

THE VISITOR

TOWNSEND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

🌸 *At the Heart of the Community - With the Community in Our Hearts* 🌸



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Since this newsletter is being sent out on Monday, March 25, here is a reminder of our **Holy Week** schedule.

Thursday, March 28 at 7 pm
Maundy Thursday service at TCC: this service will not be broadcast on Facebook.

Friday, March 29, 3-8 pm for
Good Friday, at the Townsend Methodist Church, a walk-through "Stations of the Cross" - journey at your own pace.

Sunday, March 31 at 10 am, join us in celebrating the resurrection of Jesus with a joyful and musical **Easter** service.



April Calendar

- 18 Free Community Dinner
- 22 Council Meeting
- 27 Ham Dinner
- 28 May Newsletter Deadline

Handbell Practice every Wednesday at 6:30 pm

Choir Practice every Wednesday at 7:30 pm

Remember to check the members-only portion of the TCC website for updated reports.



Our Auction is happening on Saturday, May 11, 2024.

See pages 3 and 4 for details!



April 2024

Volume 47 No. 4

Pastor: Rev. Gregory Schmidt
Pastor's Line at TCC:
978-597-0157

TCC Administrative Asst.:
Judy Karkane
Office Line: 978-597-8925

**Village Common Children's
Center Line:** 978-597-0834

Editor: Cathy Hill

TOWNSEND
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,
UCC
PO BOX 487
TOWNSEND MA 01469

E-MAIL ADDRESSES:

Pastor:
schmidtg1021@gmail.com

Church Secretary:
secretary@tccucc.org

Newsletter:
newsletter@tccucc.org

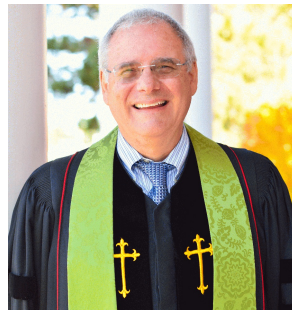
**Village Common Children's
Center:** vccc@tccucc.org

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:
Monday-Friday: 8 am - 1 pm

PASTOR'S OFFICE HOURS:
Mon-Wed 9-1, or by
appointment.

**Visit our web page at
www.tccucc.org and visit
us on Facebook**

**NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE:
SUNDAY, APRIL 28**



Pastor's Letter

This year the month of April will be in the season of Easter. That reminds us that Easter was not a one day, or one time event. Easter is an ongoing state of mind and life that propels us forward through our lives with joy, hope and faith.

On Easter Sunday Jesus was resurrected, but his resurrection was not really even known about until days afterwards. In the days after the tomb was found to be empty the disciples met Jesus at various times and in various places, but none of them recognized him at first. It seems they didn't recognize his body, his mannerisms, his walk or even his voice. That is, until they shared a meal with him and then, suddenly, as they shared the bread and cup once again, they recognized who he was, and what his presence meant to them - and to the world.

Jesus was no longer dead, he was alive. Death had been defeated and God's power and majesty were put on display for all to see. Evil and suffering would no longer win. Instead God's mercy and salvation was offered to all who believed. That is why, as Christians we are considered to be "the people of the resurrection."

What does it mean to be people of the resurrection? It means being a people of hope, of faith and of

salvation. It means living with the assurance that God is there for us through the good times and the bad. It means allowing the positive to overcome the negative. It involves allowing our faith to lead us to give our lives for the glory of God with the assurance of our salvation and our place in God's kingdom settled once and for all.

Yes, many Christians will attend church on Easter and then not return until Christmas, but the glory of Easter is not a one day occurrence. The Easter spirit remains for weeks afterwards.

I hope you will continue to join us as we celebrate the beauty and the glory of this season throughout the month of April.

See you in church.

Faithfully,

Greg



Our Father's Table



Supporting Local Charities

In March, when we announced the collection to support *Our Father's Table*, we had not considered the issue of having two collections in one month, and March is the month we collect for One Great Hour of Sharing.

We have extended this collection to run through the month of April.

Our Father's Table in Fitchburg offers free community dinners two times a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This all-volunteer organization just celebrated their 41st anniversary on February 21. Pam Snaith has been a volunteer there for many years and I'm sure she'd be happy to speak with you about the program and the rewards of volunteering. There will be envelopes in the pews during April for you to put your donation in or you may send in a donation to the church office. Thank you in advance for your support in alleviating food insecurity in our communities.

Carole Gustafson, Moderator



Free Community Dinner!

The free Community Dinner will be held on Thursday, April 18th from 5 to 6 pm. The menu will include American chop suey, salad, garlic bread and dessert. Some tables will be provided for eat-in. Water will be provided for a beverage. Any one wishing to donate food or their time to this dinner may sign up after church on Sundays or by calling Wanda Wilson at 978-597-6803.

Thank you for your time!

Wanda Wilson and June Cloutier,
Co-Chairpeople



Ham Dinner

Please plan on joining us for the last dinner of the church program year!

We will be serving a buffet/take away Ham Dinner on Saturday, April 27th from 5 to 6:30 pm. The cost will be \$13 per meal. The menu will include ham, raisin sauce, baked potatoes, butternut squash, frozen peas, rolls, and homemade desserts, bars and cookies. We will need kitchen workers, runners, ticket takers, and dish washers. The sign up sheets for donations of food and workers for that evening will be available during coffee hour after church! If you would like to sign up to donate

food or your time, or have any questions, please contact Wanda Wilson @ 978-597-6803 or wswilson7652@yahoo.com .

Preorders can be made by contacting the church office or Wanda Wilson until noon on Friday, April 26th.

Hope you can join in the fun and fellowship this event offers!

Call soon to pre order your meal!



TCC is having our 15th Live Auction on Saturday, May 11, 2024

Preview begins at 5 pm and the actual auction begins at 6 pm.

Complimentary light appetizers and water will be available. There will also be a cash bar for wine, beer, and soda.

Once again, the Pelletier family from Brookline Auction Gallery will be keeping the bidding lively. This is a fun, social event for friends and family.

We are currently accepting ideas for your donations. We need you to look around the house for items to donate. We are accepting donations of goods and services now, however, no electronics, appliances, dishes, cloth furniture or "yard sale" items, please. We

are actively getting donations from local businesses and vendors.

In the past we have had almost 100 donations, so we are working to meet that goal.

Again, this year, we have a matching fund challenge to raise even more dollars for our ongoing support of TCC-UCC and its programs. This year the challenge will be to raise \$3,000. If we can raise \$3,000 in cash donations, we have a donor who will match that dollar for dollar for a total of \$6,000. All checks should be made payable to Townsend Congregational Church and have "Auction" in the memo.

If you know anyone who provides goods or services or has a business that might donate, please let us know and tell them about the auction. Don't forget that some of our previous hot sellers were found along the roads!

Please look around your house to see if you have anything to donate. We will be collecting them at the church the week before the auction.

Please take photos of items you would like to donate and send to **both** Carole Gustafson **and** Beth Klein, or call us if you have any questions (see end of article).

Donations of services are strongly encouraged. Our congregation has historically been very creative with their service donations!

Donations that raise a reasonable amount include:

- * Wood furniture in good condition, especially antiques
- * Safes/file cabinets
- * Vacation rentals

- * Homemade meal coupons
- * Sports tickets
- * Power tools
- * Paintings
- * Hand-made blankets, quilts, wall hangings and tote bags
- * Gift baskets
- * Restaurant gift certificates
- * Popular business gift certificates
- * Vintage and collectible items like ornaments, tools or toys

Service donations such as:

- * Lobster dinner
- * Homemade soups made to order
- * Homemade cake(s)
- * Babysitting coupons
- * Fresh herb basket

Be creative!

Finally, we need volunteers to bake, help in the kitchen, set up and take down tables and chairs, to be runners and to distribute auction items during the auction.

The auction could not be successful without donations from you.

Let's make this year's event the best ever and don't forget to bring a friend!

Carole Gustafson:

carolegus@gmail.com
978-597- 6364

Beth Klein:

donald.klein2@verizon.net
978 -597- 8517

Wanda Wilson:

wswilson7652@yahoo.com
978-597-6803

Auction Contributions...

We are looking for donations of time and talent from our church congregation for the Auction on May 11th. If you love to cook, a donation of a dinner would be great. Love to bake? Offer six desserts or baked goods over the next few months, like Jody Burnham. We also have the D'Angelillo's cottage donated for a week and Pastor Greg's wonderful car detailing to bid on. These are just few of the donations we have already received from our members! Think of the talents or time that you could share with others by signing up with Wanda Wilson today! Lawn mowing, cleaning, car rides, dinners, sewing repairs, knitting...oh the possibilities are endless!

I hope to hear from you soon!

Wanda Wilson



The Birthday Fund

This is a fun way to contribute above and

beyond your regular giving to the church to something above and beyond our normal operating budget. We appreciate those who have participated so far. Simply make a donation on (or around) your birthday in the amount of your age (Memo: Birthday Fund)! Participate and watch our gifts grow!



2-Donald Hunt; 11-Pamela Allen;
13- Samantha Miller and Heather
Rochette; 14-Nick Zielenkiewicz;
15-Lucas Davidson; 16-Tina
Bauer; 18-Dorothy DuBreuil;
20-Peter Hunt; 24-Dominic
Capone; 25-Renee Fossey;
28-Karen Baer



OUR BLESSINGS:

Although no specific blessings were shared with us since the last newsletter, let us give thanks for all the blessings in our lives: the people and the good things in the world around us.

I recently stumbled across the Positive News site that is filled with articles about good things happening in our world. I do not know their politics or anything like that, just had fun reading their news and thought I would pass it along:

<https://positivenewsfoundation.org/>

Cathy

Wedding Anniversaries:

Jock and Pamela Snaith,
52 years on April 14
Doug and Karen Baer,
46 years on April 15

OUR CONCERNS:

Linda Hatch would like prayers for her friend, Meg, who was diagnosed in February with a serious health issue.

There has been an uptick in the occurrence of Noro virus, so prayers are needed for everyone's well-being.

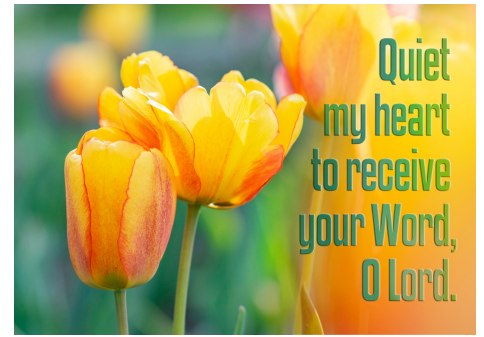
Beth Klein is asking for prayers for her friend, Janice, who is having a difficult time grieving the loss of her husband and her mother within one week of each other.

Pam Snaith is asking for prayers for the Garcia family who lost their 17-year-old son, Aiden, due to complications of diabetes.

Melanie Ouellette is asking for prayers for her health as she is undergoing some testing.

Prayers for Sue Gerken and family as they grieve the loss of Ken Gerken on March 19.

We offer prayers of healing and hope for all those in our immediate and extended families who are in the midst of battling cancer, and for all those who care for and support them.



LECTIONARY, APRIL 2024

April 7, 2024 -

Second Sunday of Easter

First reading: Acts 4:32-35

Psalm: Psalm 133

Second reading: 1 John 1:1-2:2

Gospel: John 20:19-31

April 14, 2024 -

Third Sunday of Easter

First reading: Acts 3:12-19

Psalm: Psalm 4

Second reading: 1 John 3:1-7

Gospel: Luke 24:36b-48

April 21, 2024 -

Fourth Sunday of Easter

First reading: Acts 4:5-12

Psalm: Psalm 23

Second reading: 1 John 3:16-24

Gospel: John 10:11-18

April 28, 2024 -

Fifth Sunday of Easter

First reading: Acts 8:26-40

Psalm: Psalm 22:25-31

Second reading: 1 John 4:7-21

Gospel: John 15:1-8

Nancy Clough has moved to room 108 at Benchmark; she would love to have you visit her. If other life obligations keep you away, she would welcome a cheery card from you. Her address is:

Mrs. Nancy Clough
c/o Benchmark Senior Living at Leominster Crossing
1160 Main St
Leominster MA 01453

COMMUNITY NEWS

Pet Rabies Clinic

Saturday, April 20, 2024; 11 am to 12:30 pm

Highway Dept, 177 Main St, Townsend.

\$20 per vaccine, cash or check

All dogs must be on leash, and all cats must be in carrier/box.

Dogs and cats over 6 months of age, not previously immunized, and those with a blue rosette (2021) rabies tag must have a current rabies vaccination. The veterinarian will inform you of the expiration date for the rabies vaccines given to your pet for this visit.



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST NEWS

Every month, the SNEUCC has learning events, both in person and online. To view these events, go to: www.sneucc.org/events

UCC Swag?

I was recently reminded that the UCC has an online “swag” shop. If you love being a part of the UCC and what we are doing, take a look to see if there is something to tickle your fancy!

<https://www.uccresources.com/collections/ucc-swag>



Associate Director of Philanthropy Begins

3/6/2024

The Southern New England Conference has hired a new Associate Director of Philanthropy who will work on fund-raising efforts in the Conference, and in particular will work to build and maintain close ties with Conference churches.

Lisa Maria Andreoli Steinberg has worked in churches for over 25 years, most recently as the Director of Faith Development for Children at First Parish in Bedford, MA. She has also been active in the national level with the Liberal Religious Educators Association, where she has worked with grants and endowments.

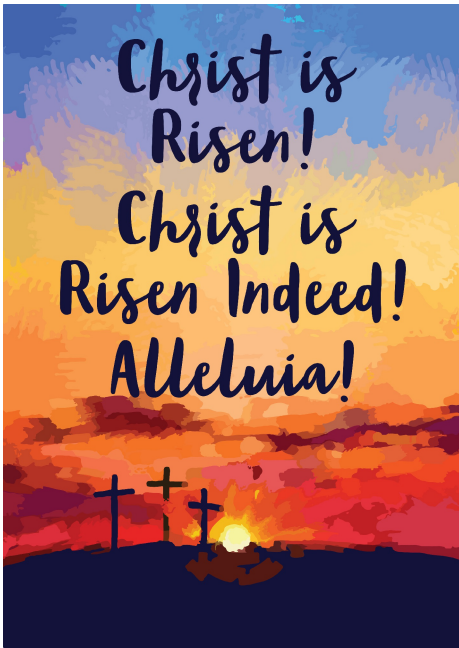
Andreoli Steinberg started in the role on March 4. She can be reached at AndreoliSteinbergL@sneucc.org.

“I am thrilled to welcome Lisa Maria to the team and, look forward to collaborating with her in the philanthropic work of the Southern New England Conference,” said Rev. Ruth Edens, the Director of Philanthropy. “Her background in serving at the local church makes her uniquely qualified for this role.”

Andreoli Steinberg brings a background in education, social work, music, and theology to her career in faith-based organizations. As a graduate student, she studied at Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley, CA and at Andover Newton Theological School in Newton Centre, MA where she graduated with a M.A. in Theology and the Arts with concentrations in education and liturgical arts. With the Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA), she has served on the 21st Century Fund Committee, the LREDA Endowment Fund Committee, and the National LREDA Board, holding the Leadership portfolio.

“I’m delighted to be joining the SNEUCC as Associate Director of Philanthropy to build relationships that further the collective work of the church. After over 15 years in parish-based ministry, it is an exciting opportunity to serve a larger community comprised of many parishes doing great things in the world,” she said.

Lisa Maria lives in Shirley, MA with her husband and their two school-age children.



I specifically saved this Daily Devotional so I could use it in this edition; I hope you appreciate the message as much as I did.

Cathy

Hallelujah Is Forever

Vince Amlin

April 10, 2023

*God's anger is but for a moment;
God's favor is for a lifetime.
Weeping may linger for the night,
but joy comes in the morning. -
Psalm 30:5 (NRSV)*

The other day, my wife made her famous apple pie. Only it wasn't. She took the recipe from a different place, thinking it was the usual.

When the pie came out, she knew something wasn't right. The apples had overcooked. The crust wasn't flaky. It tasted like nothing.

The next week she tried again and discovered her mistake. The two recipes were nearly identical. The difference just 1/4 cup of flour and 1/2 cup of shortening.

But from our first bites of the second pie, we knew: Yes! That's the way it's supposed to be.

Baking is a delicate balance. So is faith.

Easter, like Lent, is supposed to be a season: 50 days stretching to Pentecost; 7 weeks of celebration, resurrection, and joy. It's called Eastertide. Don't feel bad if you didn't know. No one does.

Many of us observe 40 days of solemn introspection at Lent. We give things up. We take things on. We remember we are dust. We bury our hallelujahs.

Then, for one glorious morning, it's lilies, and trumpets, and candy-filled plastic eggs: 40 parts Lent to 1 part Easter. That's the wrong recipe.

The original calls for 50x as much!
50x as many rolled away stones!

50x as many empty tombs! 50x as much death-defeating love!

Imagine the difference. In your life. In your church. In our world.

The balance is off. It's time to switch recipes. Welcome to Eastertide. God's anger is for a moment. God's favor for a lifetime. Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes in the morning.

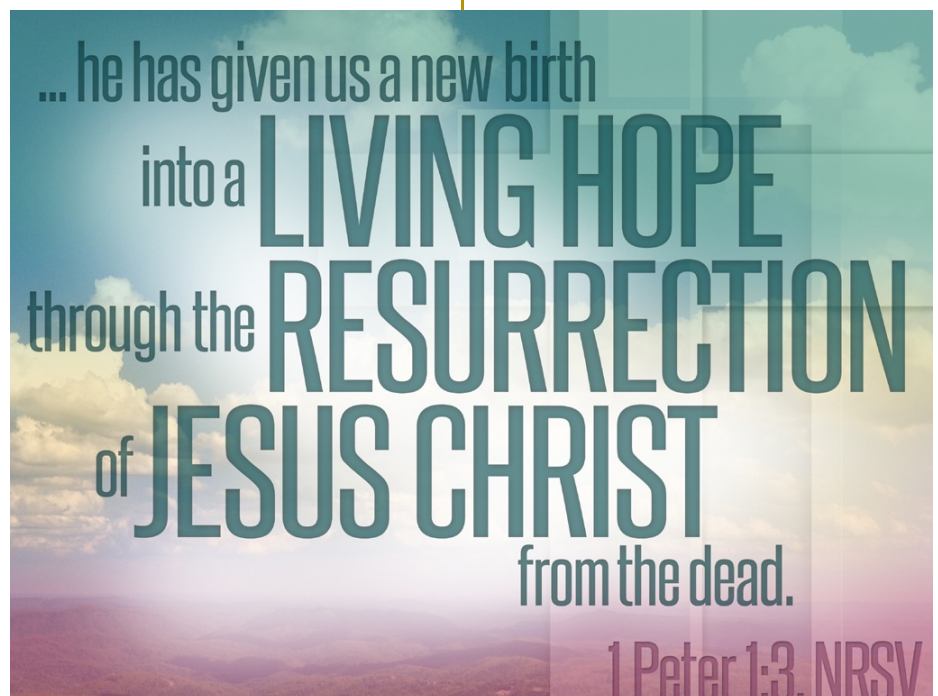
Prayer

Death has had its day. Hallelujah, forever!



Vince Amlin is co-pastor of Bethany UCC, Chicago, and co-planter of Gilead Church Chicago, forming now.

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Townsend Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
3 Brookline St., PO Box 487
Townsend MA 01469-0487

Worship/Sunday School at 10 am

Worship With Us



SHARING OUR SPACE WITH THE COMMUNITY AND FRIENDS

Weddings, Child Dedications, Holiday Parties, Baby and Wedding Showers, Family Reunions, Organization Meetings



We are blessed with a beautiful sanctuary and great space within our building for use that we are able to share with others. If you or someone you know is

looking for a location for an event, contact our church secretary at 978-597-8925. This use of our building helps support the maintenance of our facility.



OUR COMMON PURPOSE STATEMENT

Being in an intimate relationship with God in the present, we are an ever-learning, action-oriented, justice-seeking, community-caring church. Our purpose is to use our gifts to make God's love real and alive for everyone.

We are committed to ministering through the use of our gifts, learning to live the Christian way of life, and being together in Christ by seeking to fulfill these three commandments of Christ:

- ❖ *To love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength (Mark 12:30)*
- ❖ *To love our neighbor as ourselves (Mark 12:31)*
- ❖ *To love one another as Christ has loved us (John 13:34)*

