



GROVELAND
CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH

The Bell

4 King Street

Groveland, MA 01834

www.grovelanducc.org 978-372-3463



Candlelight Taizé Meditation December 1st at 7 pm

Give yourself the gift of peace and reflection. Take a few minutes from the busyness of life to share this time with each other. This is an ecumenical service, so feel free to invite your neighbors and friends.

Advent Experience and Live Nativity December 15th from 3-5 pm

There will be a live nativity in the front of the church followed by crafts and refreshments.

Everyone is welcome to join us for a festive afternoon!

Community Blue Christmas Service December 22nd at 7 pm at St. James Episcopal

Blue Christmas is a time to recognize that even though Christmas is a season filled with joy and hope...sadness, grief and loneliness are ever present. This service is open to anyone who wishes to come.

Christmas Eve Services

Family Service at 5 pm

Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols at 11 pm

Christmas Flowers

Nancy Fitzgerald will be selling Christmas Cactus and Cyclamen this year to decorate the sanctuary for the holidays. You will be able to order these plants on December 1st and 8th.

Look for Nancy in Fellowship Hall following worship service on those dates.



Taizé Candlelight Meditation Services

All are invited to begin the beautiful Advent season by attending the candlelight meditation service in the sanctuary on Sunday, December 1st at 7:00 PM. In song, prayer and silent meditation, we will prepare once again for the coming of Jesus into our hearts.

The next Taizé service will be on January 26th (snow date February 9th). Why not put it on your calendar now!



The 2019 Snowflake Fair grossed over **\$14,500**. It was our best year ever. My heartfelt thanks to everyone who made that happen.

What makes a successful church fair? Is it lots of vendors? Is it crave-able food? Is it good advertising?

It's all those things but more importantly it's the people. It's the greeters standing by the doors welcoming people to the fair. It's Tracy and his crew standing in the cold directing traffic and keeping people safe. It's our friends, family and neighbors who help with baking for the fair, volunteer to staff tables, work in the kitchen or show their support by stopping by to make purchases. But even before that It's the incalculable amount of time spent sorting jewelry, setting aside good finds in the thrift shop, making apple pies, attending meetings, working with vendors, returning phone calls and emails. It's the Scouts helping to move furniture and load the trailer. It's a week spent setting up tables and decorating. It's all of us working together as we are able.

The fair is amazing and wonderful but make no mistake, miraculous things don't just happen at GCC two days in November. We change lives, help others and are an important part of the community year-round. Just as so much goes on behind the scenes at the fair so too does work get done at GCC outside of Sunday mornings. It is a pleasure to be part of this community of faith. Together we can and do make great things happen.

With joy and gratitude,

Kim Mosley,
Lead Coordinator Snowflake Fair 2019

Fair Entertainment Thanks

A HUGE thank you goes out to those who donated their time and their talents as performers in the sanctuary during the Snowflake Fair. We had a wonderful variety of musical styles and all who attended had a joyful experience. If you or someone you know is ever in search of a musical act for a special birthday party or event, please consider the following groups. Our Friday night headliners - SAX PACK - back for their second year! This 4 person ensemble really delivers and comes complete with festive hats, too. Saturday, the string band from Saint James Church debuted here and totally wowed us with their upbeat songs. They had us clappin' and knee slappin'. They were all so very humble and seemed surprised when we told them how great they really are! GCC's own directors stepped up, too. Bonnie Surowiec entertained us with her high soprano voice and joyful personality and Linda Paulet played lovely holiday carols for us to enjoy. Our Saturday headliner was Lee Hawkins of The Lee Hawkins Band. Lee performed great classics that you know and love with just his solo God given voice and his guitar...terrific!!

Thank you to all those who came and sat for a while and listened. The performers are happiest when there is an audience...thank you for taking the time to show your support of them. *Continues on the next page...*

Snowflake Fair Thanks

I would like to thank everyone who baked, bought and sold cookies. It takes many volunteers to make the cookie table a success and I could not have done it without you. Special thanks goes to Kim Mosley for the 4,000+ cookies she baked!! Thanks and I hope you are all available next year to help again.
Nancy Fitzgerald

Thanks to EVERYONE who helped make the Snowflake Fair so fun this year!!
Here are the numbers by table:

Vendors \$2,897.76
Cookie Walk \$2,634.49
Country Store \$1,849.15
Jewelry & Vintage \$1,186.48
Crafts & Garden \$478.50
Good Finds Thrift Shop \$1,148
Prize Drawings \$2,042
Meals \$1,573.66
After fair and miscellaneous \$900

Thank you!!

Continued... And a most SPECIAL thank you to the youth performers. Come to think of it, they also mentioned that they were available for hire!! Son Nyugenn (Bonnie's student) shared his smooth vocals with us. Veronica Hart (a Pentucket student) who is self-taught gave us beautiful songs on piano and shared her wonderful voice as well. Lastly, we thank the classic rock band Throwne (with Pentucket students Jett Haryslak, Spencer Magan, Noah Horgan, Miles Azenaro, and Ethan Fletcher) who really ROCKED the house! If you have a chance to see any other these kids, please let them know how very thankful we are that they donated their time to our Fair. All in all, the time was fun filled, inspiring, and just plain awesome! All these different types of music really filled our sanctuary with great joy. The day showed us all how music can touch your heart and soul. It gives us a common denominator that's happy and positive and it brings us together!!

Sandy Keene

Venture Crew II3

Could you help support GCC's newest Crew? They are just starting out and need to build their supply of essential items. Here a list of items they are seeking.

(If you buy one let PC know, so we don't buy them 5 of the same thing!)

Dining	File and	Ground
Fly	Sharpening	Cloth/Tarps
Folding	Stone	Tarps
Table	Rope and	American
Propane	Twine	and Troop
Stoves	Mallet	Flag with
Stick	3 person	Flagpoles
Lighters	tents	First Aid
Cooking	Shovel	Kit
Utensils	Lantern	Ax
and	Wash Bins	Saw
Pots/Pans	Propane	Chuck Box

Some thoughts...

In September we were joined by Transitional Interim Conference Minister Don Remick. Don shared with us his thoughts on church today. Some of what we learned is that 80-95% of people claim a belief in something 'other', what some might call God. And 80-95% of people claim to pray to a divine 'something'. However, people's attendance at a Christian church on any given weekend, based on church attendance reports, averages less than 20% (with older generations being at least twice as likely to attend as younger generations.). Roughly, this means that nearly 2/3rds of the population believe in God, and have a spiritual practice but do not typically attend church. And that number is increasing with each new generation.

So what can we do? At Reverend Remick's workshop entitled "Weird Church" on Super Saturday (held in October), he offered some ideas. Remick states that there are three choices: stay the same, being as faithful as possible to God and our constituency knowing this will only last sustainably for maybe another quarter century, evolve to be able to continue ministering in the changing world, birth new forms of ministry and faith communities. So, staying the same will most likely only carry us through another 20-25 years. But, like Pastor Chris has said many times, change is HARD!

Remick also offers his insight as to what a vital church looks like. One detail is being flexible, resilient and patient. "Flexible: able to adapt to changes around them. Resilient: able to overcome discouragement and failures. Patient: able to stay in the in-between place while waiting for things to become clearer, not rushing to quick or technical fixes and formulas." He also says that it's "Not about attracting people in. The church understands that their goal is not about getting more people into the pews and pledges into the plate. Rather, it is moving out of the church in service to God to develop, provoke and nurture God's realm of love, compassion, and justice."

These ideas are rather new to many of us and sometimes hard to envision. If you would like to watch Don's presentation it can be found here: <https://youtu.be/WjQrZzlmwIA>. With church no longer being central to the culture and Sundays becoming less and less "sacred" for people, it's helpful to look at some of these ideas to understand how we can help GCC be the church in Groveland for longer than the next 25 years.

As I have shared with you, it has been has always been my tradition to give a story sermon series through the season of Advent and this would be the article where I share your first glimpse of what might be in story this Christmas season. These sermon series have always been a source of joy and celebration for me and the congregations I have served. It has been a time that reflects the season of Advent within a modern setting, and time when we experience childlike wonder and anticipation together.

Last year I did not experience this. This has left me in a dilemma. It has always been my goal that my stories were a reflection of the Gospel scriptures we were reading each week, that they would be modern parables. Perhaps I have failed and creating and drawing the connections between the scripture and my stories. Perhaps last year's story was vexing because the main character, a Mall Santa, also happened to be Transgender; I intended this to be an intriguing idea, I did not mean for it to be the point of the story nor critical to the plot line.

I think sermons are supposed to be events that stretch us, move us, and help us stumble into new ways of knowing God at times by asking unsettling questions. My ordination vows call on me to be a prophet speaking God's word even when others don't want to hear, yet always doing so from a place of love. I don't want my sermons to just be an intellectual exercise or just deep stirring of emotions but have elements of both.

When I look out to the congregation I see people who come with their own understanding of God, their own ears with which to hear, their own experiences of life, their own lens to see the world and so I know that different styles of sermons speak differently to different people, some folks love academic and thought invoking sermons, some love sermons that focus on values and morals, some love sermons that ask deep hard questions, and others love sermons that have pointed to political troubles of our times.

I can recall sharing sermons that I felt were downright terrible, and long before I reached the receiving line I had already vowed to never do one like that again, and yet despite my failing even these sermons would have someone stop to say that God spoke to them, or that they were moved or challenged. The only explanation for this in mind is that such events are about God's mystery rather than any talent on my part.

As we come into Advent, I ask you to come with an open heart, willing to listen with new ears, to listen with our children to a story that is layered with meaning and questions. Perhaps the narrative will ask you questions you don't like or disapprove of, perhaps not. Come meet Amanda and her journey toward what is most holy and sacred in our world. My prayer remains that more than anything else you hear God's story being interwoven into what it means to be human, a story of light and hope being born again into our lives.

Pastor Chris

Do you order from Amazon? Did you know a portion of your purchase could be going to GCC? It's super easy! Just go to Amazon Smile and note Groveland Congregational Church as your favorite charity! Put your money to good use and help GCC.



All men of the church are invited to the monthly Men's Breakfast on the 3rd Saturday of the month at 9 am





Please join us at Belleville Congregational Church, 300 High St., Newburyport for our 2019 Winter Concert featuring Giovanni Gabrieli's *Hodie Christus Natus Est* and *O Magnum Mysterium*, as well as works by British contemporary composer Cecilia McDowall, and contemporary American composers Daniel Pinkham and Kevin Siegfried.

The magnificent harmonies of the chorus will be joined with the majestic sounds of a brass ensemble and organ, representing a musical tradition that traces back six centuries to the Renaissance, and continuing forward through Europe and Great Britain to American contemporary compositions.

Our choir has four members singing in the concert! You can get tickets online at newburyportchoralsociety.org or ask Kathleen Tucker Gustafson to get some for you at rehearsal.

Worship Ministry News

The newly formed Deacon team is looking for people/families for reading and lighting the advent candles on the weeks prior to Christmas. We are also in need of help decorating the church for Christmas. If anyone is interested working on this project, we have plenty of room on the team. All help is welcome.

Contact Susan D'Angelo for information or to volunteer, or approach anyone on the Deacon Team any time. We love to hear from you! Susandan41 @ [Hotmail.com](mailto:Susandan41@Hotmail.com)



Christmas Music...give yourself the gift of sharing the music of Christmas by singing with the choir for this beautiful season! You will be glad that you did. Just come down to rehearsal on Wednesdays (not Thanksgiving eve) at 7:30 PM. I overheard a choir member saying, "If people knew how much fun we have, they would all be singing." It's true...come and see! If you would like more information, just talk to Kathleen or Linda.

Phoenix Rising United Church of Christ

Phoenix Rising Church has arrived! They are meeting here at GCC on Sundays. Worship begins at 5 and concludes with shared meal. You are invited to experience their Christ-Centered community and fresh worship style any time.

Phoenix Rising's presence within GCC is not a rental transaction, it is a partnership. We are developing a covenant that will be brought to the congregation at our annual meeting for approval. Stop by and read it and feel free to offer suggestions and ask questions. It's posted on the Phoenix Rising Bulletin Board just outside Fellowship Hall.



Outreach Ministry News:

Some days it seems that the troubles of the world will overwhelm us and we wonder what we can possibly do to make a difference. Here at GCC we are making a difference! We are lighting a lamp in the darkness with every prayer and with every expression of love and with meaningful and supportive action. How you might ask?

Team Bread has been very busy over the past several months providing meals to individuals and families in our church community who have faced illness and surgery. Not only does this fill a need for sustenance but it also expresses our love and concern. In addition, Team Bread also stocks the freezer with meals that can be shared with anyone. If you like to cook or just make too many leftovers please consider labeling them and putting them in the freezer outside the parlor. Also if you have a neighbor or friend, coworker or relative who could use a meal please take one for them.

Team Lunch Bunch puts on the monthly second Saturday luncheon which is free and open to the community. We would love more people to help prepare and or serve lunch or to make homemade desserts. If you are interested please speak to Lisa Quinnan or Deb Stephenson. Even more importantly come join us for lunch and spread the word to others! It is more about community building than about a free meal!

Team Santa's Helper will once again be coordinating a collection of gifts for children whose families are affiliated with Dept of Social Services. We will be providing 3 gifts each for 10 different children. Wish list items will be posted in Fellowship Hall on Sunday November 24th and need to be returned unwrapped by 10 AM Sunday December 15th.

Let us love abundantly and extravagantly!!

Team Mission Possible

At our September meeting Team Missions Possible voted to disperse the following funds. This giving was funded by proceeds from the Thrift Shop. Thank you to our dedicated Thrift Shop volunteers for making this possible.

- Joyful Ladle \$1,200
- Pettengill House \$1,200
- Emmaus \$2,000
- Open Hand Pantry \$1,000
- Our Neighbor's Table \$1000
- Habitat for Humanity \$500
- Anchor of Hope (diaper bank in Haverhill) \$500
- Elder Services \$500
- UCC Disaster Relief-\$1,000
- Lowell Transitional Living Center \$1,000
- Merrimac River Watershed-\$500
- Neighbors in Need-\$500

GCC Church Food Pantry Mission

We deliver to four food distributors for the hungry and needy. They are: Groveland Council on Aging, West Newbury Council on Aging, Pettengill House in Salisbury and Open Hand Pantry in Haverhill. We are now collecting food on the first Sunday of every month during worship. The food will be collected by the children during the service and we will deliver to the above mentioned pantries.

Our church has been sharing in this ministry for many years. Those who are receiving bless you all and are extremely grateful. Our church helps lift the hunger burdens from our struggling neighbors. Please remember to check your donations' expiration dates as the pantries cannot use out of date items.

Also assisting in this important mission are: Kim Mosely, Sandy Daniels, Deb Stephenson, Carol Mansell, Carol Patnaude, Tony DeSimone and Nancy Fitzgerald.

Pastoral Search Team Update

The Search Team formally started the search process with a dinner meeting that took place on September 8th. This meeting was attended by the Search Team, the Profile writing team and our Associate Conference Minister, Rev. Wendy Vander Hart.

Our first goal was to complete the Church Profile that would be used to advertise the open position for a settled pastor. The profile was completed in October and approved by the UCC staff. The profile has been placed on the UCC website and we are currently receiving applications from interested candidates.

As we sift through applications we continue to refine the actual interview that we intend to use; this work is expected to be completed in November.

Our next step will be to conduct a mock interview that will be coordinated with Rev. Wendy Vander Hart to test our interview and deepen our understanding of the process. We expect to finish this work in November and begin scheduling interviews as time and schedules permit. We are currently meeting weekly in an effort to complete the process in a timely manner. We are making good progress against the timeline as provided by the UCC.

Updates will continue as soon as we have specific information to pass on to the congregation.

Respectfully submitted,

The Search Team

POTLUCK!



No Agenda No Reservations No Plan
Just Friends, Food and Laughter!
Bring a dish and a game to share.

November 22 Food Theme is “Easy but Good”
December 27 Food Theme is “That looks Weird” or “Ohh I never tried that before” or “What is that??”
January 24 Food Theme is Hawaiian

Need reminders about game night?
Text @4b7f627 to the number 81010

Stewardship Ministry News

Team Curb Appeal happenings:

Do you remember when we spent a lot of time, money, and sweat equity to prepare the parsonage for the Hart Family? Well, it's time to take another look and continue to update the property in preparation for our settled pastor AND to thank Pastor Chris and his family for all they have done for us. The back walkway to the house needs to be updated for safety. This project is slated to occur in the spring. If you would like to provide input, make a small donation to help defer the costs, or even offer your hand at removing bricks or assisting with the redo, please contact Sandy Keene, Minister of Stewardship.

When you walk through the halls of GCC...what do you see? A clean, neat, and happy place? A building that serves the needs of our members? A room in need of repair? A safety issue? An opportunity to improve and reach our community at large? Let us know what you think. At this mid-point in the year, let's keep the conversation going about possible improvements. Contact Sandy Keene, Minister of Stewardship, anytime with your ideas.

Thank you Jen Petersen! As our building usage increases so we may better serve our community, the coordination efforts at the church office increase as well. Please remember to give Jen a "thank you" the next time you see her. GCC is very lucky to have her helping us! THANK YOU JEN!!

A Stewardship Moment - Often we think of Stewardship as giving money to our church to further its missions and care for its property. Is this truly where Stewardship begins or ends? Is giving money the only way to be a steward? Certainly not. There are many ways in which to be a good steward and participating, on any level, in The Snowflake Fair is one of them! This is Stewardship at its finest. Think of it this way - God has entrusted us with the expansion of his kingdom, right? Putting together our annual Snowflake Fair did just that. We reached beyond the walls of the church, invited our community in, and treated them all with love and kindness. They will remember the smiles, the well wishes, the exhibits of people helping others to find a gift, to get a meal, to help carry their purchases to the car...the list goes on. Whatever was needed, we did it. And we did it with smiles and kindness and positivity. The community around us continues to respond to this! They come seeking gifts, food, AND fellowship and love. And we delivered! THANK YOU ALL for your part in bringing the Fair to life. Continue to pass love and kindness throughout the holiday season ahead of us and beyond. Stewardship is more than money...it's heartfelt, it's soulful, it's positive, it's powerful, it's rewarding!!

Blessings to you all.

Sandy Keene, Minister of Stewardship



Team Access Now Forming!!!

We are looking for folks who are interested in making 100% wheel chair accessibility a reality at GCC. If you would like to be part of this exciting time, call or email Jen in the office and she'll add you to the list. Once we have a team of names, we will meet to discuss how we can make this dream come true!

In our prayers...

Julie DiScipio (friend of Kathleen)
Ellen Maxwell (req by Kathleen)
Larry Dodge (Nancy's brother)
Rev. Elizabeth King
Don Powell (Barb Harrold's brother)
Chip Sheehan (Gustafsons)
Marlin Welcome (local child)
Kastrinelis Family
Leanne Hanson
Kathy Blakesley (Deb Stephenson's niece)
Debbie Hammell
Russ Styer
Sophia Hurtado (the daughter of friend of Jen's)
Gerry Cummings
Ken and Jane Holden
Christine Parenteau
Mark Clohecy (friend of the Tildens and Fairbanks)
Barbara E. A. McGovern (BEAM)
Carol and Barry Mansell
Kelly Tuller-Martinez (Bonnie's stepdaughter)
Bill Neumyer
Abigail Smith (Caryl Haley's great niece)

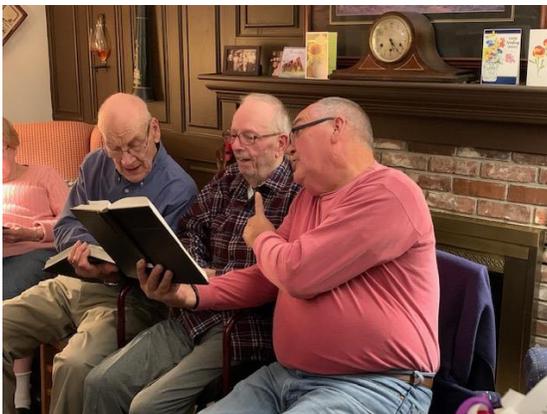
If you would like to add the name of a loved one to the church's prayer list, please complete a prayer slip which can be found in the pew rack. We will collect the prayer slips during worship. You can also email the church office anytime and request that someone be added to the list.

Free Community Lunch

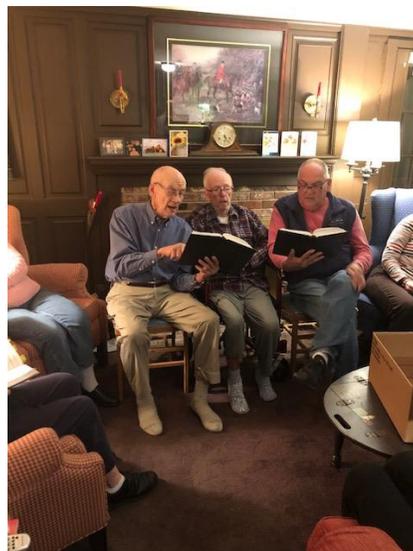
Second Saturday
of the month
11:30 am - 1 pm



Don't forget to bring your canned goods donation to worship on the first Sunday of the month!



The Three Tenors of GCC at a recent choir event at the Holden's home...Gus, Ken and Dana



Faith Formation Ministry News

Christmas is coming! What a wonderful time of year! Memories from childhood come rushing in - the magic, the wonder, the excitement.

We have so many activities planned here at Groveland Congregation Church to celebrate this season. From listening to our own choir on Sundays to our Christmas Eve service. Come join us to celebrate Jesus' birthday!

Sunday school started in October and will continue to be held on the 2nd and 3rd Sundays of each month. I would like to thank Nancy Cordaro, Caroline Cranos & Jennifer Hart for teaching in the classroom – and for Emma & Katie Formosi for assisting. Thank you to Susan & Mikayla Tilden for being available to help with youth group.

More Sunday school teachers and helpers are needed in the classroom (2 adults are needed per class). There will be a meeting in late December/early January to plan out the 2020 calendar. Please keep a look out for the date.

There will be new activity bags for the kids to enjoy during church service Sundays. They will be located behind the last pew - where the coloring books are.

The Youth Group met up at Game Night on October 25. There has been some discussion about moving forward in a different direction for youth group. Keep your eyes and ears open for future information.

Caroline Cranos will be posting more information on the Confirmation program – Confirmands – keep checking your email!

Hanging of the Greens will be held after church on Sunday, December 1st. There will be some children's activities too. Come celebrate the beginning of Advent!

December 15th we will be holding our Live Nativity from 3-5 pm! There will be special animals visiting and we need volunteers!

If you are interested or have any questions please contact Amy Szarek at mszarek@earthlink.net or 978-380-2902.



Celebrate the beginning of Advent

December 1st after worship

Happy Birthday to following folks:

Michael Kastrinelis 12/1

Kathleen Tucker Gustafson 12/4

Beckyann Kelly 12/4

Austin Spencer 12/5

Bonnie Glazier 12/7

Ed Petersen 12/8

Susan Tilden 12/14

James Lussier 12/16

Erin O'Hara 12/17

Lindsay Fabri 12/17

Sandy Daniels 12/19

Linda Lay 12/21

Mark Szarek 12/23

Julie Fabri 12/24

Carolyn Kohlhofer 12/27

Michael McDermott 12/31

Jennifer Hart 1/3

Nancy Fairbanks 1/4

Cam Keene 1/5

David Prescott 1/7

Loretta Foan 1/7

Carol Patnaude 1/11

Kathleen Kastrinelis 1/22

Phyllis Forsyth 1/13

Dana Sherburne 1/13

Cheryl Sweeney 1/20

John Statom 1/20

Dona Labrecque 1/20

Carol Mosley 1/24

Kim Mosley 1/30

David Hrubes 1/30

Michael Young 2/2

Sandy Keene 2/5

Roberta Takesian 2/6

Aaron Fudge 2/24

And Happy Anniversary to:

Michael and Lois Young 12/10

Bill and Julie Fabri 12/30

Ed and Jen Petersen 1/13

Bill and Phyllis Forsyth 1/25



CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD PUZZLE

USE THE CLUES TO COMPLETE THE CROSSWORD PUZZLE.

Across

- One of Santa's Reindeer
- Santa's Helpers
- December 25th is _____.
- Christmas Drink
- The name of a popular snowman.

Down

- Christmas Month
- He hates Christmas!
- You hang them by the chimney.
- On Christmas morning we unwrap our _____.
- _____ to the world!

WWW.THRIFTYMOMMSTIPS.COM

Blue Christmas Service

December 22nd 7:00 pm
St. James Episcopal Church in Groveland

Blue Christmas is a time to recognize that even though Christmas is a season filled with joy and hope...sadness, grief and loneliness are ever present.

Groveland Congregational Church
4 King Street
Groveland, MA 01834

Return Service Requested

Live Nativity and Advent Experience



December 15th from 3-5 pm

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR
No matter their mental health challenge.
No matter their immigration status.
No matter their sexual orientation.
No matter their economic status.
No matter their gender identity.
No matter their disability.
No matter their religion.
No matter their race.

Love your neighbor. No exceptions.

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST