



# *The Spire*

**Summer 2017**

**The United Parish of Upton**

**An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Methodist Church and the United Church of Christ**

At United Parish, we are finding our voices and our marching feet to take action for justice, human rights and love for all. This year, we've marched for homelessness, supported the IHN financially and with our humanness, interacting with families and children rebuilding their lives. We also marched with thousands of people representing churches, corporations, hospitals, theatre groups, human services organizations and the list goes on – millions of supporters cheered the marchers with smiles, with love and with gratitude and appreciation for human lives and human rights.

**Beth Alleto:**

I can remember attending my very first PRIDE parade and what I remember was being so afraid that someone from work might recognize me and out me resulting in me getting fired from my job. The laws that we have now weren't in place then nor were the benefits of corporations protecting from discrimination against sexual orientation. At the same time, my eyes were opened to the bravery of those who were allies, who were out and proud, who weren't hiding in the closet and open to showing their love of self and others. Marching today, I am full of love and joy – thankful for those who have come before me and marching for those who still do not have the laws and benefits protecting them from discrimination or even death just for being who God made. It's still terrifying at times and my choices are made with purpose – researching policies of companies, laws of states/countries, making informed decisions about where I go, who I support, where I spend my money and where I worship. To be a part of the remembrance for the 49 young LGBT community

who lost their lives in Orlando at Pulse – a nightclub – at the hands of a person with a gun – is horrifying – to know that the LGBT community is still hated and targeted is maddening. We rang the bell in remembrance of them and for

hope that we might get so mad that we retaliate in love and to fight back for love. I'm so grateful for my United Parish family – full of love – let's show that love fully – with our full selves marching together.

**Jessica Murphy:**

The Boston Pride Parade is one of the happiest events that I ever participate in. Every year, I hope that I can go, and when the time allows, I look forward to it with excitement. I am so glad that this year was one of those years when I could join the throngs of people celebrating the joy of just being

who they are. We started the day at Old South Church where we were introduced to The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, a true sisterhood of Drag Queens, I think it was my children's first encounter with Drag Queens, and I was so glad when the ladies came up and introduced themselves to us. Outside on the parade route, the crowds did not disappoint – perhaps the political climate has influenced many of us to speak up for our beliefs and stand up for what we know is just and good. This year, there was an energy in Boston that was palpable.

Then, on Monday, we held the solemn event of the 49 Bells to honor the innocent lives lost to the Pulse Night Club Shootings. There was a certain irony about the levity of the parade, in tandem with the silence that hung between each ring of our church bell. As Tim Jr. and I pulled the

The United Parish was represented in all of these events:

**Walk for the Homeless**

May 21, 2017

**Boston Pride Parade**

June 10, 2017

**49 Bells**

June 12, 2017

**NE Conference of the UMC Annual Meeting**

June 15-17, 2017

**UCC Tri Conference Annual Meeting**

June 16-17, 2017

rope for the bell, I envisioned each of the 49 faces of men and women whose families and friends would forever miss, all because they were being their fabulous self and enjoying life. It is a right and pleasure that many of us take for granted every day.

Honestly, sometimes I wonder if people question my involvement with LGBTQ rights and activism. After all, I am only an ally who is not categorized as a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Asexual, Non-Binary, Cisgender or any of the other LGBTQ+ categories that we unfortunately overlook or even worse, ignore. No one in my *immediate* family falls into any of these categories (at least none that have felt safe or confident enough to embrace that identity). I do have a Great Aunt who has the most wonderful wife and I have been blessed to be a part of their lives, and many of my good friends have fought the good fight to be treated as equal to heterosexual couples. But truthfully, I had my convictions before even knowing many of these influences. You see, I am a hopeless romantic with the silly notion that everyone deserves to be in love – first and foremost with themselves. Also, as a hopeless romantic and absolute follower of Jesus, I whole heartedly believe that our true purpose on Earth is to love and be loved, a necessary formula for saving the world.

I am afraid that in our protected society, we have become complacent to the idea that acceptance is all we need to have. Acceptance is great. It is the first step to shedding the misconceptions and hidden prejudices that lie deep within us. However, acceptance doesn't always help us see the needs of our neighbors. To do that, we must involve ourselves with their lives. We need to witness the joys and pains that they are going through. Our job as a Christian is not done until the day when no one must explain why they love who they love, or until our children do not have to second guess which bathroom they can use or until that day when we can see couples of all genders, races and religions on TV and not think "Wow, that is so cool that that company is so open."

I get involved because, as a society, we think we have it under control. The flags are posted, it's written in our mission and affirmation statements, and we are a kind, loving and accepting church family. In our schools, we have LGBTQ+ programs and there is no one protesting or picketing

against LGBTQ+ rights in our communities. But I still get calls from students who are afraid to talk to their parents about their feelings. I get calls from parents who are frustrated that no one seems to be doing anything to raise awareness. When my own children come home from school and make an innocent comment about how a boy shouldn't wear dresses – I know that there is still work to be done. And while I still have a voice to speak and legs to march, I plan on using them until it is no longer necessary.

**Orianna Murphy:**

The Pride Parade felt like everybody was free and nobody had to be scared to be who they are. The 49 Bells was quiet. To me, it gave me hope, hope that I could help to save. The main reason I went to the Pride Parade is because I wanted to see how many people actually cared. I was surprised to see how many. Everywhere I looked, there were people who just seemed so free.

**Cheryl DiCaccio:**

I spent yesterday afternoon walking with members of our church in the Boston Pride parade- my first ever. Before we marched we attended a church service at Boston's Old South Church and I was moved to tears at such a beautiful illustration of inclusive worship, and also felt moved to action and justice. As we marched through the streets the sense of LOVE and JOY emanating from the crowd to the LGBT+ community was palpable. What an absolutely fun and beautiful day!

In my reflecting afterwards, two things occurred to me: one, I wish I had done this much sooner!; and two, why can't the church (at-large) love like this??

**Jeff DiCaccio:**

This year I went to the Women's March and the Science March. Each were amazing, emotional, and inspiring events.

This month I went to the Boston LGBT Pride Parade. It started off with a very moving service at the UCC, Old South Church. It was filled with songs and moving and thought-provoking sermons. It was a perfect start to this day. We joined the United Parish team at the parade staging area. We met up with a group of other churches that organized a float. There was a flood of people at the event and it was so

uplifting. I never ran in the Boston Marathon but I have been on the sidelines. Runners say the crowd gives them the stamina to finish. Once we started to parade through the streets we were surrounded by supporters on the sidewalks - blowing whistles, cheering, high fiving, hugging, and clapping. While we only walked 4 miles, the crowds were so supportive and made the day so much more moving. I had a sense of pride knowing I was supporting equality. I was extremely glad I participated and am honored to support the LGBT community.

Please know that this day was not a protest parade but a celebration of diversity.

I am grateful for Beth and Jessica who organized our group. We all need to support and promote equality for all. I encourage all to attend next year, to parade alongside our open and affirming church.

**Lisa McNamara:**

We really enjoyed getting out and doing the Walk for the Homeless in May. It was Jess' first walk-a-thon outside of school activities. We find this one to be a very important one because it helps so many groups in our area. Homelessness and being transient is very tough on an individual but so much harder on families. We were glad to help a little by contributing our time and helping raise money for a cause which helps people who are facing being without a home or just need a little help to keep what they have.

**United Parish Celebrations**

**High School Graduates 2017**

- Chris Coley
- Nicolas DiGiriolamo
- Julia Gustavesen
- Emily Maloney
- Hannah Poe



Congratulations! Your church family wishes you all the best in your future endeavors!

**Confirmation 2017**

June 4, 2017 was Pentecost Sunday and Confirmation Sunday! During a joyful worship service, ten young men and women confirmed their baptisms and joined the United Parish of Upton as adult members. We celebrate their journeys of faith and the ministry we share as the Body of Christ and welcome our newest confirmands:

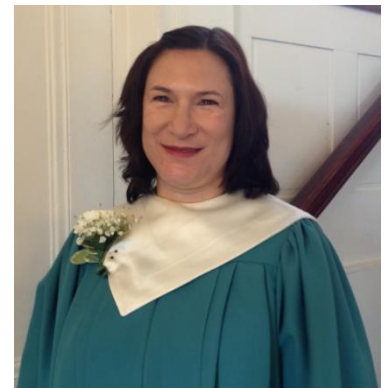


- |                  |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|
| Nolan Ballard    | Erin Bethel       |
| Andrew Griswold  | Matthew LaCross   |
| Madison LeClaire | Aidan Luetkemeyer |
| Justin Nikfarjam | Alina O'Toole     |
| Kairat O'Toole   | Alexandra Perkins |

**New Members Welcomed**

On Sunday, May 7, 2017 we welcomed five new members into the United Parish of Upton family. Please see the pictures and biographies below and be sure to introduce yourself to Gwen, Loren, Cheryl, Jeff, and Marc when you see them.

Gwen Roux grew up in the town of Pembroke on the South Shore. She's lived in Uxbridge since 2002. Gwen saw the newspaper article about Pastor Lourey when she became our Pastor last year and



thought that United Parish might be a good fit for her. She has attended worship services since September and feels lucky to have made connections with other members of our congregation. Gwen is a Tax Accountant for BJ's Wholesale Club and is the mother of three children: Monica, age 21 and twins, Michael and Brandon, age 16. Passionate about singing with others, she joined the alto section of our church choir right away and loves rehearsing, performing and socializing with her choir friends. Gwen also sings with the Blackstone Valley Community Chorus. She enjoys yoga, traveling and spending time with close friends and family including her basset hound, Lucy.

Loren Ferruccio, originally from Lakeville, has lived in Upton for over ten years and has a family history with the United Parish. Her husband, Matt, was baptized here and attended services as a child. Loren has



worked in marine safety and environmental protection and is currently a full time mom with two boys, Evan, age 4 and Ryan, age 2. She is expecting their third child in late fall. Loren is passionate about her family and enjoys spending time on their boat in New Hampshire. Because Matt travels six months or more a year with the Merchant Marines, she and the boys get great comfort from our church family. Loren serves on the Leadership Council, Gifts and Services Committee and the Early Learning Center Advisory Board.

Cheryl and Jeff DiCiaccio have lived in the area for 30 years, including 19 in Hopedale, where they currently reside. They were drawn to the United Parish citing our open and affirming stance, attention to spiritual formation and social justice, Pastor Lourey and the warmth of our community. Having met in college, they have been married for 33 years and have three grown children, ages 27, 20 and 19.

Cheryl is a life-long Massachusetts resident having grown up in Weymouth. She worked in computer sales, home-schooled her children for 19 years, cares for her elder parents and works in spiritual direction. She is passionate about creating space with others to be present to God in small groups, retreat settings and one-on-one spiritual companionship. Cheryl is interested in reading, kayaking, skiing, hiking and country line dancing. She recently joined the 'Call to Care' committee.



Jeff is originally from Stoneham, MA. He is the Director of Strategic Procurement at Harvard Medical School. He serves on a board of a non-profit called Interise that builds small business capacity in low and moderate income communities for economic growth and shared prosperity. Jeff enjoys spending time with friends and visiting Boston. He is interested in science, sustainability and the ocean and loves his 15 year old car. He likes movies, music, gardening, skiing, hiking, golfing, cooking, baking and eating.



Marc Blanchard lives in Upton and owns and operates a local landscaping company. Marc helps out frequently with the Community Supper and serves on the Building & Grounds Committee, where and has lent his expertise to the recent church ground improvements.



Photo Credits to Brian Le Suer

## Ordination Anniversary

Rev. Robert Jackman, pastor of the United Parish from 1969 to 1980 recently celebrated 55 years of being in the ministry. Best wishes to Rev. Jackman on his many years of service.





## Summer Worship

Beginning July 2, summer worship at the United Parish will feature a series of Holy Conversations as we learn how to talk with each other (and with our children) about what really matters.

As a resource, the book *Waking Up White* by Debby Irving will be used. Books will be available through the church office or during coffee hour. The cost is \$18 and donations will be gratefully accepted. The book is also available for e-readers.

**June 25:** Worship Ministry Team ~  
Join Beth Alletto, Jessica Murphy and Cindy Coley as they share their experiences at the UCC Tri-Conference Annual Meeting and the UMC MA Conference Annual Meeting.

**July 2:\*** Pastor Lourey ~ Communion Sunday

**July 9:\*** Pastor Lourey with Guest Speaker from Worcester Fellowship

**July 16:\*** Pastor Lourey

**July 23:\*** Pastor Lourey

**July 30:\*** Pastor Lourey

**August 6:\*** Pastor Lourey ~ Communion Sunday

**August 13:\*** Pastor Lourey

**August 20:\*** Pastor Lourey

**August 27:\*** Pastor Lourey

**Sept. 3:\*** Pastor Lourey ~ Communion Sunday

**Sept. 10:** Pastor Lourey  
(Homecoming Sunday)

\*Worship in the "Summer Chapel" (9:45 in the vestry, coffee hour before worship at 9:00 am)

Children are invited to join the congregation in the vestry beginning July 2<sup>nd</sup>. Just like in previous years, a special table will be set up in the vestry where children are welcome to sit and work on an activity while still taking part in worship. Nursery Care is available upon request.

**Summer Office Hours at  
The United Parish of Upton  
Tuesday and Thursday 9:00 am-3:00 pm  
June 27<sup>th</sup> to August 24<sup>th</sup>**

## Small Group Ministries

### Creating with God

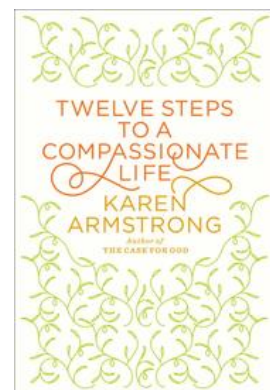
**Mondays, 1:30-3:00**

Join Pastor Lourey for a time to express whatever form your creative spiritual practice takes. From journaling to coloring to knitting to meditation all spiritual practice is time well spent. All are welcome to meet at the church for a time of creativity and companionship.



### Interfaith Book Group

The Interfaith Book Group will meet at 3:00 on Saturday, July 15 in the church vestry. Join members of the United Parish community and members of other local faith communities to read and discuss the book *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life* by Karen Armstrong.



Copies of the book will be available at the meeting. The cost is \$12. In the fall, the Interfaith Book Group will be meeting on the third Monday evening of each month. Time and place will be announced soon. All are welcome and invited to attend.

### Make Friends Across Religions

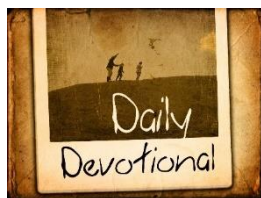
"On June 14, 2017, many of the world's most prominent religious leaders made a joint statement encouraging people everywhere to make friends across religions. Friendship and getting to know one another are the antidotes to negativity and divisions in society, enhancing understanding and unity. We pray that the message and example of unity shown by these leaders, will contribute to bridging divisions by inspiring you and your friends to start new conversations with people of different faiths."

This statement was facilitated by The Elijah Interfaith Institute, a nonprofit, international, UNESCO sponsored organization. To view the video and for more information about Institute go to [www.elijah-interfaith.org](http://www.elijah-interfaith.org).

# Committees News

## Diaconate Board

Copies of the July/August issue of *The Upper Room Daily Devotional* will be available at the end of June. Copies can be found in the vestry and on the table outside the pastor's office. The Deacons invite you to take a copy for your home use.



## Worship Assistants Schedule

### June 2017

#### June 25 ~

Ushers: **Brian Yurewicz**, Lisa Henry  
Reader: Lisa Henry  
Greeters: The Perkins Family  
Coffee Hour Host: Ruth Whitmore  
Scrip Salesperson: TBD

### July 2017

#### July 2 ~ Communion

Ushers: **Steve Cok**, Brad Rolph  
Reader: Bobbie Lawn Tower  
Greeters: The Loeper Family  
Coffee Hour Host: Lisa Henry  
Scrip Salesperson: Bobbie Lawn Tower

#### July 9 ~

Ushers: **Michel Lareau**, Suze Caron  
Reader: Rich Perkins  
Greeters: Miki & Lance Mitchell  
Coffee Hour Host: Leanne Luetkemeyer  
Scrip Salesperson: Sandra Ng

#### July 16 ~

Ushers: **Steve Cok**, Heather O'Toole  
Reader: Ken Gamache  
Greeters: Sandra & Jeff Ng  
Coffee Hour Host: Heather O'Toole  
Scrip Salesperson: Nancy & Wayne Phipps

#### July 23 ~

Ushers: **Brian Yurewicz**, TBD  
Reader: Beth Alletto  
Greeters: The Ballard Family  
Coffee Hour Host: Miki & Lance Mitchell  
Scrip Salesperson: TBD

#### July 30 ~

Ushers: **Marilyn Holman**, Ken Gamache  
Reader: Lisa Henry  
Greeters: The Tubbs Family  
Coffee Hour Host: Caroline & John Stoffel  
Scrip Salesperson: TBD

### August 2017

#### August 6 ~ Communion

Ushers: **Heather O'Toole**, Beth Tubbs  
Reader: Suze Caron

Greeters: The Vumbaca Family

Coffee Hour Host: Suze Caron

Scrip Salesperson: TBD

#### August 13 ~

Ushers: **Heather O'Toole**, Marilyn Holman

Reader: TBD

Greeters: The Stoffel Family

Coffee Hour Host: Sonja Hansard Weiner & Sandra Ng

Scrip Salesperson: TBD

#### August 20 ~

Ushers: **Brad Rolph**, Ruth Whitmore

Reader: Heather O'Toole

Greeters: Sandra & Jeff Ng

Coffee Hour Host: Sandy Leacu

Scrip Salesperson: Bobbie Lawn Tower

#### August 27 ~

Ushers: **Brad Rolph**, Lisa Henry

Reader: Beth Alletto

Greeters: TBD

Coffee Hour Host: Miki & Lance Mitchell

Scrip Salesperson: Nancy & Wayne Phipps

If you have signed up to be a Worship Assistant, please be sure to check the schedule for your name. This schedule along with the contact list of all readers, greeters, ushers and coffee hour hosts has been sent out to everyone on the schedule. If you are unable to attend as scheduled, please find an alternate from the contact list. Then let Ken Lannon (kclannon@gmail.com) know, so that he can update the schedule. Worship Assistants are an important part of each worship service. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

## Notice from the Kitchen Committee

Over the summer, the Kitchen Committee will be cleaning and organizing the church kitchen. The cabinets and drawers are labeled, so if you use the kitchen, please put things back where they belong. We are well stocked with kitchenware so please do not DONATE items without checking with Sandy Leacu first. Thank you!

## Building & Grounds

The Building and Grounds Team is continuing their work on the church grounds. You will notice that several of the overgrown shrubs along the side of the building have been removed or trimmed and new plantings have been installed. We offer a big thank you to Wendy Rowland, Marc Blanchard, Scott Oglesby, Tim, Timmy & Orianna Murphy, Don, Tom & Chris Coley, Jeff Ng, Brad Rolph, and Lance Mitchell who have spent many hours working hard to beautify the church building and grounds.



The Team meets once each month on the fourth Thursday, 7:30-9:30 to perform routine maintenance and any projects that require special attention. Anyone interested in lending a hand on a regular or occasional basis is welcome.



## Business Committee

During the months of July and August events at the church typically slowdown. People go on vacation and participation lessens. However, just as in our personal lives, church expenses are ongoing. The Business Committee asks all church family members and friends to please try to keep your pledges and giving current during the summer months.

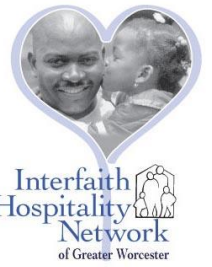


With gratitude,  
The Business Committee

## Gifts and Service

### Interfaith Hospitality Network Hosting

The United Parish will be hosting the families of the IHN at the Worcester home (91 June Street) during the week of July 30-August 5.



I am now reaching out to the congregation for assistance in filling the host slots for that week.

We have many openings, and therefore need many "hands" to fulfill our commitment. Please see the schedule below for open hosting times slots. If you are able to host any one or more of the slots, please either email me at [miki.mitchell1@gmail.com](mailto:miki.mitchell1@gmail.com), or contact Sandra at the church office, 508-529-3192. Your time and kindness really make a difference!

### WEEK OF JULY 30-AUGUST 5:

We are WIDE OPEN for most slots/days:

#### Evening Host

(5:30 to 8:30, when overnight host arrives)

Sunday, July 30

Monday, July 31

Tuesday, August 1

Thursday, August 3

Friday, August 4

Saturday, August 5

#### Overnight Host

(8:30 to 6:30am M-F, till 8am Sat, Sun)

Sunday, July 30

Monday, July 31



Tuesday, August 1  
Thursday, August 3  
Friday, August 4  
Saturday, August 5

We also are in need of gift cards for Big Y or Price Chopper to help fund the meals for that week, and any monetary donation would be gratefully accepted! If you have an interest in making a meal for the families, please let us know and we can arrange that as well. Thank you all for your kind assistance with this wonderful ministry!

Blessings,  
*Miki Mitchell*, IHN Coordinator

### Community Supper

Looking back at another rewarding year of hosting the Community Supper, Brian Le Suer shares this reflection,



"I was preparing to make an announcement one Sunday during Lent (and never did make the announcement because I found out we were not doing announcements during Lent) and I was really blown away with how many people in our congregation participate in the Community Supper. When I went through my mind and thought about the folks (adults and youth) who have volunteered to setup, cook, cleanup, bake and attend, I came up with about 60 names! That is really amazing!"

The Community Supper is simply a time to share a meal with others, some you may know and others you will get to know.

*There are no strangers here; Only friends you haven't yet met.*

~William Butler Yeats

We thank all our guests, kitchen volunteers, and bakers for their participation which make the supper a great community event. Every month 75-80 people enjoyed a variety of delicious meals and each other's company. Spread the word that all are welcome to share the meal.

We will break for the months of July and August and will resume on the third Thursday in September.

**Next Community Supper ~ September 21<sup>st</sup>, 5:30**

### Food Pantry Sunday Giving Campaign

We are stocking up on the following items during the summer:

**Cereal, Peanut Butter, Jelly,  
Juice Boxes**

**Men's Hygiene Products  
(deodorant, body wash, razors, etc.)**

Drop off boxes are located in the vestry and office entryway. Thank you for continuing to keep us in mind as you do your grocery shopping.

**Food Pantry Summer Hours and Dates  
Second & Fourth Tuesdays, 9:30-11:00**

**June 27**

**July 11 & 25**

**August 8 & 22**

We are truly grateful for the support of our community partners, volunteers, church family and friends who help us do what we do!

### Christian Education

The United Parish of Upton proudly presents

**Vacation Bible Camp\* 2017:**

**DIG**

**Delighting In God by Living Green**

**July 31<sup>st</sup> – August 4<sup>th</sup>**

**9:00 am - 12:00 pm**

**1 Church Street, Upton**

**Ages 3-11, \$15/Child**

Your budding Earth Stewards will learn ways to conserve and protect our natural world through



exciting crafts, experiments and activities that promote recycling, reusing and renewing the treasures of the environment.

They will be planting gardens, building fairy houses, feeding wildlife and of course there will be fun with water games! We will read children stories like the well-known Brother Eagle, Sister Sky and making connections to the Bible and what it tells us about being good to Mother Earth.



A snack will be served each day except Friday when we will end in a celebration/sing along and hot dog BBQ.

### Registration is Now Open!

Forms can be found in the church office or by visiting our website: [www.unitedparishupton.org](http://www.unitedparishupton.org)

Questions???

Contact: Jessica Murphy  
journeywithjessy@gmail.com  
508-208-3034

\*Vacation Bible Camp is hosted by the United Parish of Upton and is Open and Welcoming to everyone. No membership or religious affiliation required.

## Ministry & Community Partners

### United Parish Early Learning Center

Our school year has ended and the rooms are quiet and bare. I always miss the joyful sounds of the children during the summer. We again had a successful "June Fun" program! The children loved the idea of splashing in the pools and running under the sprinkler. Lots of unstructured free play time is just what they needed.




During the summer I will be preparing for the next school year. There are still a few openings available if you know anyone who may be interested in finding out more about our program. I will be available for tours this summer by appointment. Please feel free to email me at [unitedparishschool@gmail.com](mailto:unitedparishschool@gmail.com) or call me at 508-529-6382. Also, check out our website [www.unitedparishelc.org](http://www.unitedparishelc.org) or our Facebook page!


*Roanne Miller*, Director



SPEAKING OUT, LISTENING DEEP:  
**SPIRITUAL GROUNDING  
FOR POLITICAL ACTION**



**The 7th  
Annual Peace  
Conference**      **Saturday &  
Sunday,  
July 22 & 23**



Featuring Saturday Afternoon Plenary Speaker  
**DR. ROBERT A. JONAS**  
Director of The Empty Bell, a contemplative sanctuary in Northampton,  
Massachusetts with a special emphasis on Buddhist-Christian dialogue

Sunday Afternoon Workshops led by local community leaders  
with a closing prayer service for peace

**Rolling Ridge**  
Retreat and Conference Center  
660 Great Pond Road, North Andover, MA. 01845 978-682-8815  
Register at [www.rollingridge.org](http://www.rollingridge.org)

Since its inception in 2011, the **Peace Conference at Rolling Ridge** has served as an important platform for healthy dialogue and inspirational hope. Diverse speakers over the years have addressed issues of peace-making, Earth tending, and inter-faith reverence. In a confusing political and social climate, now more than ever, people need a safe space as we seek understanding, harmony, and change.

This year, Rolling Ridge will address the topic of peace in the political process at our 7<sup>th</sup> annual Peace Conference. During the Saturday afternoon plenary, Dr. Robert Jonas, will focus on the inner work that needs to be done so that we may be faithful to our call to speak out against political, social, and racial injustices.

The weekend also includes time for workshops, worship and wellness services. Brochures with a mail-in registration form are available on the table outside the pastor's office or register on line at [www.rollingridge.org](http://www.rollingridge.org).

Rolling Ridge  
660 Great Pond Road  
North Andover, MA

# Messages from Our Denominations

## United Methodist Church

June 1, 2017



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Greetings in the precious name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I am reading a powerful book by William H. Willimon titled "Fear of the Other" (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2016).

In it he writes:

"In one of my former congregations, we sought and eventually welcomed as a member a woman who was, due to her addiction, homeless. A family was assigned to lead the church in doing what we needed to do truly to receive Alice as Christ had received us. We had two years of successes and disappointments, frustrations and wonderful surprises, hard work that stretched our patience and our finances.

When Alice had been off alcohol for a year and was thriving in a new job, I thanked the woman who was instrumental in her recovery. 'You should thank Alice,' she responded. 'Before she joined Trinity, we were in danger of becoming a club for sweet old folks. Alice made us a church!'

Welcoming Alice restored the adventure of salvation in Christ and saved us from moderate, mediocre Methodism. After Alice, we changed our evangelism slogan from, 'We welcome you' to 'We NEED you.'" (pp 71-72)

Bishop Willimon's words are poignant as we celebrate Pentecost, the birthday of the Church.

Though it is a very painful exercise, people like Alice challenge us to ask the marginalized in our society, "Do you think our church really cares for every single child of God or do we seem like a club where membership is limited to people who look, talk, and think alike?"

We may welcome others, but do we make sincere gestures that say we really, really need them? I recently saw on a college campus wall: "Global can mean next door, down the street or around the world." I was reminded of Wesley's mantra, "The world is my parish!"

More importantly, it reminds us of the parable of the Good Samaritan as shared by Jesus in Luke 10:25-37. The priest and the Levite were so occupied with themselves and their agendas, they failed to see the needs of the person fighting for his life in the ditch. It was the Samaritan, who was not part of the religious establishment, who was able to assess the needs of the person in trouble. The Samaritan reached out to him, giving a clear message that he needed him. Jesus tells us, "Go and do likewise."

Friends, as we celebrate the 2017th birthday of the Church Universal, we have more opportunities and challenges to be the Church of Jesus Christ for such a time as this: when the world is constantly changing around us in every way!

Michael S. Rosenwood wrote this week in the St. Louis Dispatch:

"In late March 2006, a college dropout named Jack Dorsey finished coding a site for internet users to post 140-character messages. It was called twttr: 'just setting up my twttr-jack(@jack) March 21, 2006.' The St. Louis native and his co-founders eventually added vowels to the service, forming Twitter.

Internet histories record Dorsey's first tweet as a pivotal moment in the rise of social media. They are wrong. The history of social media began almost two centuries earlier, on May 24 1844, [May 24 will be familiar to Methodists as Aldersgate Day] when Samuel F.B. Morse, a painter-turned-inventor, sent a message from Washington to Baltimore ... There were early versions of OMG: 'GM' meant 'good morning,' 'SFD' meant 'stop for dinner.'" (St. Louis Post-Dispatch, M2, May 28, 2017)

The telegraph and Twitter were both created as ways to share thoughts and ideas, and to make us more connected more quickly. But the telegraph was becoming obsolete decades ago. And something will come along to replace Twitter eventually.

Inspired, challenged, stimulated, and guided by the Holy Spirit, the question we must ask is: Are we changing our evangelism methods (sharing the Good News of Jesus) so that we can become more connected to all the people of God? Are we sending clear messages of

welcome – through our words and our actions – to people living in our communities who are filled with fear because of their color, race, or nationality? The Church needs them. We need them. Are we reaching out to children and youth? To those who are neglected and marginalized by society? The Church needs them. We need them. May we ask prayerfully, "Whom do we need?"

Friends, in a couple of weeks we will be gathering for our holy conferencing. May I ask every one of you to be in deep, deep prayer for the Annual Conference session, so that through our work and worship in Manchester, NH, we are clearly proclaiming to all that we need them.

In Christ's love,



Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar

The New England Conference of the United Methodist Church held their Annual Conference in Manchester, NH on June 15-17. United Parish Lay Delegate, Cindy Coley and our Pastor, Rev. Lourey Savick attended. For more information and photos of the three day event, visit [www.neumc.org/news](http://www.neumc.org/news).

## United Church of Christ



### In Historic Vote, Three Conferences Vote to Move Toward Union

6/17/2017

*By Tiffany Vail, Associate Conference Minister for Communications*

HARTFORD, CT - The Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island Conferences of the United Church of Christ voted decisively on Saturday to move ahead toward forming a new combined Conference, so that they may have a stronger

voice speaking for justice and may more effectively carry out mission and ministry together.

The votes, taken at the first-ever joint annual meeting of the three bodies, mean that Conference leaders will now develop a formal proposal for a new Conference which will be brought before a second joint Annual Meeting a year from now in Springfield, MA.

"I am proud of you," United Church of Christ General Minister and President The Rev. John

Dorhauer told those gathered following the votes. "Your yes today matters, and your yes today casts a vision for the future that was not otherwise available to you. And, my covenant promise to you is that the entire denomination will walk side-by-side with you on whatever journey unfolds."



The votes were taken at separate, simultaneous Conference plenary sessions on the afternoon of Saturday, June 17, at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford. More than 1,000 people, lay and clergy from the three Conferences, gathered for the two-day meeting, with most of their time spent together in worship, joint plenary, hearings and shared meals. The Massachusetts and Connecticut votes were nearly unanimous; Rhode Island delegates approved the measure by a wide margin

"I believe that the impact of the United Church of Christ in Southern New England was enhanced today by the affirmative votes of our three conferences," said The Rev. Barbara Libby, Interim Conference Minister of the Rhode Island Conference. "Now that we know, we can move ahead to put flesh on the bones of this



imagined new conference. What a unique and awesome opportunity we have as we move into the future together."

In the months, weeks and hours leading to the vote, Board members and the three Conference ministers shared their vision for a new organization that can make a greater impact on local churches, their communities, and the world.

"As some of our churches approach their 400th anniversary, the United Church of Christ is doing a new thing," said Massachusetts Conference Minister and President the Rev. Dr. Jim Antal following the meeting. "We are discovering unity without uniformity while we celebrate diversity without division. Today we affirmed the ties that bind. In the coming year, we will explore the power and possibility of a collective voice and vision."

The boundaries of the conferences of the United Church of Christ have not changed since the 1970s. Dorhauer told delegates earlier in the day that the entire denomination was watching with interest to see what would happen in southern New England. If delegates in 2018 approve the new Conference proposal, it will then be presented to General Synod, the national gathering of the UCC, in 2019.

After the vote, several staff and board members said much work lies ahead in working out what the new Conference would look like.

"Let us together, as one, respond with the Gospel of Jesus Christ to face the challenges that lie ahead," said Connecticut Conference Minister The Rev. Kent Siladi. "Come, Holy Spirit, come."

For more information about the Tri-Conference proposal, go to [www.macucc.org](http://www.macucc.org) and click on the *Together, As One* video.

For more information from the wider church denominations, visit the New England United Methodist Church at [www.neumc.org](http://www.neumc.org) and the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ at [www.macucc.org](http://www.macucc.org)

# Peter Mulvey Concert

at the

**United Parish of Upton**

**Friday, July 14, 2017**

Peter Mulvey is an American folk singer and songwriter based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Since the early 1990s, he has developed a strong national following in the indie/folk rock scene through his relentless touring and critically acclaimed albums.

Starting his musical career in Milwaukee while at Marquette University, he honed his performing skills while traveling in Dublin, Ireland. He later spent several years in Boston, where he frequently performed in the city's subway system (and where he met Pastor Lourey's husband, Wes Savick).

He is best known for his warmly wry songwriting and his intense percussive guitar style. To learn more about Peter, his music and to view his TEDx Talk, go to [www.petermulvey.com](http://www.petermulvey.com).

**Save the Date!**

**Time and Ticket Information Coming Soon!**

