



Our Light

www.middleburyvtumc.org

The MIDDLEBURY
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Newsletter

LATE SUMMER 2026

Whether you are a member of the Middlebury congregation, a local resident, or a visitor to our area, you are invited to attend and participate in all activities & events mentioned in this newsletter.

NEW AT MIDDLEBURY UMC:

A COOPERATIVE PARISH!

Effective July 1, 2026, a new way of working with our United Methodist Church neighbors went into effect for Middlebury. The church is now joined with East Middlebury UMC and North Ferrisburg UMC in what is known as a Cooperative Parish. While this is new to us, the concept was at the heart of the Methodist Movement from the very beginning. When fully engaged in the movement, churches are expected to become connected and connectional.

Through this collaboration, United Methodists in New England are preparing to meet the rapidly shifting missional contexts and challenges based upon their gifts and strengths. The intent is for the congregations to build "God's Beloved Community Together", one cooperative parish at a time. With a number of participating congregations, the expectation is that a larger and deeper pool of gifts and resources can be created, as well as provide more opportunities for communal, and missional growth and vitality to all of the churches and their members.

Each grouping is named, and ours is the "Milk and Honey Cooperative Parish". It is considered to be a "Multiple Charge Parish" type in which each church relates to its own charge conference and participates in a parish-wide council with pastoral leadership appointed. For our parish, The Rev. Jill Colley-Robinson has been appointed as the pastor. Rev. Jill is well-known to those in the Middlebury and East Middlebury churches having served there previously before serving eight years as the District Superintendent of the Green Mountain District. For the past year, she has served the North Ferrisburgh UMC.

Throughout the process toward the development of this new way of working, we have been grateful for the guidance of the current Green Mountain District Superintendent, Rev. Dr. Songbok Bob Jon. While there is still much yet to be discovered and learned, we trust we have been blessed by what has developed, and we are excited for this new way of worshiping, serving, and working together in the larger community

WORDS FROM OUR NEWLY APPOINTED PASTOR

From the day my parents and I drove into Middlebury, Vermont when I was in high school and looking at colleges, I sensed that this is a special place, and I hoped against hope that I would be able to spend some time here. I could not have imagined how true that sensation was and how blessed I would be to attend college here and then to return to this area as a United Methodist minister in Vergennes and West Addison for four years, and then in Middlebury, East Middlebury, and Ripton for eight years. Little did I know when I departed for ministry in New Hampshire that I would have the opportunity to return to ministry here with Middlebury, Vergennes, West Addison, and Ferrisburgh Center for three years, and then with the whole of Vermont for eight years from my spiritual home base right here. And now I get to come back to you and East Middlebury again with a new beloved Addison County partner in ministry, North Ferrisburgh. What an extraordinary gift!

The Quakers have a belief called, quite simply, Way. When Way is closing behind you, it means that God is nudging you toward a conclusion of some chapter in your life. When Way is opening before you, hang on! When Way opens--when the Spirit is at work--it will be all that you can do to keep up with it. Way unfolds, spilling out in front of us with abundant, divine generosity, and those of us who are paying attention get to be a part of it.

When I learned that there would be an opportunity to form a Cooperative Parish in Addison County, I knew what I wanted the name to be right way—the Milk and Honey Cooperative Parish. Addison County has been a promised land of milking cows and honeycomb for me and my family for over 35 years because of each of you. Dare I say that Way is opening for us once again, or still. God is calling us forward to something new and lifegiving and full of promise, and I for one feel truly honored to be a part of it with you.

Thanks be to God for this indescribable gift!

Dead Creek, Addison County

*When I stand in the bulrushes,
I remember the scripture.
And then, I think about the place
where the scripture is living.*

*Our ministry is at the bottom
of an ancient sea.
The walls of water are long since parted,
and the mountains have spoken.*

*Now, there is only a valley
of milking cows and honeycomb.
And farmers who plant fields
Of prayers.*

*And a little white church
With a steeple, pointing.
From here, I look up
to where the bulrushes once grew.*

Jill Colley Robinson, 2000

Sunday Worship Schedule For Middlebury

Pastor Jill will be leading worship with communion on the second Sunday of each month. She will also be leading worship on the fourth Sunday of each month. (In August, she is leading worship on the second and third Sundays instead and taking vacation on the fourth Sunday.)

Thank you to all who will be leading worship on the first and third Sundays each month. If you feel that you could do so, please contact Pastor Jill at

rev.jill.colley.robinson@gmail.com.

When there is a fifth Sunday, one of our churches will host a joint worship service for all three congregations. The first joint service will be at North Ferrisburgh UMC (227 Old Hollow Road off of Route 7) on Sunday, August 30 at 10 a.m. The worship will be followed by a potluck lunch and our regular CVOEO mission project. (Many hands make light work.) If it is a nice day, we will worship in the outside pavilion. There is a play area for smaller children. All are welcome.

A Weekly Book Study began August 5

Pastor Jill will be leading a study of Adam Hamilton's Making Sense of the Bible for those who have not had the chance to study it. We will read a few chapters at a time.

We will meet for about an hour on Wednesdays at noon at the Middlebury United Methodist Church and on Zoom. If you need the Zoom link, email a request to middumc@gmail.com.

This study is for the whole Milk & Honey Cooperative Parish--North Ferrisburgh, Middlebury, and East Middlebury. All are welcome for any week(s) you can be present.

. Looking Forward to a Fall Book Study

Adam Hamilton's latest book--"The Holy Spirit"-- promises a deep and inspiring look at "God's Presence and Power at Work in Us". As usual, Hamilton delivers a clear and insightful exploration of an often overlooked person of the of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. Beginning in late September, an opportunity to meet in five sessions will be offered to discuss a chapter per week of this intriguing new book from a pastor and author who has given us so many thoughtful writings. More specific information regarding a beginning date will be forthcoming in late August. Meantime, you can prepare by ordering the book by mail or online from Cokesbury.

If you need more information, please contact Rene Wilbur at lwilbur0812@gmail.com

CELEBRATIONS

www.middleburyvtumc.org! **WE HAVE A NEW WEBSITE!**

Check out our beautiful new website at www.middleburyvtumc.org, and save the address on your device! When the New England Conference ceased to support online addresses for individual churches, we were left high and dry. Fortunately we were able to secure the help of Alissa Shethar, Library Director at Salisbury Free Public Library, who for the last 6 months has been working with a small committee of church members, to design and build a new website. Alissa helped us

through the process of choosing and paying for a site template, a hosting address, and an email address. She put us in touch with a Middlebury college student who is a semi-professional photographer and who took stunning images which capture the beauty and dignity of our building. Before bringing the site online in late June, we were able to add lots of information about our new Milk and Honey Cooperative Parish, with news about each church and parish-wide events. There are sections about our mission, history, and staff, as well as calendars for Middlebury UMC and North Ferrisburgh UMC. Click on the worship time for Middlebury UMC to learn who will lead the service that Sunday! Learn about upcoming educational opportunities! Find out about fun social events and eating opportunities in the Parish! Alissa updates the site information regularly.

SUNDAY WORSHIP ON ZOOM

The congregation owes a special vote of thanks to Pastor Jill and to church member Isaiah Robinson, who between them have restored much-valued enhancements to our worship services. Shut-ins, travelers, and members who have relocated can now enjoy following our worship and music on Zoom again. The church congregation is able to dispense with printed bulletins by reading the entire order of worship on the big screen in the chancel. Isaiah is the techie who makes the magic happen, tracks the action with the camera, and changes the screen images right on time. Pastor Jill crafts reverent and meaningful worship services and sends out the Zoom link.

The link will be the same every week indefinitely. If you need the Zoom link or have feedback about your experience on Zoom from the previous week, email your request/feedback to middumc@gmail.com before Sunday morning if possible.

REMINDERS

**** *Our Crafts Group* It's not too soon to be thinking about our church's Mitten Tree. Crafty ladies (and gentlemen) are invited to make or donate warm hats, mittens, socks and scarves for the Christmas giving tree, which will be put up in early November and will stay in the front of the chancel until it is replaced by our regular decorated Christmas tree. For the past two years the hats and mittens have been given to the Middlebury office of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) where they have been received with enthusiasm and meet a real need. You can find a photo of the 2025 Mitten Tree in the Missions section of our new website. The church crafts group meets on the first and third Thursday of each month from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon in the fellowship hall. We crochet, knit, chat, and share a short devotional reading. Come join us!

**** *OUR CHURCH DIRECTORY* Copies of the most recent edition of Middlebury UMC's Church Directory are available on the table in the foyer. Or, if you would like to have an electronic version, please contact directory editor Alison Metcalfe at metcalfe@myfairpoint.net. The editor would also like to hear about any errors or changes in the directory information.

**** *Pastor's Sabbath*

The pastor takes sabbath on Fridays. If you would like to speak with her privately or would like a visit Saturday through Thursday, she can be reached at

rev.jill.colley.robinson@gmail.com.

**** *Ilsley Used Books moving back to the Library*

The Friends of the Ilsley Library hosted their final used book sale from our basement space on August 1. They will be moving back to the renovated Library on Main Street in August. Thank you to all who made the relationship with this community group possible.

****Please bring your non-perishable food items to church for donation to the CVOEO COMMUNITY FOOD SHELF.****

If you would prefer to get this newsletter by mail or wish to be removed from our email or mailing lists please let us know by leaving a message at:
The Church office, 388-2510 .

THE MIDDLEBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
43 N PLEASANT ST
MIDDLEBURY, VT 05753

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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The newsletter of the Middlebury UMC

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