



Our Light

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SPRING 2026

The MIDDLEBURY
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Newsletter

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.



We are now approaching the end of Lent and have started Holy Week.

It is a week of sorrows with the man of sorrows. But we also know "the rest of the story." We know that the sorrows of that week, the sadness and pain of betrayal and abandonment and crucifixion lead finally to a RESURRECTION

Come share with us in the remembrance:

Easter Worship Service: April 5, 2026 11am

EASTER FLOWERS

As we have done in previous years, we are asking those who attend church on Easter Sunday to bring some sort of potted Easter plant to share and decorate the church. The church will have some Easter lily plants, and a nice variety of other plants always makes for a beautiful sanctuary.

WORDS FROM OUR PASTOR

Greetings, Church!

I am writing this from my home office, facing out an upstairs window, where I just watched a rather large black animal running across the backyard until disappearing into the leaf bare trees across the way. There is still snow on the ground this morning. Not much, more like a fading memory. Our winter was cold and long this year, and spring is welcome. Driving in Vermont this time of year, I pass sugar houses and their smoke going up into the sky, gray one day and blue the next. One consequence of an active church life and a decade of pastoring churches is the change of calendars that for me mark the year.

The secular calendar, like memory, fades and the church calendar takes on its prominence. The church New Year begins after Thanksgiving, with the Advent Season. The Christmas season is short, while the following season of Epiphany is rich with feast days. With the arrival of Lent, the familiar stories Jesus uses to teach his disciples follow one after the other, each teaching bringing its unique focus to the shema, the assertion of God's 'singularity' and 'sovereignty': "Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One." The Lenten parables show us how God's sovereignty and our will when they coincide change and sanctify us. The most holy weeks of the church are coming up: they begins with Palm Sunday, when Jesus makes his entrance into Jerusalem, and moves inexorably through the weeks into Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. Each of these days has a different way of honoring the suffering that is also a gift, which we receive at midnight on Easter morning, when the tomb that was a resting place for God is emptied by his Resurrection, and we can sing, "Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life."

Lent is a time we do two things we often ignore; during Lent, we listen and we are silent. This is the way we discover how to narrow the distance between God's sovereignty and our will. When we listen, when we are silent, we hear the voice of God calling us to accept the life-giving way of his Son. Let it be so!

Many Blessings, Pastor Chico

THE GIFT OF LENT

I don't recall being taught much about Lent as a young child in Sunday School--other than the idea that it was a time leading to Easter, and we should "give something up for Lent". For me and my Sunday School friends, usually that was chocolate or some other sweet or soda or something that would please our parents, such as going to bed without complaining. I can honestly say that I don't recall whether I always kept my promise, but I also don't remember any threat of punishment if the promise was broken. In other words, Lent did not have much meaning for me.

As I grew as a Christian, of course, I learned more about Lent--how it came to be observed in the early church and was formally established by the Council of Nicea of 325 A.D. The relationship between the life of Christ on this earth and the time we are urged to spend during Lent remembering all that means for us is truly a gift from these early followers of Christ. It is a time to look at our relationship with God and to ready ourselves for remembering the sacrifice of Christ on the cross and the victory of life over death when we celebrate the joy of Easter.

A practice I have found to help me focus on the meaning of Lent is to turn to scripture. One passage I have chosen this year is from Psalm 51: "You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit."

What a wonderful opportunity we have during these days to move closer to God through our loving Savior! It is truly a gift, and I offer this prayer in thanks for it and for God's gracious and enduring presence in our lives:

O Heavenly Father-we turn our thoughts to you and offer thanks for the opportunity to gather and lift our prayers of gratitude for all that you provide for our spiritual growth as we journey through Lent and toward the gift of the Easter celebration. May this time be inspiring, and may our faith be strengthened by our devotion. In the name of the Holy Trinity- Amen. In Faith, Rene Wilber

Outreach Is Reaching Out.....

This past Sunday we were busy packing flour and sugar again for CVOEO after our Sunday service. We need all the help we can get at these events, so please join us next time and bring a friend who is interested in helping to provide food for the many families in the Middlebury area who are relying on the CVOEO food shelf to feed their families.

Sunday, March 29th was one of the United Methodist Special Sundays - **UMCOR Sunday**. On that Sunday each year Methodists raise money to support the many projects that our Church has throughout the world to provide support for people who are suffering from starvation, are victims of natural disasters, are victims of wars, and many other types of disasters. Please consider contributing by getting a check to Eileen Rinker (1301 Pearson Rd., New Haven, VT 05472) made out to MUMC and noting UMCOR on the memo line on your check.

Sue Colley
Outreach Chair



Pentecost Sunday – MAY 24, 2026—

Pentecost marks the day the Holy Spirit came upon the followers of Jesus, empowering them to speak in many languages and boldly share the good news (Acts 2:1-4). Often called the “birthday of the Church,” Pentecost reminds us that God’s Spirit is alive!

UPDATE FROM TRUSTEES

OUR PARKING LOT

It can feel like “musical cars” in the church parking lot these days. Middlebury UMC is fortunate to own even a small parking lot. In addition we can park on Seminary Street at right angles to the curb, but this is public parking and space is not always available. It’s worth remembering that the Co-op is allowed to use 10 spaces in our lot for their staff (15 spaces at agreed busy retail seasons), for which they make a generous donation. The Friends of Ilsley Library are in and out, with heavy use on the first Friday and Saturday of each month when they prepare and hold their book sale. To accommodate this, the Saturday morning AA group meets upstairs on the first Saturday, but they still have to park their cars somewhere, so don’t plan on stopping by the church for an errand on Saturday morning! AA groups also use the lot on Thursday afternoons and Friday mornings. Our North Pleasant street neighbor Randy of Randy’s Service Center uses our lot and the Seminary Street spaces to park his overflow of vehicles when his small forecourt is full, especially in the spring and fall tire-changing seasons. In exchange Randy snowplows the parking lot and streetside parking (if the town does not get to the latter). Now isn’t THAT a great benefit!

Alison Metcalfe
Co-chair of Trustees

CELEBRATIONS

Thanks go out to Isaiah Robinson Isaiah has started working as the new Creation Care Social Media Intern.

As the Social Media Intern, Isaiah’s primary responsibility is managing the information on our Creation Care Facebook page. The Creation Care page spreads information about more sustainable living, along with information for education and worship. As an Earthkeeper, he is using his knowledge from that training to spread information for churches. Be sure to visit the Creation Care New England UMC Facebook.

Save the date! Chelsea Robinson's senior music recital will be on Friday, April 17 at 7:30 p.m. at the Mahaney Arts Center at Middlebury College. It will also be on YouTube. More information coming soon.



THE MITTEN TREE

Once again, our hat and mitten tree this past Christmas was a huge success! We collected 7 hats, 18 pairs of gloves and mittens, 23 pairs of warm socks, and 3 scarves. These items were taken to the Vermont DCF, and their workers were very glad to receive them.

THANKS TO ALL OF YOU WHO SO GENEROUSLY DONATED THESE ITEMS.

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.

REMINDERS:

****Our Craft Group meets every 1st and 3rd Thursday in the Fellowship room at church at 10AM. ****

****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
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MIDDLEBURY, VT 05753

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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