

# KEEPING *Current*

With The Union Church in Waban

MARCH 2013

## FROM THE PASTOR

In a Children's Time recently, I suggested that our worship life is like a beautifully illustrated picture book. Like those lovely books, our worship life tells the story of our life together with God not only by word but also with beautiful images and rituals.

Some of these images and rituals we know quite well and their meaning is clear. When we see a wreath with the three purple candles, one pink candle and the white one in the middle, we know that Advent is here. When we see the manger, we know that Christmas is at hand.

But there are other images and rituals we engage in that may be less familiar to some of us. This is particularly true, I think, during the season of Lent.

From the ashes of Ash Wednesday that marks the beginning of Lent and that remind us of the preciousness of life and of our own mortality (also hearkening the ancient practice of placing ashes on one's head as a sign

of repentance), to the lilies that fill the chancel on Easter morning representing not only the resurrection but also the care of God, as in the Sermon on the Mount: "Consider the lilies of the field" (Matt 6:28). Lent is full of texture.

Of all of the services that we have during Lent and Holy Week, however, I think there may be no other that is as powerfully rich with imagery than the Holy Saturday, Easter Vigil.

While the Easter Vigil is a relatively new service at the Union Church, its origin can be traced back to the first centuries with the Christian community that resided in northern Africa. For forty days leading up to Easter, those seeking initiation into that Christian community participated in fasting, spiritual formation and education. Then on the eve of Easter, in this Easter Vigil service, these initiates were baptized as the whole community celebrated the grace of renewal that is at the heart of living in Christ.

Our Saturday service is in keeping with this ancient practice of renewal and celebration and lends itself particularly well to intergenerational worship. The service has four components, each acknowledging and celebrating four aspects of our life together with God.

With the church dimly lit, the vigil begins with a service of light. By the use of fire, candles, words, movement and music, we celebrate that we are pilgrim people of God following the pillar of fire given in Jesus, the light of the world.

We then continue with a service of word where we hear a panoramic view of all that God has done in the world. These readings bring us up to the threshold of the tomb where we wait with longing and expectation for the Good News of Easter morning.

A service of water follows where we celebrate the sacrament of baptism for those seeking baptism and affirmation of baptism for those

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

[A Note from Your Moderators, Russell School News](#)

[Page 2](#)

[Spiritual Retreat, Deacons' Corner](#)

[Page 3](#)

[Adult Education and Formation](#)

[Page 4-5](#)

[Lent and Holy Week](#)

[Page 6-7](#)

[News from NICA](#)

[Page 8-11](#)

[C.E. News](#)

[Page 12-15](#)

## COMMUNICATING WITH THE UNION CHURCH

*Keeping Current* is the monthly newsletter covering the activities within and surrounding The Union Church in Waban. **Submissions are due on the 20th of each month.** The preferred method of submission is via email to the Church Office. All articles should include the author's name and phone number and should be submitted in their entirety.

Items for the church's Sunday Bulletin may also be submitted in the same fashion as *Keeping Current*. **The deadline for the weekly bulletin is Wednesday morning at 10 am.**

### CONTACT INFORMATION

#### Office Phone

617-527-6221

HOURS T- F, 8-2

#### Minister's Study

617-965-3893

Stacy's cell 617-759-9016

#### Fax

617-969-8717

#### Office Email

ucw@ucw.org

#### Minister's Email

Stacy@ucw.org

#### Christian Education Email

Kathy@ucw.org

#### Website

www.ucw.org

## A Note From Your Moderators

As we enter the heart of our Lenten season, there is always a question of what we are willing to sacrifice. In many cases, fasting or giving up sweets is the choice of many. It is emblematic of the sacrifice that Jesus made for us. It is a great opportunity to reflect on the depth of, or questions about, our relationship with God. I have always found that fasting goes directly to the heart of that relationship. Food and water are necessary elements of a life sustained. Giving up even a little bit drives the mind to thought. We live in a nation of such great abundance, blessed by a fertile Midwest and a glorious Mississippi River that makes the delivery of that bounty less expensive relative to other nations, yet we waste 30 percent of that bounty every year. Almost all of that waste comes from leftovers we throw out. By 2050 the planet will have an additional 2.5 billion people by some projections. Food and water security will be an ongoing geopolitical issue that will challenge us for a long time. During this season of Lent, take this opportunity to reflect on the bounty we have as a community and while giving up something yourself, give to another in need. Let these acts allow us all to build foundations to a closer relationship with God.

Peace,

Kent

## Local Initiative Takes Shape at the Russell School

As we continue to explore the nature and scope of our emerging local partnership with the Russell School in Dorchester, we are excited to participate in a school-wide literacy night on Thursday, April 4, from 5:00-7:00 p.m. -- and we want as many UCWers as possible to join us!

The Russell School partnership is a result of the church's commitment and generosity to use part of the funds raised through the capital campaign of several years back to support local outreach and projects, similar to our long-term commitment to Zambia and Nicaragua. A small group within the church has been meeting for the past year sharing ideas and discerning our "call" to this new ministry.

The literacy night is one of the first concrete opportunities we have to deepen our relationship with the Russell School community. At the literacy night, we will be supporting a "Read To Me" reading initiative for parents and students.

In preparation for the event, the Russell School staff has invited us to a "training the trainers" workshop on Monday, March 25 from 5:00-6:00 p.m. at the Russell School. The workshop will provide the techniques and skills we need to be resources at the literacy night. And we want to bring as many UCWers as we can!

If you would like to get involved in this exciting new local initiative and are able to attend either the training on March 25 or the literacy night on April 4th, please see Frank Laski, Nancy Zollers, Brita Gill-Austern, Katheryn DeRogatis or Mark Smith for more information.

### From the Pastor (Continued from page 1)

seeking to renew their baptismal vows.

The service concludes with a celebrative service of communion where we give thanks for the renewing and sustaining power of God's love.

Those who have participated in the service in past years have remarked how rich it has been for them and how much more meaningful the joyous celebration of Easter is having prepared for it the night before with light, word, water and communion.

So mark your calendars! Bring your children! Saturday, March 30<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. Child care will be provided.

### Spiritual Retreat: Save the date April 27

**Where:** Edwards House, at the Massachusetts Conference of the UCC located in Framingham.

<http://edwardshouseframingham.org/>

**When:** April 27

**What:** This retreat is intended to provide a nourishing time of spiritual rest and renewal, while also providing resources and instruction on how to cultivate nourishing spiritual practices that help quiet the soul and open more fully to God.

**Other details:** The cost of the retreat is \$25. We need a minimum of 16 people in order to reserve the space. so please RSVP to Luisa at [ucw@ucw.org](mailto:ucw@ucw.org) ASAP. If you have questions, please see or email Kathryn Henderson ([Kathryn@ucw.org](mailto:Kathryn@ucw.org)) or Stacy Swain ([Stacy@ucw.org](mailto:Stacy@ucw.org)).



### Deacon's Corner

Please hold Vicky and Ricky Smith and the entire extended Smith family in your prayers, as they grieve the passing of Vicky's mother, Beta Smith. May they be surrounded by our love and the love of God.

## Christian Education and Formation for Adults

### Meditation Drop-ins

Would you like to learn more about meditation or practice with a group? We'll be meeting in Stacy's office on March 2, 16 and 30, and April 13, and you can take part as frequently as you'd like. From 9:30 to 10:00 a.m. Kathryn will meet with anyone interested in receiving instruction or guidance with specific meditation practices. From 10:00 to 11:00, the entire group will meet for meditation and conversation about related topics. If you have any questions, please email [kathryn@ucw.org](mailto:kathryn@ucw.org).

### "Conversations Along the Way"

Grab your coffee and curiosity and continue the conversation that was begun over two thousand years ago on that road to Emmaus (Luke 21:13). We will join those two disciples in frank and honest conversation as we engage our questions, our doubts and skepticism about what exactly this Christian faith is all about. We will talk candidly about how and if the ancient story of Scripture has relevance for our living today and how we are to understand what it means to "love kindness, do justice and walk humbly with our God" (Micah 6:8) in this time and place. The agenda for this time is not to try to get each other to believe in a certain way or to try to rid us of our questions. Quite the opposite is true! The agenda for this time, which is consistent with the spirit of the Union Church community, is to simply welcome all, wherever we may be on our spiritual journeys, and to engage our questions honestly and openly, without judgment and with love.

We meet once a month on Wednesday mornings, and this month we will meet on March 6 at 9:00 a.m. at the Waban Starbucks.

### Living Waters Prayer Group

Living Waters Prayer Group meets each Wednesday morning in the side chapel from 7:30 to 8:15 a.m. You are invited to gather with others in the chapel off the sanctuary for a time of silent contemplation, meditation on scripture, and prayer. Steeping ourselves in the peace and presence of God in the quiet of prayer makes a qualitative difference in how we experience what the week brings. Again, if you are interested in this time of prayer, but mornings just are not convenient for your schedule, please see Stacy about exploring a weekday evening offering. [Stacy@ucw.org](mailto:Stacy@ucw.org)

### "Who Do You Say I Am?"

Lenten Study and Reflection Group

Who was Jesus, really? Was he a teacher, or a revolutionary? Perhaps a philosopher, or the Jewish Messiah? Kathryn Henderson invites you to explore these questions during Lent as part of a discussion group on the historical Jesus. Studying this fascinating topic is a way to deepen our understandings of who Jesus is, both in history and in our faith lives.

The group will read excerpts of *The Shadow of the Galilean* as a basis for discussion and personal reflection. This is a classic novel, told from the perspective of Andreas, a man coerced by the Romans to spy on Jesus and his followers. Through the adventures and encounters of Andreas we discover what it was like to be a Jew in first-century Palestine, and learn the various perspectives on who Jesus was in his own time, and his impact on those around him. To read more about this engaging and thought-provoking book, you can go to <http://www.amazon.com/Shadow-Galilean-Quest-Historical-Narrative/dp/0800639006>.

The discussions will be held at 11:30 a.m. for about 90 minutes on March 10, 17, and 24. It's fine to drop in, and come to as many meetings as you're able. It is not essential to read the book, but it is entertaining if you have the time. If you have any questions please email Kathryn at [kathryn@ucw.org](mailto:kathryn@ucw.org), or catch her after a Sunday worship service.

### From the Lunch Bunch

March's meeting of Lunch Bunch will be on Tuesday, March 12th at noon. Please consider joining us for Lunch Bunch. Each month we catch up on the happenings in our lives, and then discuss a topic of interest. If you need a ride, please give Stacy a call at 617-965-3893.

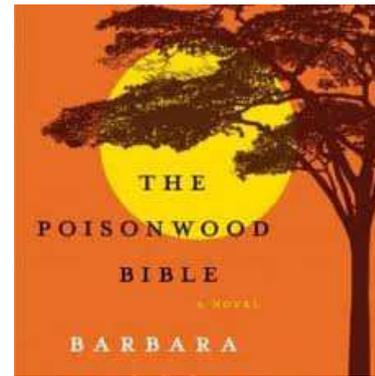
## Christian Education and Formation for Adults (continued)

### The Waban Health Nursing and Rehabilitation Center: Taking Worship Beyond Our Sanctuary's Walls

One Thursday morning per month at 10:30 a.m., Stacy is joined by others in the church to lead a monthly Protestant worship service for our neighbors, the residents of the Waban Health, the nursing and rehabilitation center located in Waban Square just behind the Waban Market. Waban Health provides short-term rehabilitation, long-term dementia, and respite care, to 90 residents. Hearing God's word and sharing communion with people who we may not have any other opportunity to know is tremendously enriching. If you are interested in sharing in this ministry, please let Stacy know by either emailing her at [Stacy@ucw.org](mailto:Stacy@ucw.org) or by calling at 617-965-3893. This month's visit will be on March 21st.

### Book Group

The next meeting of the Book Group will be on Tuesday evening, March 12 at 7:30 p.m. We will be reading *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver. If you have never come to Book Group, please consider joining us.



### Java Gents

Java Gents is an informal monthly breakfast hour for the men of the UCW congregation. It provides friendly fellowship and mutual support to the men. Java Gents meet the third Friday of each month in the church reception room at 7:00 a.m. Breakfast is provided. Jay O'Beirne usually hosts the lively discussion of timely topics, and personal goings on among the men. This month's meeting will be on March 15.

### Wellspring Women's Group

~~~  
*Wednesday, March 20th*

Women's Wellspring meets throughout the year, usually on the second or third Wednesday of the month. Mark your calendars for this month's meeting on March 20 at 6:30 p.m. when you are invited out of the demands of your days and into a place of peace. You are invited to set down that which burdens you and pick up laughter, love and learning. You are invited to fill places of hunger with good food and fellowship. Women of the church, you are invited.

Come every month or come when you can. It will be good to be together!

### Bible Study

Bible Study continues this month with a new study of the Gospel of Matthew. We meet on Sunday mornings at 8:00 a.m. in Stacy's office.

Bible Study is a great way to not only help us grow in our own understanding of who God is for each of us personally, but it also enlivens our experience of worship and helps us to be more curious and engaged in our faith throughout the week.

Please join us; the study is open to everyone. Biblical literacy or previous study is not needed. Come when you can; there is no commitment to attend every Sunday.

## Lent and Holy Week

### Small Group Lenten Dinners

Throughout Lent we will be hosting several small group potluck dinners. We invite you to choose from the following, a time and place when you can join with others from the Union Church community for a time of fellowship. Please rsvp by Friday, March 8. Everyone is encouraged to sign up, whether you are a long-time member or new to the community, whether you have long-time friends within the congregation, or are just getting to know people, everyone is invited so don't miss out. Please take advantage of this opportunity. These dinners are for everyone so please let's have everyone sign up.

Call the office, or sign up directly on the sign-up sheet posted in the Reception Room. More details are on the sign-up sheet.

Your host will be in touch with details when sign ups are complete.

Don't miss this chance to connect with someone new!

- Friday, March 8th in Roslindale at Mark Smith and Stacy Swain's home;
- Saturday, March 16th in Waban at Chris Kiritsy and Molly Owen-Kiritsy's home;
- Saturday, March 16th in Watertown at David Spertner's home;
- Sunday, March 17th in Newton at Diane Tillotson and Karen Harvey's home;
- Saturday, March 23rd in Weston at Lara and Grant Gund's home;
- Sunday, March 24th in Waban at Gary and Brita Gill-Austern's home.

### Good Friday

### Visiting the Episcopal Monastery



On Good Friday, Kathryn Henderson will be going to the Stations of the Cross service at Society of St. John the Evangelist in Cambridge, and welcomes you to join her. The group will probably leave at 10:45 a.m. on March 29. Final travel arrangements will be made the week before. If you'd like to know more, please ask Kathryn after church or [email her at kathryn@ucw.org](mailto:kathryn@ucw.org). You can also check out the society's website: [www.ssje.org](http://www.ssje.org), and the [recent Boston Globe article](http://www.bostonglobe.com/lifestyle/travel/2013/01/27/monastery-society-saint-john-evangelist-cambridge-offers-unexpected-sanctuary/0mLLyju2MitaHBM9xxDjAJ/story.html?utm_source=SSJE&utm_campaign=4836bda3fe-SSJE_in_the_Boston_Globe1_28_2013&utm_medium=email) ([http://www.bostonglobe.com/lifestyle/travel/2013/01/27/monastery-society-saint-john-evangelist-cambridge-offers-unexpected-sanctuary/0mLLyju2MitaHBM9xxDjAJ/story.html?utm\\_source=SSJE&utm\\_campaign=4836bda3fe-SSJE\\_in\\_the\\_Boston\\_Globe1\\_28\\_2013&utm\\_medium=email](http://www.bostonglobe.com/lifestyle/travel/2013/01/27/monastery-society-saint-john-evangelist-cambridge-offers-unexpected-sanctuary/0mLLyju2MitaHBM9xxDjAJ/story.html?utm_source=SSJE&utm_campaign=4836bda3fe-SSJE_in_the_Boston_Globe1_28_2013&utm_medium=email))



## Lent and Holy Week (continued)

### Consider Walking the Labyrinth as part of your Lenten practice.

We are used to prayer as being all about words. Whether spoken aloud or silently, we pray by speaking to God that which is on our hearts. But there is another form of prayer that involves not so much our words but our feet. Walking the Labyrinth is a form of body prayer, a walking practice of meditation/contemplation that draws one closer and closer to the quiet center where one can be still and know God.

It is important to bear in mind that a labyrinth is not a maze. There are no dead ends. There is a way in and a way out, and it is impossible to get lost. This is because the intent of the labyrinth is not to confuse. Instead it is a way to gain greater clarity by engaging the metaphor of journey, both physically and spiritually.

*“While archeological evidence of labyrinths has been found dating back to 4500 BCE. in Egypt and Central Italy, the Christian use of the labyrinth began in the twelfth century. At this time, pilgrimage to the Holy Land was becoming increasingly dangerous and expensive, and so labyrinths were laid down in the flooring of cathedrals. In this way, instead of making a physical pilgrimage to their spiritual home in Jerusalem, Christians could walk a symbolic pilgrimage on a labyrinth. They turned a physical journey into a spiritual journey.<sup>[1]</sup>”*

So we invite you to take time to walk the labyrinth this Lent either during our **Contemplative Prayer Service on Wednesday mornings at 7:30 a.m.**, before or after our worship service on Sundays, or any other time you may happen to be at church.

<sup>[1]</sup> Donna Schaper and Carole Ann Camp. “Labyrinths From the Outside In: Walking to Spiritual Insight, A Beginner’s Guide.” ( Skylight Paths Publishing: Woodstock, VT.2000). p. 6

## Holy Week

**Holy week begins on Palm Sunday, March 24th.** The children will open worship with a procession of the Palms.

### **Wednesday, Lenten Fast Reflection at 7:00 p.m.**

For those who have engaged in the Lenten practice of fasting, this will be a time to reflect on what we have experienced as a community of faith.

**Maundy Thursday, March 28th, 6:15 p.m.** The service is held in the vestry and begins with a meal before transitioning into a meditative Tenebrae Service of song and scripture as we meditate on Jesus’ betrayal, arrest, and death. Child care will be available. A sign-up sheet for this service is in the side chapel. Please RSVP so that the deacons can plan for the food.

**Friday, March 29 at noon.** Stations of the Cross at St. John the Evangelist in Cambridge.

**Holy Saturday Vigil, Saturday, March 30th at 7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.** Join us for this time to reflect on all that has transpired during Holy Week and to anticipate the coming dawn of Easter. During this service we will share in the Lord’s Supper and reaffirm our baptismal vows. If you have never been baptized and would like to be baptized during this beautiful and meditative service, please see Stacy. ([Stacy@ucw.org](mailto:Stacy@ucw.org)).

**Easter Sunday Worship, March 31st at 10:00.** Join us for this service of joy.

An Easter **Egg Hunt** for children of all ages will follow the worship service.

## News from NICA

The following is a reprint of an article published in *Revista*, a publication from the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies at Harvard University. **David Gullette** is Vice President of the Newton, MA/San Juan del Sur Sister City Project. He is author of *Nicaraguan Peasant Poetry* from Solentiname, *¡GASPAR! A Spanish Poet/Priest in the Nicaraguan Revolution*, and *Dreaming*.

### Solving Water Problems in Southwestern Nicaragua

By David Gullette

In global terms, ours is the troubled century of water. Expanding populations, extreme climatic events, and threatened or contested sources of “the vital liquid” are guaranteed to cause more crises—even regional conflicts—in the coming decades.

But let us tighten the focus to the strip of land in Nicaragua between the Pacific and Lake Nicaragua, south of Rivas all the way to the Costa Rican border: here folks are paradoxically both rich and poor when it comes to access to potable water.

The port town of San Juan del Sur went from sleepy fishing village to international resort in 20 years, like Provincetown on fast forward. It now gets its water (heavily chlorinated) from the big lake, pumped through a system financed by the Spanish government. Ironically, the residual taste of chlorine, plus a widespread revulsion at the very idea of drinking lake water, means that most *sanjuaneños* who can afford it use tap water for everything *but* drinking. The bottled water business is booming.

Meanwhile, in the 33 impoverished rural communities scattered around the 250 square mile township, potable water from a tap remains a distant dream. Most rural homes get their water from hand-dug wells. And virtually all these wells are contaminated, given the omnipresence of farm animals plus the haphazard placement of porous latrines. The water contains *E. coli* bacteria, as well as a range of parasite cysts. Intestinal ailments are widespread, dangerous for vulnerable infants, and hard (and expensive) to get rid of.

We in the Newton (MA)/San Juan del Sur Sister City Project ([www.newtonsanjuan.org](http://www.newtonsanjuan.org)) have been working with our Nicaraguan colleagues for more than a decade on a set of interlocking water solutions: home-based purification of well water; rehabilitation of wells; installation and repair of hand-operated pumps; teaching families basic hygiene; watershed preservation (partly through reducing firewood use); and introducing sealed-unit composting toilets to replace the traditional latrines.

Our preferred method of purifying well water has been the BioSand Filter (BSF). Invented by a Canadian and promoted

around the world by [CAWST.org](http://CAWST.org) in Calgary, the BSF is essentially a box, usually of concrete, the size of a free-standing water-cooler, filled with carefully processed sand and gravel. Contaminated well water is poured in at the top, works its way slowly down through the column of sand, and comes out of a spout, purified. Key to the process is a “biolayer” created by the permanent two inches of water above the top layer of sand, where “good bacteria” slowly form a colony: they trap and eat much of the *E. coli* population that passes through.

The BSF has obvious advantages: it’s cheap (about US\$50 each); home-based; and requires no chemicals or electricity. The downsides are that boxes made of concrete are extremely heavy (330 lbs. without the sand/gravel) and thus hard to deliver and move for maintenance; they also require daily use to keep the “good bacteria” in the biolayer well-fed and oxygenated. If neglected for more than a day or two, the biolayer dies and starts to stink, and the efficacy of the system is compromised. Thus the human element at the point of use is crucial. Families have to be disciplined enough to follow the “use-it-every-day rule” and keep their water storage bucket clean to avoid *recontamination*.

In 2008 and 2009, grants from the Boston-based Conservation, Food and Health Foundation allowed us to manufacture and install more than 600 BSFs in twenty rural communities, and to train area *promotoras* and village *brigadistas* to troubleshoot and help villagers comply with the rules of proper filter use.

In 2011, retired businessman Dennis St. John approached us with his design for a BSF made entirely of PVC (using a 10” drainage pipe for the column). For the 2012 pilot project we installed twelve of these in one community. We have been very pleased: the PVC filter weighs only 29 lbs. empty, and laboratory tests show that it removes contaminants as well as the concrete filters do. Plus, it’s elegant and easy to clean. We’ll build and install 36 more in January 2013.

Our Nicaraguan colleagues also emphasize domestic hygiene, especially hand-washing and keeping animal feces out of the yard. Particularly useful in these efforts are graphic posters made available by [CAWST.org](http://CAWST.org). We have also paid to have wells dug deeper and re-lined, and to have the classic “rope pump” installed or repaired.

Because an occasional well runs dry early in the year, we also focus on “how to take good care of your watershed.” Since virtually everyone cooks with wood in the countryside, we point out that stripping vegetation from around the house can actually put the water supplies at risk. We explain how, when it rains, a forested

hillside is like a sponge; if deforested, it's like a zinc roof. But people still need wood to cook. So Fidel Pavón and I developed our own model stove, which uses half the amount of wood of the typical open fire with the added advantage that its chimney ridges the house of the smoke that gives mothers emphysema and children asthma. As we were building the prototype, Fidel's wife, Luzmarina, was hospitalized with emphysema, but after we replaced her open fire with our EcoStove, her symptoms disappeared.

We've decided to present the EcoStoves as a reward for families who use their BioSand Filter properly. At the same time, it's a new incentive to those who have stopped using their filters: get your filter re-installed, follow the rules, and become eligible for a stove. (Unlike the BSF program, in which we gave the filters free of charge, participants in the EcoStove program must donate sweat equity and when possible, materials such as cement, sand, and bricks, to obtain a stove.)

Demonstrably, clean lungs, clean water and healthy watersheds go hand in hand.

One obvious alternative to the use of BSFs would be to have wells professionally bored to great depths where contamination is not a problem. The issue here is cost: it's extremely expensive to have a deep well bored, and a pump for such a well requires electricity, yet fewer than half of the villages we serve are wired. And in most villages the houses are so dispersed that piping water to each home would be an additional challenge.

But one non-electrified community did it right: Ojochal, where about twenty families live along an ascending dirt road. In 2008, the Union Church in Newton worked with local residents to take several steps toward a potable water supply. They deepened the existing, privately owned well at the top of the road that most people used and then constructed a hardwood tower to hold a 1,100 gallon water tank. They installed a set of solar panels to power a submersible pump to fill the tank and finally, they excavated a trench for a two-inch water main to run the water down the hill, with a spigot in front of each house. Eventually the mayor's office found money to bore a deep *public* well. Today, all the Ojochal families have access to solar-pumped high-quality water that does not require subsequent filtration. But of course there are 32 other villages.

One other way to limit the infiltration of pathogens from surrounding soil into a well is by using composting toilets (CT). The first of our "in-house outhouses" was a twin-bin affair (one room for boys and one for girls) built next to the schoolhouse we financed in the community of Cebadilla.

Essentially our CT is a pair of tall boxes *on*, not in the ground. Their floors are sealed with roofing cement. A tall stack carries off water vapor and whatever gases arise from the composting process, and creates a slight updraft to disperse odors. On top of the boxes sit the roofed "throne rooms." Because San

Juan del Sur is a fishing port, we were able to modify a Vietnamese-model CT, employing a "hammock" of heavy-duty nylon fish net that holds the "biomass" in the air so that aerobic decomposition can take place. The "hammock" was filled first with layers of palm fronds, *zacate* (a perennial fodder grass), corn husks, leaves, and sawdust from the sawmill a mile away. A bucket of sawdust is left in each stall, and the teachers are urged to throw a handful or two of sawdust into each toilet at the end of every school day.

This system has functioned flawlessly—without strong odors or external leaks—since February 2005. Not far away is a hand-dug well that serves most of the community. The schoolyard where the well is located is livestock-free, thanks to a barbed-wire fence. As a result, the unfiltered well water registers a fairly low *E. coli* count, compared to similar (unfenced) wells in the region.

Our Canadian colleagues at Project Nicaragua/NicaCan have been promoting single-family composting toilets in several other rural communities in the San Juan del Sur township. They found that often families would help build their new CT and then, when the Canadians left, revert out of habit to using the old odoriferous, well-water-polluting latrine. The donors now insist that the old latrine be dismantled before the family can receive the new CT.

This sporadic backsliding points to a key issue that we who do development work must sooner or later confront, whether we work in water purification, sanitation, alternative building materials, or something as basic as making sure kids get sent to school. The point is, people are slow to change old habits, or as we say in Nicaragua, *La costumbre es la ley*: old customs rule. Some people will never change. I once saw a man kneel on a rock covered with monkey feces and drink directly from the creek which ran below his knees. Maybe his intestinal system had years ago adapted to the bacterial flora of the water he and the monkeys shared. Or maybe he suffered from chronic parasitosis and simply lived with it. What is clear is that an infant or toddler would almost certainly not be as immune to infection. Worldwide, 5,000 such children die every day from contaminated water. Doubtless the parents of many of these children had been warned about microbes. But as in all types of education, including public health, steady repetition and reinforcement of basic lessons is crucial. Patience is power.

Certainly, our efforts to guarantee year-round potable water for folks in our little part of the world will never have 100 percent success. But over the years we have forged partnerships between activists in Newton and numerous Nicaraguan colleagues—in the medical community, local government, civil society, village councils, and individual families—that will at least assure that *la lucha continúa*: the fight for clean water goes on.

## News from NICA (continued)

- **NEXT SERVICE PROJECT:** If you are interested in our next service project trip to Nicaragua, please contact David Spertner at [dspertner@gmail.com](mailto:dspertner@gmail.com) or 617-549-1200 for preliminary information. Next trip is only 1 year away!
- **NEW SPONSORED STUDENT:** The Union Church has sponsored a college student (through the Brugger Foundation [www.fundacionajbrugger.org](http://www.fundacionajbrugger.org)) in Nicaragua to go to college whose name is Yarisleidy. Many members who traveled on our last service project had the pleasure of meeting her. She is graduating in March and we wish her all the best of luck.

We are now going to be sponsoring Ana who is in her third year of college studying Tourism and Hotel Management. She is the first woman in her family to go to college. A short bio is below along with a recent letter from her to the Union Church.

### Ana Mariela Montiel Muñoz

Ana Mariela is 20 years old and is from Barrio La Planta- San Juan del Sur; she has 5 siblings. Her mom works as a maid in a hotel and with her salary she struggles to pay all the expenses of her family. Ana is currently studying her 3rd year of Tourism and Hotel Management, and with great efforts she has accomplished an average of 94%. Her family is going through an economic crisis and her mother will not be able to afford her University expenses next year. Her goal is to be able to complete her degree with determination. Her favorite classes are Geography, History, and Cultural Heritage. She thinks that with her degree she could promote the culture of Nicaragua to the kids in school in the area of San Juan del Sur. Ana thinks that the young people are the future of the country and because of that, they should all be involved in social initiatives. She has been involved in social projects through the youth group of her church.



### **A recent letter from Ana to the Union Church** (*Translated by: Brugger Foundation staff*)

*San Juan del Sur,  
Feb. 11, 2013*

*Hi David and friends from Union Church,*

*My name is Ana Mariela Montiel, I have 20 years old, I was born on August 13, 1992. I live in a small town located in the south of Nicaragua, called San Juan del Sur.*

*I come from a humble family; I am the third from 6 children. I have 2 brothers and 3 sisters. I study tourism and hotel management, it is a beautiful career that promotes the culture of Nicaragua. In this career more than others it is very important to learn English, and I like it.*

*In my freetime I like to read, spend time with my family and friends, meet new people, have friends, go to church, listen to music, go to the beach, and swim is something I really enjoy. Have you visited San Juan del Sur? I am sure you will like it! It is a colorful port, people are very friendly, we have beautiful natural resources, the weather is hot almost all the time, we have beautiful beaches and mountains. I live close to the beach and I frequently run in the beach every afternoon and see the extraordinary sunset.*

*I think that every day there is something new to learn and that every day is unique, that's why we need to live happily and smile always!*

*Love,  
Ana Mariela Montiel*

# 12 BY 12 ART SHOW and silent auction



*Proceeds benefit Newton - San Juan Sister City Program  
Newton, Massachusetts - San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua*



SILENT AUCTION & RECEPTION  
FRIDAY MARCH 22nd 7pm-9pm

Wedeman Gallery at The Yamawaki Art and Cultural Center  
Lasell College 43 Myrtle Avenue, Newton, MA 02466 617 243 2143 12by12sistercity@gmail.com

## Christian Education News for Children and Youth

by Kathy Malone

### Shrove Tuesday pancake breakfast



The Sunday School observed the Sunday before Lent with a 'Shrove Tuesday' pancake breakfast. In true Mardi Gras fashion, we filled up on chocolate chip pancakes and sausage, as we talked about the tradition of using up one's eggs, milk and butter in pancakes before the start of a Lenten fast. We then transitioned into Lent by practicing the Lenten disciplines of prayer, fasting and service. We learned a five finger prayer method, made 'rice bowl' coin collection containers for the congregation, and signed Valentine cards for the residents of the Waban Health Center. Thanks to Cindy Spertner for flipping all of the pancakes and to Jenny Hadley, Sue Hadley, and Susan Tuozzolo for assisting.



**Christian Education News for Children and Youth (continued)****Youth Group Bake Sale for Zambia****Early Release Day: Saint Patrick's Party  
at the Waban Health Center**

*Thursday, March 14*

St. Patrick's Party with the residents of the Waban Health Center. We'll share some musical talent, read a St. Patrick's story, and share some cookies and punch while visiting with the folks there. Plan to meet at church after school with a bag lunch. Then we'll all walk over to the health center together. Feel free to invite your friends.



## Christian Education News (continued)

### Sunday School Schedule for March

|                                                                                                             |          |                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| One Room Church School<br> | March 3  | Parable of the Fig Tree                                           |
| Classes                                                                                                     | March 10 | The Parable of the Prodigal Son                                   |
| Classes                                                                                                     | March 17 | Mary anoints Jesus' feet                                          |
| Classes                                                                                                     | March 24 | Palm Sunday                                                       |
| No Sunday School                                                                                            | March 30 | Easter! Children join in worship, followed by an Easter Egg Hunt. |

#### Appreciation for our Sunday School Teachers

Thanks to everyone who helped out with Sunday School in February: Sandy Nelson, Cindy Spertner, Sue Hadley, Jenny Hadley, Susan Tuozolo, and members of our Nicaragua group.

#### Friday Fun Night (for 4th and 5th graders )

Cosmic Bowling at the Needham Bowlway

March 1

6:00-8:00 p.m.

We will meet at 6:00 p.m. at the Needham Bowlway, then head back to church for snacks and dessert. There is no food at the Bowlway so eat dinner before you come. We will give rides back to church. But if you'd like a ride to the Bowlway for your child(ren), let Kathy know. Permission slips will be sent out the week before.

#### Time to Start Thinking about Summer Camp

Mark your calendars for the return of Camp ReNew, UCW's half day camp for elementary-aged children, the last week in June. Whether camp will be two, three, four or five days during the week of June 24-28 will depend upon how many snow days the Newton schools need to use. But we will plan to have camp that week on any day that school is not scheduled. Stay tuned for this year's theme and more details this Spring.



Lucy and Ellie display their Ancianos spirit. At our One Room Church School on February 24, David Spertner, Soo Laski, and Cate Brown talked about their visits to Nicaragua and described some of the Ancianos parties for the elderly with which our church delegations have been involved. The presentation included photos and a video of many of our own members doing the Macarena to the delight of the older guests. After the presentation, the kids decorated posters for the Ancianos we will be holding at UCW this Sunday, March 3.



UCW kids carefully dip pretzels in melted chocolate and roll in candies. Afterwards, the kids packaged up their goodies, made Valentine cards and delivered these special treats to the Newton Food Pantry. The kids met at church for this service project on February 6, an early release day from the Newton schools. Thanks to the Mission Committee for providing the supplies and helping with delivery to the food pantry.



# MARCH 2013

| Sun                                                                                                                                   | Mon                                                                             | Tues                                                                                             | Wed                                                                                                                                          | Thurs                                                                                                                               | Fri                                                                                | Sat                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                 |                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                     | <b>1</b> Friday Fun<br>Night bowling<br>6-8:00 p.m.<br><br>Game Night<br>6:30 p.m. | <b>2</b> Meditation<br>workshop<br>9:30-11:00 a.m.                                         |
| <b>3</b> 8:00 a.m.<br>Bible Study<br><br>10:00 a.m.<br>worship and Sun-<br>day School<br><br>Ancianos Event<br>12 noon – 2:00<br>p.m. | <b>4</b>                                                                        | <b>5</b><br><br>6:00 p.m.<br>Deacons' mtg.                                                       | <b>6</b> 7:30 a.m.<br>Prayer Group<br><br>9:00 a.m. Con-<br>versations Along<br>the Way (Waban<br>Starbucks)<br><br>6:30 p.m.<br>Council mtg | <b>7</b>                                                                                                                            | <b>8</b>                                                                           | <b>9</b>                                                                                   |
| <b>10</b> 8:00 a.m.<br>Bible Study<br><br>10:00 a.m.<br>worship and Sun-<br>day School<br><br>11:30 Lenten<br>Book Group              | <b>11</b>                                                                       | <b>12</b> 12 noon<br>Lunch Bunch<br><br>7:30 p.m.<br>Mission mtg.<br><br>7:30 p.m. Book<br>Group | <b>13</b><br><br>7:30 a.m. Prayer<br>Group                                                                                                   | <b>14</b> 8:00 a.m.<br>Internet mtg.<br><br>12:30 Early re-<br>lease activity with<br>Waban Health<br><br>7:30 Choir Re-<br>hearsal | <b>15</b><br><br>7:00 a.m. Java<br>Gents<br><br>6:00 p.m. Youth<br>Group           | <b>16</b><br><br>Meditation<br>workshop<br>9:30-11:00 a.m.                                 |
| <b>17</b> 8:00 a.m.<br>Bible Study<br><br>10:00 a.m .<br>worship and Sun-<br>day School<br><br>11:30 Lenten<br>Book Group             | <b>18</b>                                                                       | <b>19</b>                                                                                        | <b>20</b><br><br>7:30 a.m. Prayer<br>Group<br><br>6:30 p.m. Well-<br>spring                                                                  | <b>21</b><br><br>10:30 a.m.<br>Waban Health<br><br>6:30 p.m. Teach-<br>ing Parish<br>Committee                                      | <b>22</b>                                                                          | <b>23</b>                                                                                  |
| <b>24</b> 8:00 a.m.<br>Bible Study<br><br>10:00 a.m.<br>Palm Sunday<br>worship and Sun-<br>day School                                 | <b>25</b><br><br>5:00 p.m.<br>"Training the<br>Trainers" at Rus-<br>sell School | <b>26</b>                                                                                        | <b>27</b><br><br>7:30 a.m. Prayer<br>Group<br><br>7:00 p.m.<br>Lenten Fast<br>Reflection                                                     | <b>28</b><br><br>6:15 p.m.<br>Maundy Thursday<br>service<br><br>7:30 Choir<br>Rehearsal                                             | <b>29</b><br><br>12 noon<br>Stations of the<br>Cross (off-site)                    | <b>30</b><br><br>Meditation<br>workshop<br>9:30-11:00 a.m<br><br>7:00 p.m. Easter<br>Vigil |
| <b>31</b> 10:00 a.m.<br>Easter Sunday<br>service<br><br>Egg Hunt                                                                      |                                                                                 |                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                    |                                                                                            |

# APRIL 2013

| Sun                                                                                | Mon       | Tues                                                         | Wed                                                                                                                                  | Thurs                                | Fri                                  | Sat                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                    | <b>1</b>  | <b>2</b><br>6:00 p.m.<br>Deacons' mtg.                       | <b>3</b> 7:30 a.m.<br>Prayer Group<br>9:00 a.m. Con-<br>versations Along<br>the Way (Waban<br>Starbucks)<br>6:30 p.m.<br>Council mtg | <b>4</b>                             | <b>5</b>                             | <b>6</b><br>Council Retreat<br>9:00 a.m.-1:00<br>p.m. |
| <b>7</b> 8:00 a.m.<br>Bible Study<br>10:00 a.m.<br>worship and Sun-<br>day School  | <b>8</b>  | <b>9</b> 12 noon<br>Lunch Bunch<br>7:30 p.m.<br>Mission mtg. | <b>10</b><br>7:30 a.m. Prayer<br>Group                                                                                               | <b>11</b><br>7:30 Choir<br>Rehearsal | <b>12</b><br>7:00 a.m. Java<br>Gents | <b>13</b><br>Meditation<br>workshop<br>9:30-11:00 a.m |
| <b>14</b> 8:00 a.m.<br>Bible Study<br>10:00 a.m.<br>worship and Sun-<br>day School | <b>15</b> | <b>16</b>                                                    | <b>17</b><br>7:30 a.m. Prayer<br>Group<br>6:30 p.m. Well-<br>spring                                                                  | <b>18</b>                            | <b>19</b>                            | <b>20</b>                                             |
| <b>21</b> 8:00 a.m.<br>Bible Study<br>10:00 a.m.<br>worship and Sun-<br>day School | <b>22</b> | <b>23</b>                                                    | <b>24</b><br>7:30 a.m. Prayer<br>Group                                                                                               | <b>25</b><br>7:30 Choir<br>Rehearsal | <b>26</b><br>Overnight<br>retreat    | <b>27</b><br>Retreat<br>continues                     |
| <b>28</b> 8:00 a.m.<br>Bible Study<br>10:00 a.m.<br>worship and Sun-<br>day School | <b>29</b> | <b>30</b> 7:30 p.m.<br>Book Group                            |                                                                                                                                      |                                      |                                      |                                                       |

*Happy Easter*  
*from*  
*The Union Church*  
*in Waban*