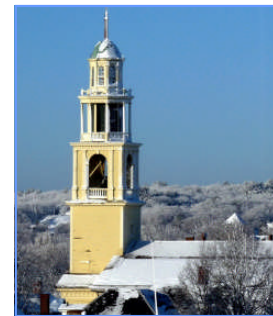


The Gloucester Universalist
Newsletter of the Gloucester Unitarian Universalist Church
The First Universalist Church in America
 Organized in 1779 as *The Independent Christian Church*
THE REVEREND WENDY FITTING, MINISTER Worship Service: 10:00 am



Words from Wendy

“Random Ruminations”

We were blessed to have AzOne and The Reverend Sarah Clark lead us in worship last month. I heard praise both for the music that day and for Sarah’s preaching. Sarah’s sermon was described to me as “very moving” – pleasing praise for any preacher. Sarah preached for free and will do so again. She asks that donations in gratitude be made to The Lend a Hand Society.

Guest preachers bring freshness, style, and the breadth of their experience to our sanctuary. In March, we’ll have two guests. On the 18th The Reverend Rona Tyndall will lead worship. Rona is the Spiritual Care Coordinator (AKA “Chaplain”) at Hospice of the North Shore. On March 25th The Reverend Edwin Lynn will lead worship. Ed is Minister Emeritus of the North Shore Unitarian Universalist Church in Danvers, where he served for many years. He recently published a book of meditations and ruminations, Shore Lines: Life Lessons from the Sea.

Sarah preached for free and will do so again. She asks that donations in gratitude be made to The Lend a Hand Society.

Rona is a United Church of Christ (AKA ‘Congregational’) minister. Now I could get away with saying that she’s with the UCC and that Ed is a UU. However, I am a staunch advocate of resisting the shorthand and of saying the whole name - United Church of Christ, and Unitarian Universalist – the better to communicate. I never liked “UU” to describe us, because it presupposes that we’re a club and all us members know what it means. Saying, “UCC” is delicious to UU’s, because we can call it, “Unitarians Considering Christ.” HA! QED, the problem of in-speak, or, us-speak. The church is, after all, a public place, the company of strangers.

Speaking of names, our church has a substantial one: “Independent Christian Church, Unitarian Universalist.”

WHEW! What a mouthful! Back in 1989 when I arrived, I told the folks that we needed to put our denomination out there to let interested people know who we are. I was told that Independent Christian is our historic name, our foundational identity since 1779. Almost always, this statement was followed, sotto voce, with, “But we’re more independent than Christian.” Delightful! The current sign on Middle St., which was made and installed by Bill Holton, makes the denomination name emphatic. In the past couple of years we’ve figured out how to continue that emphasis while acknowledging the original name.

Here’s a thought for lent. Yes, lent. Give up the arcana of the texting time’s abbreviations, and say the whole thing. Give up bumper stickers in favor of whole paragraphs of description. Eschew labels. Another thought for lent: Give up avoidable agony. There’s plenty of unavoidable agony in life already. An aphorism that I love comes from Susan Sontag: “Try not to suffer future pain.”

Specifically for us right now, it will be healthy to stop agonizing over the fiscal condition of our church. We need to take the long view and trust in the fact that this institution has survived for 233 years through good times and bad. What we need and have in abundance is cool and calm. Embracing a balanced approach, even in the face of an un-balanced budget, will carry us through. Remember this: In the mid 1980’s when the congregation was very small in numbers, the core group (“more independent than Christian”) rallied to restore the steeple which was about to topple onto Church St. They concluded that the glass was half full and forged on to great success. If for no other reason, to honor them, we must do no less.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I ♥ CHURCH DINNERS! • PHOTO GALLERY • A MONTH AT A TIME IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION • BIRTHDAYS & FLOWERS • CELEBRATING OUR GREATER COMMUNITY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RANDOM RUMINATIONS • ALL ABOUT US • OUR TURN AT THE OPEN DOOR • MARCH SHOWERS BRING EASTER FLOWERS 	<p><i>What’s Inside?</i></p>
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Our friend **Linda Kidder** continues to deal with chronic back pain. We all miss seeing her at church.

Mary Sullivan, who lives nearby at Gould Court, had knee surgery in December. She reports that recovery is going well, but surely would appreciate getting cards from folks she knows at the church.

We were all delighted to see **Faith Magoun** enough recovered from her bout of pneumonia to be at church these past Sundays. She is taking advantage of our chair lift to get to and from the Sanctuary ... and enjoying the "ride."

We received word recently that **Ruth Woodbury** has moved to assisted living. She misses being in church, and would love cards and visits.

The memorial service for **Gail Demaine** took place at Northfield-Mount Herman, where she and her husband **David** worked for many years.

Our longtime friend and member **Priscilla Runkle** would enjoy receiving notes and cards from church members. Priscilla and her late husband Jim were longtime, active and beloved church members. Priscilla is now in assisted

living in Billerica. She has some memory loss but remembers the church with a lot of affection. Mail can be sent through her son, Paul.

Barbara Baumer's father passed away in mid-January; he lived in Pennsylvania. Some of the RE children made cards for her during their class time.

Brenda Enslow was hospitalized briefly and is being moved to a rehab center. Contact Wendy for more information.

Jeanne Ann Wood, passed away recently. We send our sympathy to her son, daughter-in-law, and granddaughter: **Tim, Megara and Tracy.**

If you are wondering why you haven't seen **Kay Poole** lately, she is experiencing some mobility problems that make it hard for her to get to church — particularly because she lives in Ipswich now. She would love card, a call, or even a visit.

Contact information for all can be found in our current Directory.

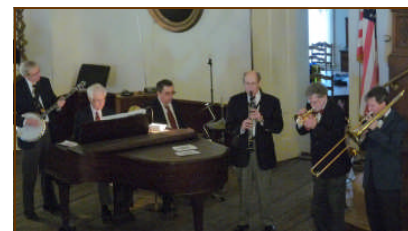
Thanks to all who gave to support the **Guest at Your Table** program over the holidays. We sent more than **\$377.51** to the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) to support their programs across the United States and worldwide. Our efforts were coordinated by the Religious Education and Social Justice committees.



Our service on Sunday February 12th was filled with Gospel music provided by The **AzOne Trio** and

was made possible by a generous gift from **Charles Nazarian.**

The following week, February 19th, we were treated to "Mardi Gras Sunday" with the jazz band **Civil Disturbance** made possible by their donation of time, and a gift from Bob and Joyce Tuffley.



THANK YOU ALL!

I ♥ church
DINNERS

APPRECIATION DINNER

SUNDAY - MARCH 4TH AT 5:30 PM

FREE

If you joined the church in the last year or two ... or have been a volunteer in *any* capacity ... please come to this free dinner organized in your honor. **RSVP** to Carol Ackerman by Monday February 27th.

March Birthdays

- 9 Diana Peck
- 11 Beth Paddock
- 12 Deb Hardy
- 17 Adara Peres
- 20 Zoe Paddock
- 21 Jesse Cope
- 22 Charlotte Lacey
- 25 Ann Straccia
- 26 Bonnie Stafford
- 28 Ananda Stephan
- 30 Kay Poole



February Flowers

February 5 Given by Calvin, Oliver, Margaret and Bonnie in loving memory of their mother and father, Ruth Transue Cook and Homer Calvin Cook.

February 19 Given in memory of his father Howard R. Corliss, his mother, Gladys Irene Corliss and his sister, Shirley Irene Corliss, by Col. William Dale Corliss. The beautiful allee of trees in front of the church was a gift from Howard Corliss.

February 26 In honor of the choir director and choir ... keeping an old tradition alive wherein the "Lillian Smith Music Fund" donated flowers on the last Sunday of February in a leap year.

A Month at a Time in Religious Education

February was a big transition for the kids.

We are currently working on stories from the Old Testament and discussing the meaning of them in the classroom. We talked about Noah's Ark and doing what you are told although you may not quite understand it.

Please take time to look at the mural of Noah's Ark the children created. It is posted on the Religious Education bulletin board in the Vestry.

After reading the story of the Tower of Babel, the children created their own Towers of Babel using toothpicks

and marshmallows. They were not allowed to speak in English to one another and even got to make up their own languages.

I was not here on February 19th, but I know the children enjoyed making the Mardi Gras masks. With Lent — being a season of transition — we will be making a new covenant for the classroom. This is a great time for us to look forward and create some classroom guidelines: the children will make this *their own* covenant.

For the Month of **March** we will finish talking about the Old Testament.

In **April and May** Reverend Fitting and I will talk about our Unitarian Universalist history — focusing on the background of the Gloucester Unitarian Universalist Church.

June will be dedicated to the New Testament and we'll touch a bit on world religions.

Please feel free to come check out the classroom and volunteer with the kids. We have a lot of fun and welcome your participation.

Tabitha Carty,
Director, Religious Education

Time to Think About Easter Flowers

Easter Sunday (April 8th)

We thank Carolyn Edwards for once again coordinating the taking of orders for tulips and/or lilies — and for decorating our Sanctuary with them. Plants are \$12 per pot ... the same price as last year! *Carolyn will need your order by Sunday, April 1st.* Her phone is (978) 283-9129. Please send your check - payable to ICC-UU to Carolyn at: 7 Perkins Road, Gloucester MA 01930.

Remember to indicate which selection: tulip or lily.

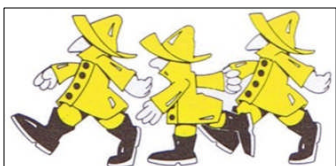


Celebrating Our Greater Community

CELEBRATION OF NEW MINISTER AT ST. JOHN'S

The Wardens, Vestry, and people of Saint John's Episcopal Church (our next-door neighbors at 48 Middle Street) invite all to their celebration of new ministry and service of institution for **The Reverend Bret Bowie Hays** as the 21st Rector of St. John's Parish.

The installation takes place on **Wednesday - March 7th - from 6 to 9 pm**. There will be a reception following the service. Please RSVP to the church office (978) 283-1708, or via email at st.johns.assist@earthlink.net



Gloucester's 25th PRIDE STRIDE Coming Up

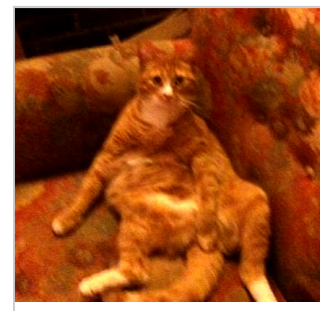
Gloucester's annual walk for civic pride will take place on Sunday, April 29th. It's not too soon for groups — or individuals — to begin thinking about signing up pledgers. This is an opportunity for non-profits, and others, to raise awareness (and money) for their causes. More information will follow in our April newsletter.



Photo Gallery

On the left "We Start Them Young" ... Jacob and his cousin, announce the beginning of a Sunday service.

On the right ... Bix "I Think I Ate Too Much!" ... relaxing at home after a satisfying meal.



COMMUNITY RECOGNITION AWARDS: CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The Social Justice Committee is inviting nominations for its 2012 Community Recognition Awards. Again following a tradition begun in 2006, the church will recognize up to 10 Gloucester residents for the contributions they make to their community and their neighbors, without thought of any remuneration or recognition.

The men and women who receive these honors will come from all walks of life. Some are known for simple deeds they do for their neighbors. Others are honored for giving their time and efforts to a larger community. All have generously made a mark on Gloucester, and are selected because their actions embody the best of the spirit that guides Unitarian Universalism: open-hearted giving to others, solely for what those gifts mean, for no pay, and often with no public notice. There are no age limits.

Nominations are due no later than Friday, April 13. They must be in writing and include the name of the nominee, why this person should be honored, and contact information. We also ask that you include your name, phone number and e-mail address. They should be sent to the Gloucester UU Church, 10 Church St., Gloucester MA 01930, or emailed to gloucesteruu@earthlink.net. Final choices will be made by the church's Social Justice Committee. The awards will be made at a public event at the church on Sunday, May 20.

Next 'Open Door' Date is April 21

The Social Justice Committee extends its thanks again to all those who team up for the Open Door meals. Our church serves dinner four times a year at Open Door, on Emerson Avenue, and everyone seems to agree that it's a great experience and that they enjoy the spirit that teamwork brings.

After more than a year as coordinator of the Gloucester UU-Open Door connection, **Peggy Kimball is stepping aside** from that job and moving on to give her time and wisdom to

other church affairs. Thank you to Peggy, from all of us, for her excellent management of this important activity! The **new coordinator is JoAnn Souza**, who has been an active friend of Open Door for a long time. We know that this ongoing support project is in good hands.

Our next Open Door date is Saturday, April 21. Typically food preparation starts around 3 p.m., serving begins around 5:30, and everything wraps up by about 7. You're welcome to come for just some of that time if that's what fits your schedule. Naturally, you get to share in the supper, too. Contact JoAnn, or any member of the Social Justice Committee, to be part of this.