



Vestry News

JULY AND AUGUST 2026

Habitat Volunteers



First row: Susan and Curt **Second row:** Lee, Connie, Pastor Fran, Dot **Third row:** David, Jim, Scott, Dave, Greg, Ari, Rich.

See the full list of the volunteers and some pictures on page 5.

OPEN AND AFFIRMING
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Christmas in July



Pastor Fran looking the part.

See more pictures of Christmas
in July on page 7.

Does God live in our dreams or are we living in God's dream?

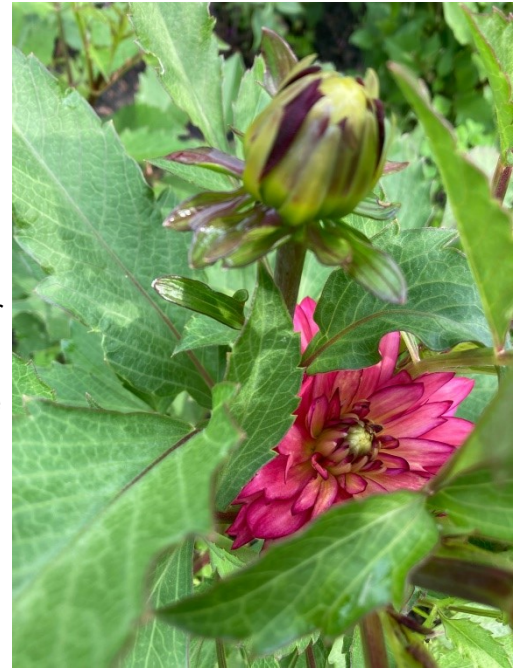
This question came from the 6-week worship series we followed after Pentecost, "Drawn In." The question has lingered in my mind. God's dream? What is God's dream? Does God dream? Or does God simply live in God's reality? Okay, maybe I need another cup of coffee.

In relation to God, there is one thing I am certain. We cannot define God nor God's dream completely. We hope, in our relationship with God, to see glimpses; hear a soft voice guiding us; or feel something that holds us even in our darkest times. Our relationship with God is a life-long journey of discovery. There are moments, people, life experiences that pivot our understanding of ourselves and the people around me. People in different cultures around the world and through different times have placed language around those experiences; tried to build a structure of community around a common belief in such experiences. We call that religion.

Religions try to capture God's dream, understand a purpose greater than us. Sometimes we get it right. Sometimes we get it very wrong, because we sit too strictly inside our limited dreams and try to make God fit into our box, our dream. That is when we are making God to live in our dreams.

How do we live in God's dream when we are not even sure what it is? One first step is to live outside of our box – God knows everyone and everything in this creation. God's dream is loving and caring for all of it. That might not be possible for us to do. AND the more we expand our hearts to everyone and everything around us, the closer we are to understanding God's dream. Here are a couple of ways to expand toward God's dream.

- a. Decenter our view of the world - Life is busy and complicated, and it can narrow our experiences and shrink our circle. Recognizing that God's creation has no single center—that it is a diverse creation shaped by many life experiences—helps us see a bit more of God's dream. We can listen and learn from others, spend time discovering more about the world, and commit ourselves to something new that expands our hearts and minds. Maybe that means learning a new language, visiting a new place, or simply knocking on a neighbor's door and saying "hi."
- b. Lean into things that surprise us - New experiences can unsettle us. They may challenge long-held assumptions, stir fear or anger, or leave us feeling guilty when we realize we have hurt someone. In those moments, God enters our journey. God's grace holds us as we stay with the experience and allow our hearts to be changed by what we have learned, seen, heard, or felt. God can help us resist the urge to build walls and instead sit with the discomfort long enough to grow. So, what does "leaning in" look like? When new learning makes us uncomfortable, we can pause and name our feelings, breathe and remember that love is present, and then respond with a question rather than a defense. It takes practice, and it takes Grace.
- c. Live in a beloved community – Religion can give us a safe place to broaden our experiences, lean into our emotions, and continue our journey within God's dream. Our society offers many other groups and activities that comfort, entertain, or give us purpose, and our schedules are full of choices. Many small communities can nourish us, and church is no longer the only place where individuals and families can expand their lives. But when church is truly a beloved community, it offers something unique. It can be a place where our hearts are held together across all our other experiences. Together, we help one another encounter something larger than ourselves. A church is a network of friendships and a community that points toward a dream beyond us. As Rev. Sean Witty preached at my installation, the rituals of beloved community matter. We are changed simply by showing up week after week, seeing life through the lens of a broader dream, and walking together with trust and intimacy.



Damaged dahlia beginning to bloom

Blessings on our journey together. May we live in God's dream.
Pastor Fran

August Worship Schedule

We will once again have the pleasure of co-worshipping with the Congregational Church of Harvard

Please note dates, times, and locations:

August 2nd – Boxborough hosting at 9:30 am
 August 9th – Boxborough hosting at 9:30 am
 August 16th – Harvard hosting, 5 Still River Road, 10:00 am
 August 23rd – Harvard hosting, 5 Still River Road, 10:00 am



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=VlgwZUtYL05JeVU2WklHWGtUWExGdz09>

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/UCIayswOH7Ta7LYVK-BcAyA>).

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



Christmas in Summer 2026 - Crafters invited to Make Ornaments

The Merrie Christmas Fair may be a few months away but the Ornament/Decoration Table co-chairs are seeking help in making 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 make ornaments. Interested? Contact Gloria Roe 978-502-9625/email gloria.a.roe@gmail.com, Linda Morse at kcmorse@verizon.net / 978-314-3272, or Connie Brown at conniebcmc@comcast.net/978-263-3852.



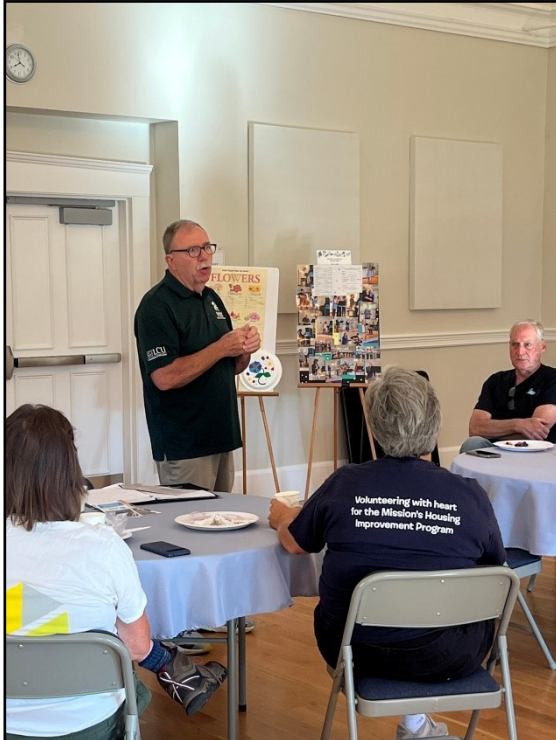
Recent Services



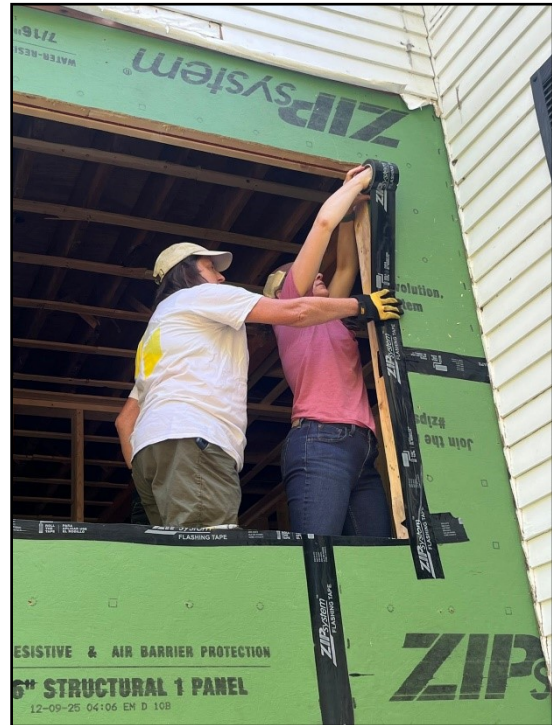
Rich Tosh preached July 5th in the cooler Gathering Room.



Anthem *Come Follow Me* sung by Gloria R., Glynis H., Brian D. and Duncan B. on July 12



Curt Logee preparing the volunteers



Susan A. and Dot S. prepping a window



More volunteers at work



Habitat foreman

Mission Trip/Habitat for Humanity

The new model of the Adult Mission Trip was a complete success! Thank you to all!

One team worked with Habitat for Humanity installing windows and replacing siding at the site of the former Le Lyonnaise French restaurant. A second team installed a new concrete floor in the former boiler room at the back of the Church, which is now ready to store goods for the Merrie Christmas Fair and FreeBee Markets.

Food Crew Volunteers: Lee, Connie, Duncan, Laurel, Linda, Ginny, Ellen, Nicolette; **Site Volunteers:** Susan, Dave B, Chris, George, Pastor Fran, Jim, Dave R, Ari, Dot, Peter, Doug, Scott, Richard, Sandy, Greg, Phyn, Frank, Fiver

Generosity



We have been **planting seeds of hope – together** all year as we have worshipped, sang, and worked in faithful fellowship. And, in 2026, we planted seeds in UCCB's community garden on Middle Road! Our harvest has already started to benefit members of our community as we distributed peppers at the July FreeBee market.

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

Volunteer Opportunities!



We're looking for a few helping hands to support our Sunday worship services on August 2nd and 9th —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#/>

Christmas in July

During a special service “Christmas in July” Pastor Fran preached on the origin of Saint Nicholas in Turkey and Greece and how he gave away all his inheritance to benefit poor children or young women needing a dowry.



Nancy W. dons her elf costume



Altar decorated for Christmas in July. Nancy made a poinsettia plant with Legos shown on altar table.



Nicolette W. shares childhood Christmas memories



Peter S. wrote the song *For Christmas* and performed it with Todd W. and Tineke V.



Helping Our Community Garden

In June, we painted jugs and signs for the community garden. People are invited to take a jug, fill with water to keep the garden thriving.



5th Annual Porchfest

On Sunday, June 7th 2026, we held our 5th annual Porchfest – this year, expanded to include a food truck from Tacos Y Burritos Panchita for some flavors from around the world. In addition to enjoying the talents of musicians from the wider church community, we enjoyed tacos, beverages and reflected on the ways in which UCCB supports initiatives revolving around hunger and the elimination of waste, such as World Central Kitchen, Free Bee Market, the Little Free Pantry and Rise Against Hunger. And, UCCB, offered a “taco on us” to all those who attended!



Acton-Westford Pridefest

UCC Boxborough had a fun day at Acton-Westford Pridefest! We love showing everyone in our community to “Bee You!” A big thank you to Tineke, Jeff, and Nancy for organizing and being at the table. Also thanks to Susan, Brenda, Nicolette, and Larry who welcomed people to the table. It was wonderful to see other church members and friends come by to say hello as they enjoyed the music, food, and fun!



Vacation Bible School at Acton Congregational Church

August 17-21st!

Vacation Bible School: Compassion Camp: August 17-21st from 9-12pm for ages, pre-K through 4th grade. Acton Congregational; Acton American Baptist; and UCC Boxborough are combining to offer Compassion Camp: What Every Living Thing Needs, a joyful week of stories, songs, art, and play, all rooted in nature and compassion.

The camp will be hosted at Acton Congregational and staffed by all three churches. To learn more, scan this QR code on the side.



Join Us at Fruitlands to Listen to The Love Dogs!

The Love Dogs are playing at [Fruitlands](#) on July 30th, 7-8:30 pm! They are a fun, 7-person energetic rockin' band that will be amazing to see in Fruitland's parklike setting.

Learn more about the Love Dogs and buy your ticket here: <https://thetrustees.org/event/446928/>



July and August 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



Fifer's Day: A youngster picked one up of the Bee-You bees at the Strawberry Shortcake table and then came back with it nestled in this bouquet he made elsewhere at Fifer's day.