



Our Light

www.umcmiddlebury.org

The MIDDLEBURY
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Newsletter

**FEBRUARY
2016**

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.

THE DAYS ARE LENGTHENING FOR LENT

The word *Lent* comes from the old English, *lencten*, which means *spring*. In Middle English the word is derived from the words *lenten* and *lente*; related to the Dutch, *lente*, and the German, *lenz*, also rendered *spring*. In Old German are found the related words: *lenzin*, *lengizin*, and *lenzo*, which probably come from the same root as *long* and refer to *the lengthening days*, as the earth moves from the dark of winter toward spring.*

In the western church, Easter falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon following March 20/21, the spring or vernal equinox (meaning “equal night”) in the northern hemisphere and the autumnal equinox in the southern hemisphere. This year, the moon is full on March 23, four weeks after the spring equinox. This puts Easter Sunday on March 27.

Lent begins forty days before Easter Sunday not including the Sundays (little Easters). This year, **Lent begins on Wednesday, February 10**. Jill will lead a contemplative service at **7 p.m.** at the **Ferrisburgh Center United Methodist Church**.

Here is a brief history of the development of the forty days of Lent:

Originally, in the first century, Lent was observed as a forty-hour period, in keeping with the forty hours Jesus’ body was in the tomb. This Lenten watch ended with an Easter service at three in the morning. In the third century, the forty hours evolved into an extended six days known as Holy Week. Then, the six days grew into thirty-six days, thirty-six being the tithe or a tenth of the 365 days of the calendar year. Finally, during the reign of Charlemagne in the eighth century, four days were added to the thirty-six to create our current celebration of Lent. The added days were Ash Wednesday, which begins the Lenten season, and the following three days leading up to the first Sunday in Lent. The forty days of Lent (Sundays are not included, for they are the Lord’s day on which the celebration of the resurrection always occurs) are a time that calls us to be dedicated to discipline and personal examination.

from Boston University’s Marsh Chapel newsletter in March 2000

In Judeo-Christian history, forty is a significant number. In addition to the delineation of the time in which Jesus' body was in the tomb, the number forty appears over ninety times in our Hebrew and Greek scriptures. The number is used repeatedly to describe times of war and of peace, and to explain cultural traditions. Also, the number is an integral part of some of the better-known Bible stories. In the Genesis story of Noah and the ark, God sent rains upon the earth for forty days and forty nights. At the end of their forty years of wandering in the isolated wilderness, the Israelites began construction of a tabernacle standing on forty pieces of silver. Moses spent forty days and forty nights with God on the mountain and received the commandments. David and Solomon each reigned for forty years. Jesus fasted in the wilderness and was tempted for forty days and forty nights. After his resurrection, Jesus appeared to people for forty days before his ascension into heaven. Can you find other references to the symbolic importance of forty in the scriptures?

The dates and length of Lent are not determined in our scriptures; however, the significance of its length is repeatedly illuminated. When we celebrate the forty days of Lent, we journey with Christ from the forty-day wilderness fast, to the forty-hour entombment, to the forty-day Easter resurrection. Is God challenging you to find forty ways to begin again with Jesus? ...forty ways to go on a carbon fast? ...forty ways to change the world? May God's Spirit go with you on your early Lenten journey this year.

*adapted from www.ecumenical-catholic-communion.org

FEBRUARY WORSHIP

Our preachers will be doing a sermon series on the Lord's Prayer for Lent.

February 21 2nd Sunday of Lent,
Jill C. Robinson *Your kingdom come...*

January 31 Season of Epiphany, Jill C.
Robinson - *Communion*

February 28 3rd Sunday of Lent,
Jill C. Robinson -
Communion

February 7 Transfiguration of the Lord
Paul Hoffman

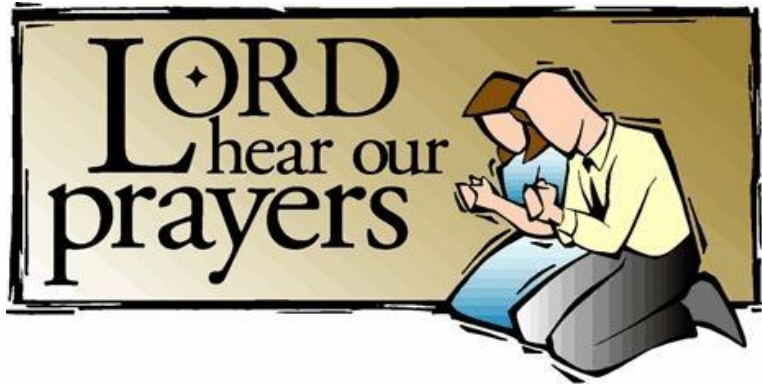
Your will be done...

February 14 1st Sunday of Lent, Gus Jordan
Our Father in heaven...

March 6 4th Sunday of Lent, Joanie Huestis
One Great Hour of Sharing
Give us today and your daily bread...

SAVE THE DATE

Our next **ALL CHURCH MEETING** is scheduled for **SUNDAY, APRIL 3RD, FOLLOWING WORSHIP**. We expect to have a light lunch available



Joann D with ongoing health issues

Betty H with ongoing health issues

Connie W with ongoing health issues, and Leonard who is helping to take care of her

Gerry & Shelby D who have been unable to get to church

Jim H who is recovering from a recent illness at Helen Porter

Bob W, a resident of Helen Porter

Clay W, our friend

Willie G and Betty D and their family after the loss of their mother

Richard L after the loss of his wife, Pat

Linn L and her family after the loss of her brother, Eric

Bud C who has not been able to get to church regularly

Sue T who has not been able to get to church regularly

Tom C and his family after the death of his father

Tom C's brother who is dealing with a medical condition

Gerrie W after the loss of her husband, Jack

Don J's mother, Bea, who has health concerns

Don S's nephew with ALS

Marilyn D as she anticipates surgery

Norma D who is recovering from a recent surgery

Stacie M who is recovering from brain surgery

All who are living with and being treated for cancer

Friends at East Middlebury UMC

Students at Middlebury College

GOOD NEWS

The Coordinating Committee is excited to share some good news after reviewing year-end 2015 reports at our recent meeting.

Joyce Sargent has faithfully kept worship attendance records for us, and shared that compared to our average attendance of 33 people during 2013 and 2014, the average has gone up to 40 for 2015. This is wonderful news! Can we increase again this year? We encourage you to invite your friends, neighbors, co-workers to join us for worship and our special events. Our faith grows in a supportive community, and we believe that outreach is most effective using a one-to-one approach.

We also reviewed our year-end financial reports, and are most grateful for the faithful generosity of this congregation. Your monetary support has grown steadily over the past few years, and has enabled the church to get back on stable financial footing. Indeed, over recent years, your combined gifts have been more than enough to meet our needs, and the church has accumulated a surplus. Many will recall a period of years when no surplus was available, and when we withdrew funds from the Arnold Fund to support our operating budget. It was with great enthusiasm that the Coordinating Committee has voted to return \$25,000 to the Arnold Fund. The Trustees oversee our investments and will select a balance of mutual funds appropriately screened for social responsibility and future growth potential.

Thank you for your gifts of time, prayer, service and money to our church. Together we are one small but mighty group, serving our community in meaningful ways. Bless you all!

Julie Coons, on behalf of the Coordinating Committee

UMW NEWS

The next meeting of the United Methodist Women will be February 15th at 2PM at the home of Mimi Hardy. Our women are working on Hygiene Kits and also will be deciding the date for the Spring Rummage Sale. Dues for the 2016 year are now due.

SPIRITUALITY

The Spirituality Group will meet on February 2 & 16 at 1PM at the home of Mimi Hardy. Members have the same assignments as for the January meeting which had to be cancelled.



Chicken and Biscuit Supper February 28, 2016

- All proceeds from the supper will go to "NO MALARIA"

Imagine No Malaria Event

Middlebury UMC is hosting a viewing of

'Mary and Martha'

by HBO Films

Written by Richard Curtis and directed by Phillip Noyce, Mary and Martha stars Hilary Swank as Mary, and Brenda Blethyn as Martha, an American and an Englishwoman who have little in common apart from a tragedy that unexpectedly brings them together. Empowered by their friendship they form an alliance that takes them from their meeting in a remote part of Mozambique all the way to Washington—two ordinary mothers doing something extraordinary. *(from www.rottentomatoes.com)*



Saturday, February 6 6:30 p.m.

Runtime: 1hr.35min plus an intermission

Rated PG for some adult language & themes

Free Admission!

**Proceeds from the sale of refreshments will
benefit Imagine No Malaria
through New England Annual Conference.**

The New England Imagine No Malaria campaign has saved 91,000 lives by giving \$840,000 toward our \$1 million goal. Let's save some more!!!

THANKS TO ALL THE GENEROUS FOLKS WHO HELPED MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Thanks to the many people who contributed to a call for assistance for a migrant family from Shoreham, who recently moved from North Carolina to COLD Vermont. This family consists of a mother, father, a twelve year old girl and five year old boy.



I received a call from Carol Wood. Carol's work and interest has been working with migrant families for many years. When she brought a family to our Coat Giveaway program before Christmas, she asked if I would share my home phone number, so she could call on me to help provide winter clothing if she needed assistance with another family. That's how our church "adventure" started.

I asked folks for help to supply warm winter clothing for this great family, or money to be able to purchase what could not be donated, and WOW, did you respond!

We raised \$640, with which we were able to buy all the needed items. The list included 4 winter jackets, 4 pairs of long pants, 4 pairs of good warm winter boots, 4 sets of winter socks, mittens, gloves and hats for everyone in the family.

Carol and I had the joy of playing "Santa" when we delivered all these gifts. And joyful it was – I wish everyone could have been there to see and hear the appreciation and fun your help provide. We also provided some great used items that had been donated from our church family.

We had some money left over, which is in the Middlebury UMC bank account for the future.

Thanks and Blessings to all who participated in this wonderful gift.

Margaret Klohck and Carol Wood



HAPPY VALENTINES DAY -- FEBRUARY 14

LOOKING BACK ON 2015

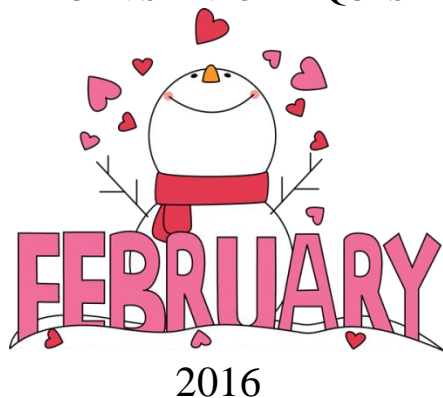
Special gratitude to:

- Joyce Sargent for managing the church phones, mail and all things office related.
- Our preachers and worship leaders, especially Gus and Laurie Jordan who continue to serve us in regular rotation on the excellent team that Rev. Jill coordinates.
- George Klohck for conducting our annual audit again this year (a thankless job that is done behind the scenes, but does not go unnoticed).
- Our Trustees, especially Tom Colley who constantly sets and checks the thermostats and timers so we have heat and lighting at the proper times, completes many repairs at the church and the parsonage, and is the “go-to guy” for anything related to the property.
- Our worship team (Sue Leggett, Mary Wimett, Emmy Alford, Rev. Jill) for enhancing our worship by decorating our sanctuary beautifully every week, and especially so during the recent holiday season.
- John-Eric and Jill Colley Robinson and Tom Colley for enthusiastically opening our worship time with praise music, bringing the word of God to us in song.
- So many others who feed, clothe and help our neighbors in need, with Community Lunches, Chicken & Biscuit suppers, MidSummer Lunch program, rummage sales, Trick or Trunk, coat drives, the Christmas Room and many other activities.



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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The newsletter of the
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