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

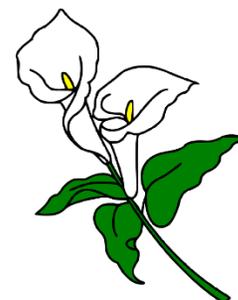
## To worship via Zoom:

Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88306753408?pwd=VlgwZUtYU05JeVU2WkIHVGtUWExGdz09>

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/UCIlayswOH7Ta7LYVK-BcAyA>).

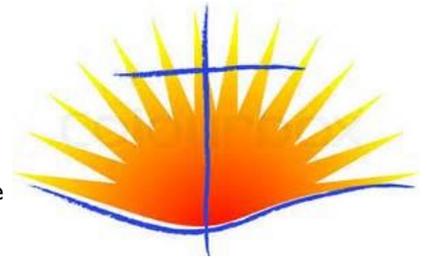
Zoom offers closed captioning subtitles for those who find that helpful.



# Easter Sunrise Service: April 5th at 6:30am

**North Cemetery, located at the intersection of Hill and Middle Roads**  
(parking at Boxborough Historical Society)

UCC Boxborough will worship outdoors at North Cemetery at 6:30 am. Dress warmly and be ready to sing and praise God at sunrise. Please bring your own flower (ideally one for everyone in your party), so we can weave gorgeous variety into the cross! We will have daffodils for everyone who attends. After the service, a delicious breakfast will be served in the Community Building .



*Photo by Ginny Harris*

# Invitation to Participate in 46<sup>th</sup> Music Sunday Concert

**4:30PM, MAY 3, 2026**

Musicians are invited to share their musical talents on Sunday afternoon, May 3 at 4:30 as a vocalist and/or instrumentalist. Perform as a soloist or in a group with family and/or friends. If you know of others who are musicians, let them know about the concert and have them contact Gloria Roe. You may sing up in the Gathering Room or contact Gloria.

All are welcome. **SIGN UP TODAY!!!!**

For more information, Contact Gloria Roe 978-502-9625 ([gloria.a.roe@gmail.com](mailto:gloria.a.roe@gmail.com))



## Faith in Action



Outreach is a vital part of our life as a congregation, and a natural expression of our Open Doors philosophy. Our faith calls us to reach out to those in need, while also working to bring the world closer to the vision of justice and peace God holds for creation. Plus, we have found that whenever we get together to “do good,” we also have a ton of fun! Here are just a few examples of what we do as a congregation.

**Worship in Action.** Several times a year, we put all we believe into action during the worship service. We might prepare lunch for people experiencing homelessness, create care packages for veterans, or rake yards for seniors who need a little extra help. Instead of listening to a sermon, we bring the sermon to life. These are favorite worship services for all ages.

**Food and other “drives.”** It is amazing what a difference we can make when we combine our efforts! Whether it’s peanut butter and paper towels for the food pantry, razors and shaving cream for our incarcerated siblings, winter clothing for newly-arrived immigrants from warmer climes, or personal hygiene products and diapers, we combine our resources to increase the impact on those needing assistance and support.

**Education, exploration and conversation.** We are a congregation with a wide variety of perspectives and experiences. We see that diversity as a blessing, and endeavor to develop it even further. And so we seek opportunities to expand our awareness, and engage each other. We’ve held workshops on anti-racism and bystander training, worked on changes we can make to reduce climate change, welcomed guests to share their experiences as transgender asylum seekers, and hosted storytelling events about immigration.

**Money.** We share the gifts we have received to make a difference in the world. At least 9% of our annual pledges go toward outreach efforts organized by the Faith in Action Team, along with 10% of the income from the annual Merrie Christmas Fair. We organize special collections in response to natural disasters or initiatives like retiring medical debt, so our prayers and our support can be with those in distress. We support two organizations, **World Central Kitchen** and **EarthJustice**, on a sustaining basis, and we are in covenant with North Central Mass. **Habitat for Humanity**, providing both money and labor. We also make small grants in response to proposals made by parishioners around particular subjects, speakers or issues.

Whether we are serving dinner at the Community Supper, helping out at the Acton-Boxborough Community Compass or packing food for Rise Against Hunger, we discover again and again how uplifting it is when we put our faith in action to bring God’s love to the world!

So far in 2026, we have put our resources to work to:

- Bring Al Green, Ministry Director of the LGBT Asylum Task Force, to preach on February 10<sup>th</sup> and to help us appreciate the important work they do to provide safety and support to LGBTQ+ people who have come to the U.S. to escape abuse, imprisonment. Over \$400 was collected from the congregation with the Faith in Action team contributing an additional \$500.
- Sponsor a community support on March 11<sup>th</sup> at Mt. Calvary Community Supper. Thank you, Glynis, for leading this effort!
- Organize a church wide event for Earth Day (check out the related article in this Vestry News – thank you Janet for spearheading this!)



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Stay tuned for more efforts in the months to come - planning our next Rise Against Hunger event (thank you, Catherine, for the inspiration!), learning more about how we can partner with a non-profit group in Uganda (thank you, Anitta!), and leaning into our partnership covenant with Habitat for Humanity (thank you, Jim and Peter!).

Want to join the discernment and planning with the Faith in Action team? Contact Susan Appleton ([sjapple@gmail.com](mailto:sjapple@gmail.com)) or Kellie Senghas ([ktsenghas@gmail.com](mailto:ktsenghas@gmail.com)) Many hands make light and joyful work!

## Household Goods



Household Goods, in Acton, provides a full range of donated furniture and household items, free of charge to help people in need make a home. Not incidentally, it is an organization that helps the environment by keeping many items out of the waste stream. In April, to commemorate Earth Day, UCCB will hold a drive for Household Goods. We will be collecting linens and kitchen items. So please, put aside your gently used towels, sheets, comforters, blankets – and check your kitchen for utensils and dishes you no longer need. Stay tuned for more details in the weeks to come!



## Adult Mission Trip with Habitat for Humanity - July 16 thru 18

We're excited to share that planning is underway for this summer's Adult Mission Trip with Habitat for Humanity! In lieu of visiting Maine Seacoast Mission, we will be supporting a local Habitat for Humanity build in Acton, helping to create safe and affordable housing in partnership with the community. The dates are from Thursday, July 16, through Saturday, July 18.

There will be a kickoff breakfast Thursday morning at the Church, followed by lunch at the site daily, and a potluck celebration on the evening of July 18 for volunteers, families, and friends to gather and share the experience together. In addition to the 8 to 12 construction workers needed each day, we need help to support the breakfast, daily lunches, and the Saturday celebration. We welcome your help, even if you can sign up only for one day!

This opportunity is open not only to UCCB folks but to friends and neighbors in the wider community—so feel free to spread the word!

If you are interested, click the link to sign up [here](#)!

We'd love to have you join us!



## 16th Annual Folk Coffeehouse

Our 16th Coffeehouse was a big success. We experimented with holding it in the Sanctuary (accommodate larger numbers and better acoustics), but kept the tables to preserve the coffeehouse vibe. Thanks the wonderful performers (a nice mix of new and old friends). Special thanks to Todd, Kellie and Gloria for their help that evening.

-Steve and Peter



The Saturdays



Newcomer Brandon Harris



Long time performer at the Coffeehouse,  
Patti Sardella



Tineke and her brother Michael

There were also two female performers not shown: Danielle and Madeleine

# Generosity



Thank you to all who have pledged your financial support to keep the ministries of UCCB vibrant and growing in 2026. And, here we are well into the new year, worshipping together and working side by side to **plant seeds of hope – together.**

Have you looked closely at the word cloud we created from our collective hopes and dreams during the generosity campaign last fall? It is posted in the upstairs lobby of the church. Pause to scan the image and see the many contributions from our congregation and the community.



Thank you for **all** the ways in which you give generously to this faith community, including with your financial gifts.

You can learn more about pledging and giving options, by visiting UCCB’s website ([www.boxboroughucc.org/giving/](http://www.boxboroughucc.org/giving/)). If you would like to pledge via a secure online form, follow this [link](#).

Thank you for being part of this journey and our faith community.

Your Generosity Ministry Team: Griet Dehandschutter, Rev. Fran Graveson, and Kellie Senghas

## Early Call for the Blanket Collection

Despite the recent blizzard, Spring will be here in a month or two and so will our annual blanket collection! Maybe you could use the intervening time to make a donation by knitting, crocheting, quilting or sewing. Blankets can be any size, and will give warmth and comfort to needy children.

Many thanks,  
Ann Marchmont



## Practicing Hope

The sun still wears its winter manners,  
bright but careful,  
warming the glass more than the air.

Snow thins into memory along the muddy curb,  
and the day loosens its shoulders,  
one degree at a time.

Outside my window,  
a fluffy robin settles into a holly bush,  
red breast puffed like it's practicing hope.  
It doesn't sing yet...  
just waits,  
as if listening for permission.

Somewhere beneath the frozen ground,  
spring clears its throat.

(Peter Senghas)



(Ginny Harris)

## 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](mailto:boxborochurch@verizon.net) by May 17, 2026** More details are listed in this application.

<https://boxboroughucc.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/scholarship-application-UCCB-2026.pdf>

## March 2026

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

978-263-7387

[boxborochurch@verizon.net](mailto:boxborochurch@verizon.net)

**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)**

