

Sharing Christ, Changing Lives



The Union Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Groton, Massachusetts

August 23, 2026 10:00 a.m.

The altar flowers are given to the Glory of God.

The Rev. Priscilla Lawrence, Interim Minister
Bernard Crane, Music Director
Cheryl Townsend, Handbell Choir Director

Welcome! We are glad you are worshipping with us today. Large print bulletins and personal listening devices are available at the back of the Sanctuary or from an Usher. If your baby or child(ren) become a little restless during worship, feel free to walk with them in the back of the Sanctuary or use the rocker by the right-side exit door. During the summer, children may go to Kids Club in the Parlor on Sundays when we have a volunteer chaperone. Feel free to approach an Usher or the Pastor with any questions.

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PRELUDE *The Lord My Shepherd Guides Me Well* — J. Carter

*CALL TO WORSHIP (based on Psalm 67)

Leader: Let all the people praise you, O God!

People: Let all the people praise you!

Leader: Let the nations be glad and sing for joy!

People: For you are just and merciful.

Leader: God, our God, you have blessed us.

People: May God continue to bless us always.

Leader: Let us now worship the Lord together!

*HYMN #12 *Holy God, We Praise Thy Name*

*OPENING PRAYER (*unison*)

O Lord, we praise you. Our voices join with others to praise your name and give you due glory. Bless us, O Lord. Make your face to shine upon us, in this sacred place and time. Send your Holy Spirit to lift our hearts, as we worship you in truth and gladness. In the name of Jesus, we pray, saying together...

*PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR (*unison, debtors*)

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

*ASSURANCE OF GOD’S GRACE

*THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

(As a sign of reconciliation with God and each other, you are invited to share the peace of Christ with those closest to you.)

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SPECIAL MUSIC *Come to Me* — L. Beethoven
Christine Dutton

CHILDREN’S SERMON

(Following the Children’s Sermon, children will stay in worship.)

**Please rise in body or spirit.*

SCRIPTURE READING (p. 789, pew Bible)

Matthew 8:18-9:13

SERMON

The Spirit of Enlistment

The Rev. Dr. Priscilla Lawrence

OFFERING OF PRAYERS

SONG OF PREPARATION

In The Stillness

—E. Tompkins

*In the stillness, Savior, draw me near. In the stillness, teach my heart to hear.
Like a little child I come to Thee, and pray that in the stillness I may rest in Thee;
and know that in the stillness You will speak to me.*

LIFTING NAMES INTO GOD'S LIGHT

SILENT PRAYER

PASTORAL PRAYER

SHARING OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

OFFERTORY MUSIC & PASSING THE PLATE

*THE DOXOLOGY

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (*unison*)

**Generous God, as we are your children, we share these gifts and offerings with you,
that they might make a difference for your kingdom around the world. In the name
of Jesus, we dedicated them. Amen.**

*HYMN #376

I Have Decided to Follow Jesus

**BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

We Are Marching in the Light of God

— Zulu / arr. J. Carter

**Please rise in body or spirit.*

***Following the Benediction, you may depart immediately or remain seated to listen to the Postlude.*

Thank you for serving today: Craig Smith (Reader)

Offering Note: Pledge offerings and donations can be given in the passed plate, or scan the QR code on the back of this bulletin to give online. Thank you for supporting the mission and ministry of our congregation. **Ministry of Fellowship:** Welcome to all who are joining us this morning. We're glad to have you sharing in our celebration of worship. Please join us downstairs in the Fellowship Hall after worship for refreshments and conversation.

Welcome Guests and Newer Folks

Our church family is made up of people from all walks of life and from every point along the spiritual journey. No matter who you are, what you believe, or even if you aren't sure what you believe, you are welcome here in this place. We are not a church that tries to get everyone to think alike, but we do encourage and teach people to love alike. If you would like to stay up with what happens around here, we encourage you to sign up for our weekly Union Digest email that comes straight to your email inbox each Friday. There you will find worship recordings, devotional videos, seasonal reflections, upcoming events and opportunities, and other materials to support you in your journey of faith. Feel free to sign a guest card and place it in the offering plate, sign up on our website www.uccgroton.net, or email the office at unioncc@uccgroton.org.

Our Ongoing Prayer List:

Edie Tompkins
Janice Owen
Barbara Gale
Halsey Platt
Family of Michael Janiszewski
Family of John Murphy
Sarah Reiff
Mark Epply
Lily Burgess
Family and Friends of Joe Garza

Joe Marchesani
Settled Pastor Search Committee
Abby Winkler
Don Landry
Family of William Shute
Chris Brown
Family of Rev. Skip and Peg Lloyd
Marvin Caldwell
Nils Nordberg

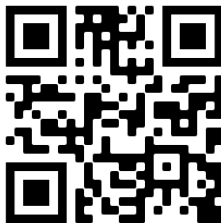
John Greene
Billy Smith
Rachel Elliott
Friends of Sheila Mitchell
Family of Rev. Vicki Hammel
David Stewart
Family of Barbara Kenney
The Hargraves Family
Debbie Shields

We have updated and refreshed our prayer list. If there is a name you would like to add or remove, or if we have removed someone erroneously, please contact the Church Office (978-448-2091 or unioncc@uccgroton.org).

Need prayer and need it now? Simply email prayer@uccgroton.org and your request will go to the confidential pray-ers; or the Church Office (978-448-2091) and we will put your prayer request in motion for you. Prayer requests are held in confidence among those who are praying for you, and you may request that your name be withheld.



Give Online



Upcoming Events



Join Our Email List

ANNOUNCEMENTS – August 23, 2026

Church Office Hours

For security reasons, we have made a decision to no longer post office hours outside the church. Signage at the doors has been updated to list only the church website and phone number. **The office will continue to be open on Tuesdays and Fridays from 9-4:30, and email and voicemail will be monitored throughout the week.** The building will remain locked even when the office is open. Each door is equipped with a doorbell and a security camera. Please come to the Willowdale entrance, ring the bell, and the office administrator will be able to check the camera before letting you in. If possible, it is suggested (but not required) to call or email to confirm the office is open in case of days off, lunch breaks, etc. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out at unioncc@uccgroton.org.

Sunday School / Youth and Family Registration

Its that time again! Sunday School is starting in just under one month on September 13th. In order to plan our year and our curriculum, **we are asking all families to fill out our registration form at bit.ly/UCCSundaySchool2026**. Please fill this form out for all youth, even if your child has already attended Sunday School, or has aged out of Sunday School but is still in high school (we might have some events for older teens and would love to be able to get in touch)!

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to Charlotte at unioncc@uccgroton.org.

Red Cross Blood Drive

Lets roll up our sleeves and save some lives! The **Red Cross has declared a national blood crisis** for just the second time in its history - but we can help. **We are hosting our next blood drive on Friday, September 4, from 11:00 - 4:00.** If you'd like to make an appointment to give blood, please visit www.redcrossblood.org/give and enter the sponsor code GROTON, or contact Charlotte at unioncc@uccgroton.org. Donors who come to give blood Sept. 1-20 will get a one-of-a-kind Red Cross x Hello Kitty collectible plush mascot clip and surprise sticker pack, while supplies last!

Want to help, but can't donate? We are also looking for volunteers to help check in donors and monitor the snack table during the drive. No experience is needed! If you'd like to volunteer, you can sign up at uccgroton.org/signups

Service Sunday

Join our Backpack Distribution and Service Sunday activities. There are many opportunities to have fun while helping others.

- The **Service Sunday barbeque** is always a joyful way to be in community with others. Sign up to donate food/supplies at uccgroton.org/signups, and join us on Sunday, August 30, immediately following church. Prefer to donate money instead? That's wonderful, too! Donations will help us purchase the essentials. Simply note your donation as "Service Sunday BBQ" when contributing to the church offering or donate online at bit.ly/ServiceSunday2026.
- Looking for **other hands-on volunteer opportunities**? Sign up to volunteer at uccgroton.org/signups (backpack distribution, Service Sunday set-up team, BBQ team and more)
- Donate to our very worthy **non-profit recipients**
 - Contribute to the Backpack Giving Tree. Donate during service/coffee hour or online at bit.ly/BackpackDriveUCC
 - Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry. Bring your donations to church on or before the event
 - Catie's Closet. Bring your donations to church on or before the event

A few important notes:

If you are providing food, please label all items clearly with ingredients to help accommodate those with allergies or dietary restrictions. Drop-off of food will be in the kitchen before service on Sunday, August 30th.

Thank you in advance for helping us celebrate and serve together. With everyone's help, this promises to be a joyful gathering for our whole church family and our greater community!

Summer Kids Club

Kids Club is simply supervised time for the kids to hang out after the children's sermon. We are looking for people to chaperone Kids Club each Sunday. There is no need to plan an activity (though that is welcome), just be present to supervise. If you're interested in signing up for a Sunday, you can do so at uccgroton.net/signups.