

THE VISITOR

TOWNSEND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



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



In this edition . . .

- 🌸 Pastor's Monthly Column
- 🌸 Suppers Thank-You
- 🌸 Free Community Dinner
- 🌸 2026 Auction News
- 🌸 Children's Ministry News
- 🌸 Turkey Supper in May
- 🌸 A Beautiful Concert
- 🌸 VCCC News
- 🌸 Birthday Fund
- 🌸 Our Birthdays
- 🌸 Our Prayers
- 🌸 Monthly Lectionary
- 🌸 Community News: GGCC Concert; 250th Celebration
- 🌸 UCC News: Events; Iran War
- 🌸 Thank-You Letter re Christmas Fund Contributions



Holy Week Schedule at TCC


MAUNDY THURSDAY
April 2,
at 7 pm

April 3,
at 12 pm


GOOD FRIDAY


EASTER SUNDAY
April 5,
at 10 am



2026 Auction - May 9!

Our annual auction is a little over a month away (as of this writing). Take a look on pages 3 and 4, the auction team have written a few articles to let you know what's happening, and ways you can participate – before, during, and after the auction.

April 2026 Calendar

13 Council Meeting

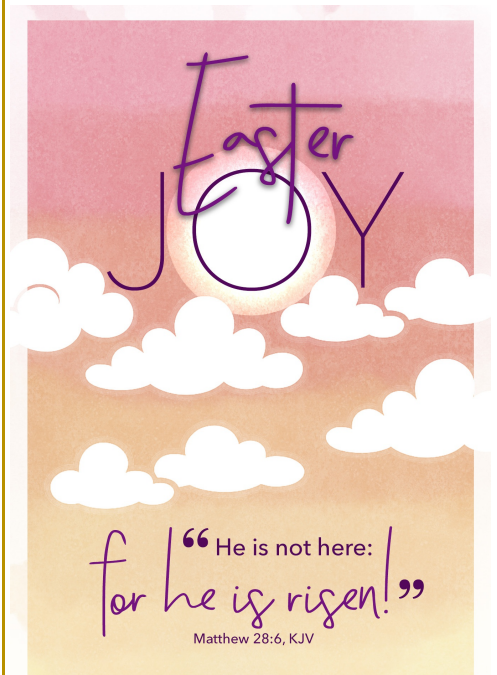
16 Free Community Dinner

26 May Newsletter Deadline

MAY 2 Turkey Supper

Choir Practice every Wednesday at 7:30 pm

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





April 2026

Volume 49 No. 4

Pastor: Rev. Gregory Schmidt

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:

Church Secretary:
secretary@tccucc.org

Newsletter:
newsletter@tccucc.org

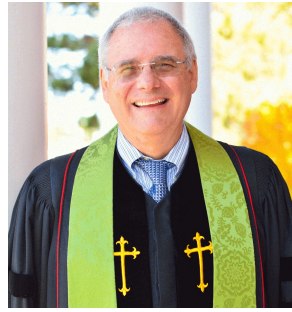
**Village Common Children's
Center:** vccc@tccucc.org

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:
Monday-Friday: 9 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 26**



Pastor's Letter

In his book, *The Jesus I Never Knew*, Philip Yancy shares this insightful reflection. "Presumably [Jesus] could have had any resurrected body he wanted, and yet he chose one identifiable mainly by scars that could be seen and touched. Why?"

"I believe the story of Easter would be incomplete without those scars on the hands, the feet, and the side of Jesus. When human beings fantasize, we dream of pearly straight teeth and wrinkle-free skin and sexy ideal shapes. We dream of an unnatural state: the perfect body. But for Jesus, being confined in a skeleton and human skin WAS the unnatural state. The scars are, to him, an emblem of life on our planet, a permanent reminder of those days of confinement and suffering."

"I take hope in Jesus' scars. From the perspective of heaven, they represent the most horrible event that has ever happened in the history of the universe - the crucifixion - Easter turned into a memory. Because of Easter, I can hope that the tears we shed, the blows we receive, the emotional pain, the heartache over lost friends and loved ones, all these will become memories, like Jesus' scars. Scars never completely go away, but neither do they hurt any

longer. We will have re-created bodies, a re-created heaven and earth. We will have a new start, an Easter start."

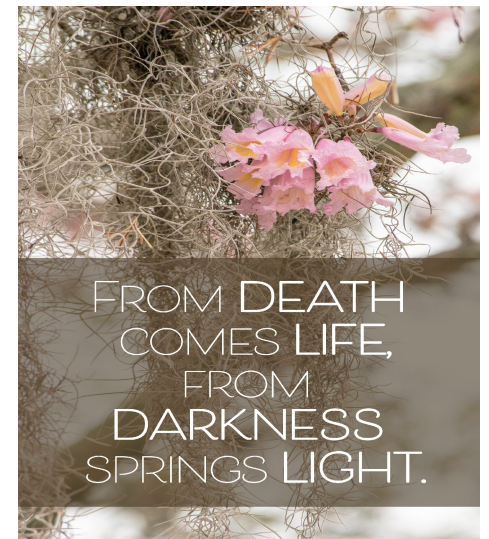
Let us celebrate, once again, the new start that Easter offers our world and all of us. Join us as we remember the passion of the last week of Jesus' life, and the glory of his resurrection.

Our Holy Week services are as follows:

- † Palm Sunday, March 29, 10 am.
- † Maundy Thursday, April 2, at 7:00 pm. We will remember the last supper Jesus shared with his disciples in this moving service.
- † Good Friday, April 3, at 12:00 NOON in our sanctuary.
- † Easter Sunday, April 5, 10 am in our sanctuary. Join us for the music, the glorious story, the children's musical presentation, the Easter Egg Hunt, and Communion.

I hope you will join us to remember this glorious week of faith.

Peace, *Greg*





Thank You So Much!

A big thank you goes out to everyone who has made a donation of food or time to our dinners in any way this last year! Your dedication has helped to feed those who live with food insecurity or are lonely through our free community dinners. If you donated to our paid dinners, you have helped to provide funds for our yearly budget, which allows us to support our faith journeys while continuing our many outreach services to the people in the community and the world with God's help. Townsend Congregational Church is blessed to have your help and the grace of God.

Thank you for your time,

Wanda Wilson



Free Community Dinner

The final Free Community dinner for this church year will be held on Thursday, April 16 from 5 to 6 pm. It is a take-away, free dinner with a few tables available for those who would like to eat in. The menu will

include American chop suey, salad, garlic bread and cookies for dessert. Water will be available for a beverage. Preorders are encouraged by contacting the church office at 978-597-8925, or Wanda Wilson, no later than noon on that day.

Sign up sheets will be available for those who wish to donate food or their time to the dinner.

Thank you for your time,

Wanda Wilson



Our annual church auction is fast approaching, Saturday, May 9 – there are so many ways to participate...

🍷 Food Contributions 🍷

We are looking for contributions from the congregation of small hand-held food items, appetizers, fruit, vegetable/dip, cookies and bars.

If you would like to contribute please let Judy K (church secretary) know. There will also be a sign-up sheet available after Easter Sunday.

Thanks so much!

Cynthia Tremblay and Judy Russell



🍷 Time and Talent Contributions 🍷

We are looking for donations of time and talent for the Auction! If you love to cook, a donation of a dinner would be great. Love to bake? Offer 2 dozen decorated cupcakes like Kristina Cormier or six desserts or baked goods over the next few months like Jody Burnham. Jen Climo has donated one free 2026 Tax Prep (a \$705.00 value). These are just a few of the donations we have already received from our members and friends! Think of the talents or time 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!

We hope to hear from you soon!

Wanda Wilson

Carole



🍷 Auction Signs 🍷

Please check your house, garage, shed, or barns for any Auction signs —we seem to be missing some and the dates need to be changed. Contact Carole Gustafson as soon as possible, if you find any. I have the new numbers.

Carole



🔨 Getting Ready for the Auction! 🔨

Please plan on joining us for a fun night of bidding and laughter at this year's TCC Auction on Saturday, May 9th, at 6:00 pm. The preview will begin at 5:00 pm. Daryl Pelletier from Brookline, NH, will once again keep the bidding lively! Non alcoholic beverages will be offered for sale and refreshments will be free! This is a fun event for friends and family.

We are currently collecting donations of items or services! Look around your home to see if there are gently used items that you would like to donate to the auction. Please tell us what you have or send us a picture for approval (We want to make sure there are not a lot of repeats or items that have typically not sold in previous auctions). We will not be accepting most dish sets, stuffed furniture, electronics, or flea market items. Please contact us with any questions. We are actively seeking donations and services from local businesses and vendors as well.

There will be a Matching Fund challenge again this year. A donor is graciously matching any monetary donations up to \$3,000! So, if someone donates money to the auction, that amount will be doubled – up to \$3,000. Checks can be made out to TCC with “auction match” written in the memo section. Monetary donations can be brought to the church office, left in an envelope in the collection plate on Sunday or mailed to the church

at TCC UCC, PO Box 487, Townsend MA 01469.

So here is the checklist of things that you can use to help our auction be a success! Before starting the list...Put “Auction 5 pm” on your calendar for Saturday, May 9th!

1. Look for items to be auctioned off and speak to or send a picture to Carole Gustafson and/or Wanda Wilson.
2. Make a gift basket to be donated to the auction. We have had many fun baskets over the years - baskets for breakfast, game night, maple syrup, candles, homemade cards etc, to name just a few. Be Creative!
3. Think of services that you could offer to be auctioned. Home baked items, dinners, car detailing, event tickets, and yard work are just a few of the many ideas that would be a welcome donation.
4. Consider how much you would like to donate to the Money Challenge. Remember, every donation will be matched up to \$3,000!

Finally, there are many volunteers needed to make our auction successful! We will need volunteers to make refreshments, help set up for the auction, place posters, runners during the event, sell drinks and help on the refreshments table, picking up donations, clean up at the end of the night and of course, ... please join us on the night of the auction for the fun!

We are asking everyone to save their items at home until the week before the auction if possible. Many

rooms in the church are used throughout the week, so storage before the week of the auction is a problem.

We hope to hear from you soon!

Thank you for your time!

Carole Gustafson and Wanda Wilson, Chairpeople



Happy Easter, Happy Spring!

Good tidings from Sunday School.

We are very excited for the weather to be warming up. With the coming good weather, we will be going on more adventures outside, so please make sure your little one is prepared. We will be learning about how to be good Christians, and how to appreciate God's outside world.

We hope you enjoy your Easter celebrations!

Thank you,

*Amanda Caprigno
Sunday School Superintendent*



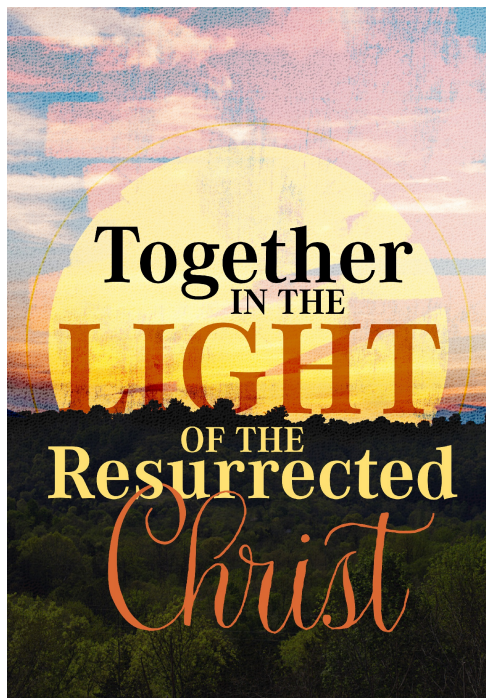
Turkey Dinner in May

The last dinner of the church year will be held on Saturday, May 2, from 5:00 - 6:30 pm. We will be serving our famous turkey dinner with all the fixings including baked potatoes, stuffing, vegetables, rolls and dessert! The cost will be \$15 per person and no more than \$30 for families with young children.

Sign up sheets will be available during the April coffee hours for anyone who would like to donate food or their time to the dinner. Working at the dinner is a wonderful time to visit with friends and catch up on news, while serving all those who love our dinners!

Thank your for your time,

Wanda Wilson



A Beautiful Concert

Our heartfelt thanks to Rudy Zimmerman for sharing with us his beautiful “7th symphony, The Miracle” in our sanctuary on March 21.



The Village Common Children's Center

Hello TCC Friends!! Happy April and Happy Spring 2026 from VCCC!!

From our youngest infant to our oldest PreK friends, the children are continuing on their wonderful journey through early childhood education taking on new challenges and reaching new milestones, but most of all, having FUN!! During the month of March our talented Infant/Toddler and Preschool/PreK teachers took the children on magical “trip” into the wacky,

wonderful world of Dr. Seuss! From art projects where they created “Cat in the Hat” hats and “Red Fish, Blue Fish”, to cooking “Green Eggs and Ham” for snack time, to a variety of Dr. Seuss games, the children not only had the chance for lots of silly fun, they utilized their imaginations and creativity, enhanced language skills, learned about rhyming and about opposites, and they worked on improving both their fine and gross motor skills. They also had lots of St. Patrick’s Day and Dinosaur fun throughout the month as well! April will find the Infant and Toddler classes focusing on Spring, Gardening and Farm Animals, as well author Mercer Mayer. Our Preschool and PreK children will have a busy April as they concentrate on Easter, Spring, changes in the Weather, and Earth Day!

During February and March we had our registration for the 2026-2027 school year for our currently enrolled families as well as our waiting list. Hard to believe that it was that time already! We are so VERY excited to say that our Infant and Toddler classes are now full for that new school year. Registration for our Preschool/PreK class has also gone well, we only have very limited availability left in that class for the Fall, so if you know anyone with young children 2 years 9 months through 4 years old who may be looking for a preschool program, please have them call me at 978-597-0834 as soon as possible!

We will soon begin registration for our upcoming Summer Program. As we firmly believe that “word of mouth” is the best form of

advertising, we would like to ask your help in getting the word out to those out in the community about the availability of our Summer Program. The staff and I are in the process of putting together plans for the Summer and will be including some fun “specials” such as a creative art program that will have the children using the formats of famous artists like Van Gogh, Monet, Matisse and Pollock, which will then result in an Art Show at the end of the summer! “Kids Can Cook” will have the children getting creative in another way as they mix, stir, cook and bake up some yummy fun, including some recipes from around the world! A “Little Scientists” program will allow the children to explore, investigate, and make discoveries about a variety of topics connected to the scientific world they live in. In addition, weather permitting, we will spend lots of time outside engaging in nature-based art activities, fun gross motor games and lots of water play-wading pools and sprinklers, water tables and water walls on the playground fence!!

The month of April will also bring our yearly celebration of the “Week of the Young Child” (WOYC) which is sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). NAEYC is the largest early childhood education association in the world. The purpose of the WOYC is to bring public attention to the needs of young children and their families, and to recognize the early childhood programs and their staff who are meeting those needs every day. As in the past, there will be a different theme for each day of the week-long festivities!

Monday’s theme will be **Music Monday!** We will sing, dance, and learn through lots of fun musical activities that will allow the children to develop and enhance math, language, literacy and motor skills. **Tasty Tuesday** will let us have us connect math and science skills with a yummy cooking project! It will also let us once again reinforce healthy eating habits. **Working Together Wednesday** will not only focus on our engineering, architectural and building skills, it will reinforce our ongoing concepts of friendship and teamwork! **Artsy Thursday** will challenge imaginations and get those creative juices flowing through a variety of art processes! And on **Family Friday** we will celebrate the heart of who VCCC represents, all our wonderful families!

I would like to sincerely thank our TCC family for your ongoing support of VCCC, we always most appreciate your help and generosity. From all the Staff, the VCCC Board of Directors and myself, we wish you all continued health and happiness! **HAPPY EASTER!!**

Carol Ciccolini, 
VCCC Director



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!



Donald Hunt; Pamela Allen; Samantha Miller; Heather Rochette; Nick Zielenkiewicz; Lucas Davidson; Tina Bauer; Dorothy DuBreuil; Peter Hunt; Dominic Capone; Renee Fossey; Karen Baer.



OUR BLESSINGS:

Deb R has a blessing of a beautiful great grandson, born February 12.

We give thanks for the longer days and (slightly) warmer weather; for the blessing of the early spring flowers in our gardens.

Wedding Anniversaries:

Jock and Pamela Snaith,
54 years on April 14
Doug and Karen Baer,
48 years on April 15

OUR CONCERNS:

Lee M is asking for prayers for her friend, Frank who is in rehab after hospitalization.

Deb R is asking for prayers for comfort and healing for her cousin, Dot who is recovering from surgery.

Melissa M is asking for prayers for her family as they mourn the death of her daughter's Papa Joe.

Prayers for Barbara G as she mourns the death of her brother Gary who passed away in Florida.

Karen B is asking for prayers for Jane who is recovering from a fall.

Paul M is asking for prayers as he has lost his job and is seeking employment as an account manager/salesman.

Paul M is asking prayers for Corey who is looking for a house on the Cape.

Judy R is asking for prayers for Dick N as he undergoes surgery next week.

We pray for Louise who is recovering in a nursing home.

We pray for all those dealing with seasonal illnesses.

We keep in our prayers all those around the world who are living in war zones.

We pray for peace and wise leadership.

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.



APRIL LECTIONARY

April 5, 2026 -

Easter Day

First reading: Acts 10:34-43 or

Jeremiah 31:1-6

Psalm: Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

Second reading: Colossians 3:1-4
or Acts 10:34-43

Gospel: John 20:1-18 or Matthew
28:1-10

April 12, 2026 -

Second Sunday of Easter

First reading: Acts 2:14a, 22-32

Psalm: Psalm 16

Second reading: 1 Peter 1:3-9

Gospel: John 20:19-31

April 19, 2026 -

Third Sunday of Easter

First reading: Acts 2:14a, 36-41

Psalm: Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19

Second reading: 1 Peter 1:17-23

Gospel: Luke 24:13-35

April 26, 2026 -

Fourth Sunday of Easter

First reading: Acts 2:42-47

Psalm: Psalm 23

Second reading: 1 Peter 2:19-25

Gospel: John 10:1-10



PLANTING
THE GOSPEL

COMMUNITY
NEWS

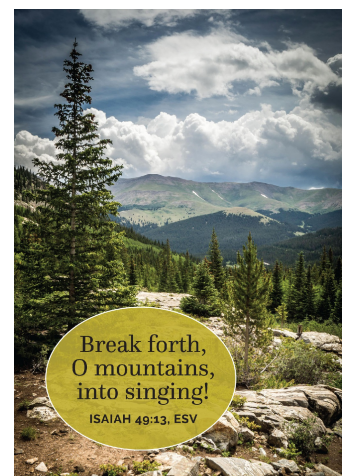
The Greater Gardner Community Choir (GGCC) are presenting their annual Spring concert on Sunday, April 26.

They will be presenting "The Testament of Freedom" based on the writings of Thomas Jefferson and composed by Randall Thompson, along with spirituals and other inspirational songs to celebrate our country's 250th birthday.

This concert will be held at the Bethany Baptist Church, 72 Ryan St,

Gardner, MA.

There is no entry fee, but you may make a donation.





250th Celebrations

TCC received an invitation to participate in a parade and “Old Home Day” that is being planned for June 20 this year. Following is the message we received – please give this your serious attention and reach out to any of the Council members if you have any thoughts or ideas.

“On June 20, 2026, Townsend will have a parade and Old Home Day on the Common to celebrate America’s 250th birthday, and John Barrett and I [Bill Rideout] would like to personally invite any and all Townsend Congregational Church groups to participate.

“June 20, 2026 is a special date because on June 20, 1776, Townsend voted to support our country’s independence. This will be more than just a parade. It will be a hometown celebration of who we are, where we’ve come from, and the people who make this community strong. The parade will start from Scales Lane at 11:00 a.m., travel down Main Street, and end at the Town Common, where the Old Home Day festivities will continue with games, local food, and displays such as antique cars.

Groups from the Townsend Congregational Church would be very welcome to participate in the parade in any way they like, or to have space on the Common, or both - participation is free. This event is really meant to be a celebration of all things Townsend, and the Townsend Congregational Church has always been a big part of our town.

“To find out more or to sign up, please go to <http://townsend250.org>.

“This event is being sponsored by the non-profit Townsend Historical Society.”



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

Good Friday Services

Seven Last Words Service - Online - April 3, 12:00 pm

Streamed to the SNEUCC Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/sneucc>

Offered by the Council of Conference Ministers.



Living into the Mystery - Worship & Sacraments in the United Church of Christ

April 11, 9:00 am to 12:00 pm • Online

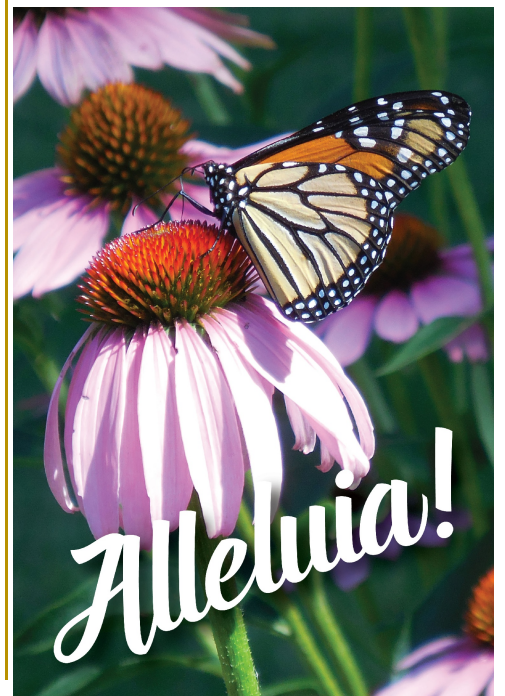
An overview of the worship tradition of the United Church of Christ, tracing its history back to the early Christian practices of Baptism and Communion.



Lunch and Learn: Tapping the Brakes of Conflict

May 7, 12:00 to 1:00 pm • Online

Mark Seifried and Stephen Beals of the SNEUCC Restorative Justice Task Team will share how circle process is a structure that can facilitate wholesome, holistic communication in congregations and other communities.





UCC Leaders Call For Opposition to Iran War

3/11/2026

Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson

In the days following the US/Israel attack on Iran, United Church of Christ leaders have been calling on members to speak out in opposition.

“On February 28th, the U.S. and Israel waged an unprovoked and unnecessary war against Iran, prompting Iran to respond with attacks on several countries in the Middle East including where the U.S. has military bases and personnel,” The UCC Office of Public Policy and Advocacy posted. “Americans and people in the Middle East are rightly deeply worried by these actions and the statements the administration has made about the U.S. attacks. President Trump’s administration acted without the authority of Congress and members of both the House and the Senate have raised concerns about the legitimacy of these unprovoked attacks.”

The UCC Office of Public Policy had called on members to contact legislators to vote in favor of a War Powers resolution directing the administration to remove US forces from hostilities against Iran without a declaration of war or authorization of use of military force by Congress. That resolution was defeated last week, but other votes may come.

UCC General Minister and President Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia A. Thompson condemned the attack in her own statement, saying: “We call for an end to the abuse of government might that is poured out on people who are not the ones making decisions yet bear the brunt of the ensuing violence, casualties of actions they do not support. We urge people of faith to call on leaders to return to diplomatic efforts and to reject war as a tool for peace.”

In a more personal reflection posted on March 2, Thompson talked

about the impact of war on children.

“As bombs continue to drop around the world, the children cannot run fast enough to escape the carnage visited upon them,” she said. “The children are a part of the collateral damage of war, civil unrest, and the misguided notion that peace can be achieved with war or that a people should not exist because of who they are. Children are watching their parents and family members die. Children are being killed at an alarming rate in armed conflicts around the world.”

Reprinted with permission from the Southern New England Conference, UCC, sneucc.org.



When they saw the star, they were filled with joy. (Matthew 2:10)

March 16, 2026

Townsend Congregational Church UCC
P.O. Box 487
3 Brookline Street
Townsend, MA 01469-0487

Dear Friend,

I hope you're enjoying a lovely start to spring. As a cherished supporter of The Christmas Fund, and as a beacon of generosity within our United Church of Christ community, I wanted to thank you for your generous gift.

Your donation helps the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance (UCBMA) multiply the light of God's love into the lives of our active and retired ministers, church workers, and their families. So many lives are impacted by our Christmas Fund Community and so much spiritual support is conveyed through the gifts you make each year. Thank you again for your faithful generosity!

With heartfelt appreciation,

Rev. Dr. Paul Leon Ramsey
Director, Church Relations & Philanthropy

United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization (EIN: 13-6168290). Gifts to UCBMA are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law. Please consult your tax advisor for further information.
Date: 2/26/2026 Amount: \$700 Reference #: 134332318

(212) 729-2822

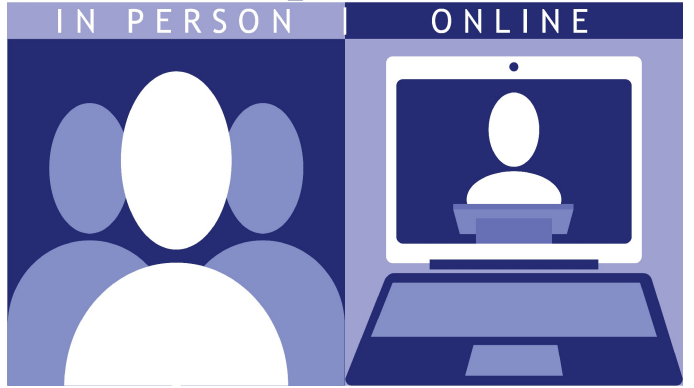
philanthropy@pbucc.org

475 Riverside Drive, Room 1020
New York, NY 10115

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)*

