

APRIL 2026 HILLTOP HERALD

Rev. Andrew Harris
Pastor

Mark Omobono
Moderator

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Dear church family,

In January, Deb Raymond and I went with a couple of our church's high schoolers on a trip into Boston for a program called CityReach. We collected donations from the church, stuffed them into the back of my minivan, and headed down 93 South on a dark winter night.

We arrived at St. Paul's on Tremont St. in Boston with about 50 other high schoolers from churches in the area. We met the CityReach staff, all of whom have experienced homelessness, and then we went out on a tour, with CityReach staffers as our guide.

This was not your typical tour of Boston. We didn't walk the Freedom Trail or visit the State House (although its golden dome glinted across the Common). Instead, our tour guides took us to a place called Bridge Over Troubled Waters.

One of our guides, a young woman, told us that Bridge (as it's colloquially known) is the only youth homeless shelter in Boston. She told us about how she wound up living on the streets after both of her parents died. At age 14, she got a room at Bridge.

I asked her if her memories of being at Bridge were good or bad. "Was it a place you remember fondly or a place you prefer not to think about?"

"Both," she told us. There were a lot of kind people, and the programs and resources they were able to provide her helped to change her life. But she also remembered there were a lot of kids with a lot of trauma.

We listened to her stories as we walked the streets together. She shared a poem that she wrote with us. When we went home the next day, to our warm, comfortable homes, her words lingered in our hearts.

This is why our church's Mission Committee has decided that half of our Easter offering this year will go to Bridge Over Troubled Waters. Out of gratitude for our wonderful tour guide, we want to share our Easter blessings with young people who do not have a permanent place to live. It's hard to imagine the difficulties they face; both the difficulties of being unhoused and the difficulties that led to them being unhoused in the first place. Our hope and prayer is that these young people can receive the love, kindness, and support they deserve.

This Easter, as we remember the promise of Good News of resurrection, may our Easter offering, in a small way, be a sign of new life for the many young people in our state, our city, and our community who do not have stable and secure housing.

Peace,
Rev. Andrew Harris



HOLY WEEK

PALM SUNDAY-March 28th

Worship Service at 10:30 am. Please join us for our Palm Sunday service leading up to Easter Sunday. Come early, pick up your palms at the door, get your name tag and welcome each other.



Palm Sunday procession at Noon Join us for a .7 mile walk from St. Mark's parking lot to the UCC church led by Clyde, our mini horse or a goat if Clyde can't make it. All are invited. Water, Lemonade and cookies will be served outside of the church when finished.

MAUNDY THURSDAY-April 2nd

Worship and Fellowship Service at 6:30 pm in Sewall Hall for soup, bread and worship. This is a solemn service not recommended for young Children.



GOOD FRIDAY-April 3rd

All are invited to join us outside the Burlington ICE Detention Center at 1000 District Ave. on Good Friday, April 3 at 3pm for The Seven Last Words: An Ecumenical Worship Service on Good Friday. We hope you will gather with us to mourn, lament, and hope as we wait for the Good News of Resurrection.



At 7pm join us at the Presbyterian Church, 335 Cambridge Street for the Stations of the Cross

EASTER-April 5th

Sunrise Service 6:30am at the top of the hill at Simonds Park. Perfect way to celebrate the resurrection of Christ as the sun rises.



ANNUAL EASTER EGG HUNT

Join us at 9:45 as all our children will celebrate with a fun egg hunt provided by Christian Education.



EASTER CELEBRATION

Worship Service begins at 10:30am

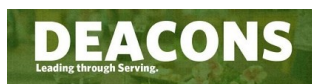
Join us from 10:15-10:30am as we decorate our beautiful floral cross and listen to music from our guest musicians.



A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF DEACONS

The Deacon's Fund, funded by your support with donations to The Love Offering, provide confidential assistance to those in financial need. We are seeing a greater need this year for assistance. One way, we help is by having grocery gift cards available to give to those who are in need. Last year, we distributed \$1,000 in gift cards for the entire year. In contrast, by the end of March 2026, we have already purchased \$1,300 in gift cards. Other ways we assist is that the fund provides anonymous assistance to individuals and families experiencing financial hardships, we have helped to pay medical, utility bills, car repairs, assistance with moving and transition, to only name a few.

A few years ago, we suspended the separate monthly collections for this fund due to its strong financial position and a reduced need for assistance at that time. However, circumstances have changed; there is now a greater demand for support, and the funds' resources have been significantly depleted. Starting in April, we will reinstate a second collection for the Love Offering on the second Sunday of each month. However, donations can be made at any time using the envelopes available in the pews or through our online giving program. We encourage you to consider supporting this important effort to assist families in need.



OUR MONTHLY REPORT

We are blessed to be able to provide a full schedule of worship opportunities for Holy Week and we hope you will join us. Please see the Holy Week schedule.

Our guest musician for Maundy Thursday will be violinist, Lisa Brooke. We always look forward to hearing her beautiful performance. On Easter, Jim Messbauer will be performing with a brass quartet. A huge thank you to all who are preparing and bringing food for our Maundy Thursday supper.

On Saturday, April 4th at 9:30, we will be setting up the large cross and preparing the sanctuary for Easter. If you would like to join us for this fun activity, we would love to have your help.

Aline will be taking a much-needed break after Easter and Andrew Moore will be playing for us. Andrew joins us for worship on a regular basis.

Pastor Andrew is preparing for the arrival of their third son by lining up guest ministers for us, we are looking forward to celebrating their new arrival.

On a final note, thank you to all of those who have been faithfully wearing your name tag, it helps all of us get to know each other a bit better.

Also, remember to take home your Easter plants after Sunday Service.

The Board of Deacons

A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARDS OF DEACONS AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Dear Church Family,

We have listened to your concerns about disruptions in our worship service and excess rowdiness at coffee hour posed by our children. We believe that “All are Welcome,” and that welcome includes everyone; the toddler who can’t sit still, the baby who makes noise at the wrong moment, and the noisy older children and the adults doing their best to calm down an excited group of grade schoolers. Although these times may cause disruptions and distractions, they are part of our effort to include children in our church family—by inviting them for communion, letting them participate on All Worship Sundays, or letting them play in Sewall Hall. Our aim is to help children become active members of our church family, and that means they’ll occasionally be restless, just as we all once were. We want every person, from our eldest members to our youngest, to feel welcomed and loved.

By involving children in worship, we hope they will grow to love this church and choose to remain part of it as adults, bringing their own families in turn. We are grateful and blessed to have children of all ages as part of our church family.

Thank you to the parents for bringing them.

The Boards of Deacons & Christian Education



THE MUSIC CORNER MUSINGS FROM DEBBIE CLAR

Holy Week is upon us and we will have guest musicians grace us with solemn and celebratory music on Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Easter. The Band will rouse and lead us on Palm Sunday. Lisa Brooke will be playing the violin during our Maundy Thursday service and Sarah Clark, John Getsinger, Julie Lewis and Mark Omobono will be singing. Coffeehouse Brass will sound the trumpets and trombones for Easter Sunday and our choir will be singing the anthem. So come and join us to relive the foundation of our faith through scripture, meaningful rituals, a thoughtful sermon and of course through the mournful and triumphant music of this eventful week.

I also would like to thank Donna DeSimone and Mark Omobono for offering music on March 15 and I thank the choir for accompanying me on my solo on March 1. And as always, I thank Aline for being such a wonderful collaborator. May the light of Christ be with you all.



MISSIONS UPDATE!

RED WAGON

The Burlington Pantry is asking for the following items to help stock the shelves:

- Sugar-Tea
- Boxes of crackers-Boxes of cookies
- Toilet Paper

Please bring to worship on April 26th.

Thank you!



CRAFTING FOR A CAUSE

We are busy making prayer shawls and prayers squares. Weather permitting, we will meet every Thursday at 1PM in the conference room.

All are welcome!

BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATERS

In the late 1960's a group of women teachers began reaching out to disadvantaged youth on the Boston Common and in Cambridge which had become gathering places for young people who had no place else to go. They began by providing sandwiches, cold drinks and non-judgmental conversations. These turned into referrals for health and psychiatric services, and alternatives when returning home was not an option.

By the 1970s it was clear that traditional services could not keep up with this growing population and Bridge Over Troubled Waters was founded by three Sisters from the Sisters of St. Joseph in Boston. They teamed with physicians at Massachusetts General Hospital to run a medical van to bring emergency health care to the streets. They were at the forefront of a national movement to provide care to youth ages 14 to 24.

Even now, 50 years later, 1 in 10 young adults aged 18-25 and 1 in 30 aged 13-17 experiences some form of homelessness and related trauma over the course of a year. Bridge is the only facility in the Boston area equipped to offer a safe shelter, showers, meals, support and counseling to this vulnerable population.

Two of our Confirmands, Precious Kabagahya and Lindsey traveled with Rev. Harris and Deb Raymond to visit Bridge this winter. The congregation was very moved to hear these two young women speak during a worship service about their visit to Bridge and overnight stay at a shelter. The testimonies of these two teens was a stark reminder of the needs of this underserved population.

Upon the recommendation of the Missions Committee, the Parish Council voted to have 1/2 of this year's Easter Offering be donated to Bridge Over Troubled Waters. You can find out even more about Bridge at botw.org.

SOCKS SOCKS SOCKS

Our Lenten Project to get a bin filled with socks to the needy will end the Sunday after Easter, April 12. Socks should be adult size for men or women. The bin is in the office area.

MISSIONS TREASURER'S REPORT MARCH 2026

In March \$1000 was paid to the SNEUCC. This is the first of 4 payments, which will total \$4500 by the end of 2026. \$900 will go directly to the Metropolitan Boston Association. \$200 will be donated to support the Palm Sunday Procession, led by Deb Raymond. The check will be made out directly to Sandy Covee, who provides Clyde, the horse for the Procession.



PLANT, BAKE, CRAFT SALE

MAY 9 10-2PM

Perennials, Annuals, and Baked Goods donations are needed for the Plant Sale. Please drop off your labeled donations on Friday, 5/8 by 2pm. We will also need volunteers on the day of the sale - signups will be at coffee hour. Thank you!

COME SHOP JUST IN TIME FOR MOTHER'S DAY!

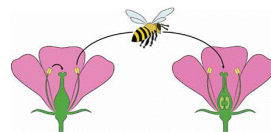
DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO SHARE DURING WORSHIP ON MOTHER'S DAY?

For Mother's Day this year, we are recruiting members of our church to share a short story about moms and faith. Do you have a story about your mother to share? Do you have a story about being a mother? Do you have a story about being a mother figure? Or perhaps about someone who showed you a mother's love, whether they were your biological mother or not?

If you think you might have a brief story to share about the way God's love is revealed to us through motherhood, please let Andrew know! We'd love for you to share your story during worship. Call the church or email andrew@uccburlington.org

GREEN TEAM

For the past two years the Green team has been trying to schedule a time to cut the invasive vines that are choking the trees between the church parking lot and parsonage. We have decided to "take action," and cut the vines after worship on April 12, 19 and 26. If you can help us on any of the dates it would be greatly appreciated. Please dress appropriately and if you have clippers or a small power saw please bring it. We do have extras.



DON'T FORGET EARTH DAY, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22

Isaiah 61:11 - As the earth brings forth its plants, and a garden makes its growth spring up, so will the Lord God make justice and praise spring up before all nations.

NEWS FROM CRISTIAN EDUCATION



Filling Easer eggs for 4/5/26. Thank you to CE, Sean and the Sunday School kids.

The Sunday School group have been studying a unit on Love and Lent for the past few months and will be happy to show you their work soon.

Upcoming Sunday School events

April 5 Annual Easter Egg Hunt 9:45 in Sewall Hall. Hear the Easter Story & then the hunt is on! During worship, Sunday School will be in session. The kids will come downstairs after the passing of the peace.

April 12 Open House in Sunday School! The Sunday School and Nursery invite all Congregants to please join us after church downstairs in Sunday School classroom for an open house display about Lent and more.

Nursery School

Nursery School is held every week 9/7/25 – 6/8/26

Youth Group

Youth Group began last November in conjunction with Hancock Church in Lexington.

The group is for people 7th – 12th grade.

Schedule:

Sunday April 26 off site: Harvard Epworth Church in Cambridge with Rev. Steven Bingham from 4 – 5:30pm. The youth will meet at UCC Burlington and will be driven to Epworth Church by Deb.

Along with Hancock Church Youth, we will deliver prepared meals to people in Cambridge. This will be a walking event to people's homes. We will meet at church at 12:45. The event is 1:30 – potentially 4:30 Return to church by 5.

Upcoming Intergenerational Events

Sunday 3/29/26 start promptly at noon Palm Sunday procession

Come and meet at St. Mark's Church parking lot at 11:30am to celebrate Palm Sunday. The procession begins promptly at noon. The walk begins at St. Mark's church and proceeds .7 miles up to UCC Burlington.

There will be a cold drink and snack waiting for you at the end.
Don't walk? Hang out at the end and cheer on the procession!

Wrap up of events



On March 15th UCC kids and parents having a ball at the pool party
At the Boys and Girls Club in Billerica.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

<p>Tonia Egan, her mom and dad Laura Nowell's friend Mary Bev Maher's daughter Kim Barbara Naddaff's grandson and friend Mary Sally Willard's sister Vicky Anna Karwan's sister for being a wonderful caregiver for mom Liz Silva's friend has a son overseas with health issues Rev. Cheryl Kerr's son Gabe Joyce Carpenter nieces Breanna, MaryJane and brother-in-law Ken Tom Killilea Auri Musselman's sister-in-law's family Sally Willard's sister Woody Knowles Donna DeSiome's sister Brenda and brother-in-law Rick Deana Tredeau's great niece Katie Wise Conrad Fong Bill Livezey Kay Shute Roberta Low</p>	<p>Debbie Claar's dear friends Victor and Bob Jan Blandino, her grandson Toby David Knowles Elaine Glancy Ted Brierley Andrew's friend Lorenzo Bill Hitchcock Skip Glancy and sister Dorothy Karen Butler's brother-in-law Lenny Shirley Fong's Mom Mary Julie Lewis' cousin Alicia Shirley Garside's daughter Lynn Jessy McNeil's sisters Grace and Joyce Kelly Sievert Ginger Mungillo, daughter Cindy, son Jim Barbara Garland</p> <p>Middle East Our Country The World Mother Earth</p>
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CONDOLENCES

Our deepest sympathy to Jan Costa and her family on the sudden passing of her brother Bud Valcourt.

Our condolences to Michael DeLuca on the recent passing of his dad, Michael Dominic DeLuca.

Our deepest sympathy to Loral Nowell on the passing of her cousin Nigel who was on our prayer list for a very long time.



1	Alan Beck	15	Donald Walker
7	Brody Bonnell	19	Janet Hooper
9	Kristen Costa	21	Shirley Fong
10	Josephine Samarjian	25	Allison Reynolds (Phillips)
11	Barbara Naddaff	28	Kristen Harder
12	Barbara Leonard	30	Mark Forbush
13	Tina Brierley	30	Kay Shute
13	Pam Walker		
13	Brad Bond		

April 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1  2 2p Bible Study 7p Choir Rehearsal	2 <u>MAUNDY THURSDAY</u> 1p C4C No Scouts 6:30p Worship and Soup	3  3pm at ICE Facility 7p Stations Of the Cross Presbyterian Church	4 9:30a Decorate Sanctuary
5 EASTER 6:30a Sunrise at Simmonds Park 9:45p Easter Egg Hunt 10:15a Cross Decorating 10:30a Worship and Communion	6 6:30p AA 7p Trustees	7 5pm Mike Fay Tech Rehearsal	8 2p Bible Study 5pm Mike Fay Tech Rehearsal	9 1p C4C 5:30p Scouts 7p Deacons	10 5pm ANNIE SHOW	11 2pm ANNIE SHOW 6pm ANNIE SHOW
12 10:30a Worship Noon CE Open house Noon Vine Cutting/Church 1pm ANNIE SHOW	13 6:30p AA	14 Holocaust Remembrance Day	15 2p Bible Study	16 1p C4C 5:30p Scouts	17	18
19 10:30a Worship Noon Vine Cutting/Church	20 PATRIOTS DAY Office closed 6:30p AA	21 7p PC MTG	22 EARTH DAY 2p Bible Study	23 1p C4C 5:30p Scouts	24 5pm Dan Shea Drum	25
26 10:30a Worship Red Wagon Noon Vine Cutting/Church 4p Youth Group 6-10p Noha Rental	27 6:30p AA	28	29 2p Bible Study 3:20p Green Team	30 1p C4C 5:30p Scouts		

UCC Congregational
6 Lexington Street
Burlington, MA 01803
Address Service Requested

TO:



APRIL 202 HILLTOP HERALD NEWSLETTER



GOOD FRIDAY

The Seven Last Words of Christ

AN ECUMENICAL WORSHIP
SERVICE ON GOOD FRIDAY

April 3rd at 3pm
Burlington ICE Detention Center
1000 District Ave.

Gather with us to mourn, lament, and hope
as we await the Good News of Resurrection