



Vestry News

MAY 2026

46th Annual MUSIC SUNDAY CONCERT

MAY 3, 2026, 4:30PM

Come and brighten your day by coming to the 46th annual **Music Sunday Concert** at 4:30 on Sunday, May 3, at the United Church of Christ, Congregational in Boxborough. This free musical program showcases local musical talent (instrumental and choral) performed by people of all ages. Come one and come all to this joyful musical program. Refreshments to follow the program. For more information about the Concert, contact Gloria Roe, gloria.a.roe@gmail.com



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Save the Date: Come Celebrate our Ministry Together!

We will come together on **May 17th at 3pm** to celebrate the installation of Pastor Fran.

This is a service of joy and hope. It is time to celebrate who we are together and who we can become.

LET'S CELEBRATE!

In the photo to the right, Pastor Fran is explaining the importance of taking care of the earth to the children.



Pastor's Message

What an amazing season we are in at UCC Boxborough!!! I am so very grateful to be on this journey with UCC Boxborough and with each and every person in our community who calls us home in whatever way they feel welcome. Over the next few months, we have many opportunities to welcome people into our community and to go out into the community and meet people. On May 3rd we have Music Sunday, an amazing afternoon of talented people from all over our community. On May 17th, we will invite many colleague churches and our community to celebrate our covenant with each other at my installation as minister. The Faith in Action team is looking forward to adding food and community gathering to the Porchfest on June 7th. And they are already scheduling events in for the fall. We are excited to be working at the Habitat for Humanity work site in July. FreeBee Market will begin in July. And the Bee-Long Boxborough immigration advocacy group is planning more education and social events. Our community garden plot will be a community gathering place all summer. It feels as though the Spirit is moving.

Faith communities play a unique role in society. They offer spaces to gather and worship within particular traditions, and to build community that reflects God's love in how we live with one another. We are also called to be disciples, following our tradition's way of peace and love.

With more mobility in our society and more demands on our hours spent at our jobs and responsibilities, studies show that fewer of us are involved in any community organizations, including churches. And experts worry that we have lost touch with the community of people in which we live. Unfortunately, this leads to distrust. Fewer of us believe that "most people can be trusted." [<link to Pew Study>](#) Our society seems to be getting more angry; more isolated; and more easily able to dehumanize each other. History has shown that when people can easily dehumanize other human beings, our communities can become very dangerous. And besides that doomsday conclusion, a life with a closed heart is a lonely life, indeed. All religions would agree that God wants our lives to be lived with open hearts, loving each other.

So, let's get back to the amazing season we are in at UCC Boxborough. It is amazing because we can be part of the solution. Churches have a unique role in the healing of our isolation and distrust.

First, we provide a Word, a worldview, that is above the transactional world we live in. Our tradition provides a respite from the demands of productivity and wealth building. Our tradition holds our world in the light of grace. Our scriptures challenge those who use people to build their own power and wealth. And our story of a prophet, teacher, and redeemer, Jesus, tells of a life spent teaching against a dehumanizing, self-worshipping empire. A leader who led with humility and found ways to support and love people in the most trying times. I think that is a message many people want to hear today.

Second, we can become a place where people feel safe and able to open their hearts. There are not many places like that in our world. In order to be a safe place, we need to keep a few things in mind and do our own work as individuals and as a community to ensure we are providing that safe space for all.

Focus our efforts on the needs in the community. This requires open ears and hearts, the ability to listen to stories that are different than our own and believe the experiences of others. Life becomes a kaleidoscope of stories when we can be present with each other.

Recognize that the church has hurt many people. There is distrust in the community due to these harms.

researchers found that when neighbors were invited to bring a dish and share a story, 98% made a connection with someone they didn't know.

one potluck did what years of living on the same street couldn't.

Source: Community Plate, National Civic Review, 2025

@foodstoriestold / @stephanitaeats

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We must visibly show the world that we repent these past wrongs and are fully committed to being vulnerable and open when people approach us with their pain, looking for a safe space.

Be flexible in our practices to ensure that we can grow with the community around us and those who find our safe space and beloved community. The flexibility muscle is one that comes with the practice of change and a heart that accepts progress over perfection.

And lastly, church can be a place that connects people from all different phases and places of life. We can be the home of many people across generations; social classes; cultural groups; and life experiences. We can be the place that coordinates resources and offers community time together. Our calling to love God and love our neighbor challenges us to open our hearts across differences. We are called to trust when our world today tells us to isolation and distrust. Our work can symbolize what can be done when we trust and come together.

The message that this world is Good and that we are all Loved is a message that can heal. That healing is not a one-time event. It is a practice. We bring God’s healing when we stand in solidarity with people who are being harmed. We bring God’s healing when we educate ourselves and find ways to heal our own bias and the discrimination in our world. We bring God’s healing when we sit together, maybe awkwardly, and find common life and love.

The possibilities are endless when we act on God’s love as one community. We are one, one humanity. And when we join our hearts, we can do anything. Hope grows here.

Blessings,
Pastor Fran

Annual Visioning Meeting

Sunday, May 31



HOLD THE DATE! On May 31, 2026 immediately after worship we will have our annual visioning meeting. No homework, just good connection and a sharing of ideas.

Keep your eyes open for more information in the weekly church bulletins and the Friday Flashes. If you are interested in participating but have childcare needs, please let the church office know. Everyone is welcome and hope to see you there!

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.



New Member Sunday

We were full of love and celebration on April 12th as we welcomed three new members of UCC Boxborough. Pastor Fran Graveson, Maricel Lucero, and Rodny Chanteur became members accepting gifts and membership certificates from the congregation. God's love shone through on this morning. May we all be blessed with God's calling to be part of the recreating; renewal; and healing of our world through and in our Beloved Community. Welcome, Pastor Fran, Maricel, and Rodny.



Above: All of the deacons joined on the chancel to welcome the new members.



Left to right: Rodny Chanteur, Pastor Fran Graveson, Maricel Lucero, and deacon chair; Larry Wellington.



On April 12th, Ari Kiiirikki, an alumni of Maynard High School and Holy Cross performs Prayer for us.



To celebrate Earth Day, the children are making a mosaic with all of the gifts God has spread all over the creation: trees, water, and mountains all have their own gifts.

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

We're excited to share that planning continues for this summer's Adult Mission Trip with Habitat for Humanity! 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.

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!

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!

If you are not able to join us at the work site, please join us at the kickoff breakfast and the potluck celebration!

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

We'd love to have you join us!



Strengthen the Church Offering

On May 31, during the worship service, we will collect for Strengthen the Church. Strengthen the Church raises funds that go directly to our Southern New England Conference to support training and support programs for church leadership and church vitality. If you would prefer to donate on line, go to Donate, Give Now and under Special Collections add amount and place Strengthen the Church in the adjacent box. –Thank you

Volunteer Opportunities!

We're looking for a few helping hands to support our upcoming Sunday worship services—whether it's greeting, ushering, lay reading, or young folks lighting candles. If you feel called to serve or just want to be part of something meaningful, we'd love to have you! No experience needed! For information on the tasks, please contact the deacon chair, Larry Wellington or Heidi Matthew. We are happy to answer any questions you may have. We use sign up genius to help organize the Sundays. See link below.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0F4AA9AF2AA1FDC61-sunday2#/>



Faith in Action

This spring has seen a variety of actions as we have brought our hands together to make a difference in the life of others in our community.

- Sixteen of us attended **Habitat for Humanity's** Dueling Pianos fundraising event at the Bull Run Restaurant in Shirley, MA. From funds contributed by individuals and the Faith in Action team, we donated more than \$2,400 to the North Central Massachusetts chapter of this impactful organization. We understand that the event raised between \$15,000 and \$16,000 in total that evening.
- In April, Janet Glidden led a collection of household items and linens to benefit the families served by **Household Goods** in Acton. Not only did this collection demonstrate our care for our neighbors, our action also helped care for the world by reusing items. Our donations were delivered in perfect time for **Earth Day**.
- **Did you know?** The Faith in Action team directs funds throughout the year to **Earthjustice**. First brought to our attention by dear Channing Migner, Earthjustice is the premier nonprofit public interest environmental law organization. "We wield the power of law and the strength of partnership to protect people's health, to preserve magnificent places and wildlife, to advance clean energy, and to combat climate change. We are here because the earth needs a good lawyer." Follow this link to learn more: [Earthjustice](#)



Stay tuned for more efforts in the months to come!

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

Household Goods collection—helping the earth



To commemorate Earth Day, UCCB organized a collection drive to benefit Household Goods. The Acton-based organization provides essential items that help individuals and families in need create a comfortable home. By reusing furniture, kitchenware, and linens, Household Goods also helps keep usable items out of the waste stream.

Faith in Action coordinated the effort, and above you'll find Janet Glidden describing the impact of the drive and expressing gratitude for the many generous donations. Pastor Fran stands by the large pile of donations by church members and friends.

Generosity



We have been **planting seeds of hope – together** all year as we have worshipped, sang, and worked in faithful fellowship. Thank you to all who have pledged your financial support to keep the ministries of UCCB vibrant and growing in 2026. Your generous gifts – of time, talent, and treasure make **all** things possible in our faith community. Through you and with you, we live out our mission to Welcome All, Care for the World, and Grow in the Spirit.

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

If you would rather not pledge, but would like to contribute to support UCCB's programming and mission, here are some options for you to consider:

- Venmo @uccboxborough
- Text your donation amount to 978-776-3110 (supported by Vanco)
- Send a check to "UCC Boxborough", 723 Massachusetts Ave, Boxborough, MA 01719
- Select Donate on our church's website: <https://www.boxboroughucc.org> and use the UCCB Ministries option.

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

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

Scholarships-applications due this month!

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 17, 2026** More details are listed in this application.

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

May 2026

www.boxboroughucc.org

978-263-7387

boxborochurch@verizon.net

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



Photo by Ginny Harris