



Our Light

www.umcmiddlebury.org

The MIDDLEBURY
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Newsletter

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2018

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.



BREATHING DEEPLY IN LENT

Rabbi Lawrence Kushner writes:

The letters of the Name of God in Hebrew are yod, hay, vav, and hay. They are frequently mispronounced as “Yahveh.” But in truth they are unutterable. Not because of the holiness they evoke, but because they are all vowels and you cannot pronounce all the vowels at once without risking respiratory injury.

This word is the sound of breathing. The holiest Name in the world, the Name of the Creator, is the sound of your own breathing.

I am profoundly struck by those last words – “The holiest Name in the world...is the sound of your own breathing.”

We cannot say God's name – we can only breathe it.

Consider this – do you ever notice your breathing? Breathing is so natural that we don't think about doing it. It's only when we stop to notice it that breathing becomes awkward and unnatural. Conversely, we notice our breathing when it does not come naturally – when our nose is stuffed up, when we've over-exerted ourselves, or when our lungs are diseased with illnesses like pneumonia or emphysema.

Perhaps this is also, then, the way it is with God. We take God's presence for granted and don't stop to notice it. When we do stop and attempt to “notice” God, we feel awkward and strained because we're not really sure what the best way is to be attentive to God's nearness. And during times of dis-ease and illness, stress or exertion, we grasp desperately for God who seems so inaccessible.

The season of Lent is an invitation to BREATHE.

It is an invitation to breathe deeply this holiest of Names that cannot be said – only breathed.

I grew up in a heavily Catholic community, so there was always a lot of talk about “giving up” something for Lent. Maybe each of us should give up whatever it is that keeps us from pausing and breathing deeply the holy Name of the One Who Brings into Being all that is.

Give up whatever it is that keeps you from breathing God's holiness.

So here's a practice to consider for Lent: throughout the 40 days of Lent set aside 5 minutes each day for breathing God's holy name. Listen to the sound of your own breathing for a mere 5 minutes each day. Add 5 minutes each week through Lent so that by the end of the season you are breathing the Name of the One Who Brings into Being All That Is for 25 minutes each day.

It takes 6 weeks to develop a habit. Maybe by the time Easter arrives, we will all be breathing holy!

Peace,

Mary Kay

Worship Changes for Lent The first Sunday of Lent is February 18. Lent is a season to pause and reflect on our humanity in all its complexities, and our worship during this season is an opportunity to incorporate this journey into our spiritual lives. Therefore, during the season of Lent, you will notice some changes in what happens during worship.

We will include the following elements for the 5 Sundays of Lent:

A Sung Call to Worship

A Prayer of Confession and Assurance of Pardon

A Doxology without the Alleluias

These “changes” are not arbitrary, but are chosen to intentionally mark our journey through Lent in a meaningful way. While different words and tunes may feel awkward, we pray they will also attune your heart and spirit to the voice of God during this season of reflection and renewal.



WORSHIP DURING LENT

- February 18:** **First Sunday in Lent**
I AM the Bread of Live, John 6: 35-40
- February 25:** **Second Sunday in Lent**
I AM the Light of the World, John 8: 12-20
- March 4:** **Third Sunday in Lent**
I AM the Door, John 10: 1-10
- March 11:** **Fourth Sunday in Lent**
I AM the Good Shepherd, John 10: 11-18
- March 18:** **Fifth Sunday in Lent**
I AM the Resurrection and the Life, John 11: 17-27
- March 25:** **Palm and Passion Sunday**
- March 28:** **Maundy Thursday Worship with Cornwall Church**
- March 29:** **Ecumenical Good Friday Service, 12:00 pm**
Followed by an Easter Prayer Vigil through Saturday, 1:00 pm

40 Ideas for Keeping A Holy Lent

- ◆ Day 1: Pray for your enemies
- ◆ Day 2: Walk, carpool, bike or bus it.
- ◆ Day 3: Don't turn on the car radio
- ◆ Day 4: Give \$20 to a non-profit of your choosing
- ◆ (Sunday)
- ◆ Day 5: Take 5 minutes of silence at noon
- ◆ Day 6: Look out the window until you find something of beauty you had not noticed before
- ◆ Day 7: Give 5 items of clothing to Goodwill
- ◆ Day 8: No bitching day
- ◆ Day 9: Do someone else's chore
- ◆ Day 10: Buy a few \$5 fast food gift cards to give to homeless people you encounter
- ◆ (Sunday)
- ◆ Day 11: Call an old friend
- ◆ Day 12: Pray the Paper (pray for people and situations in today's news)
- ◆ Day 13: Read Psalm 139
<http://bible.oremus.org>
- ◆ Day 14: Pay a few sincere compliments
- ◆ Day 15: Bring your own mug
- ◆ Day 16: Educate yourself about human trafficking www.praxus.org
- ◆ (Sunday)
- ◆ Day 17: Forgive someone
- ◆ Day 18: Internet diet
- ◆ Day 19: Change one light in your house to a compact florescent
- ◆ Day 20: Check out morning and evening prayer at <http://dailyoffice.wordpress.com>
- ◆ Day 21: Ask for help
- ◆ Day 22: Tell someone what you are grateful for
- ◆ (Sunday)
- ◆ Day 23: Introduce yourself to a neighbor
- ◆ Day 24: Read Psalm 121
<http://bible.oremus.org>
- ◆ Day 25: Bake a cake
- ◆ Day 26: No shopping day
- ◆ Day 27: Light a virtual candle
http://rejesus.co.uk/spirituality/post_prayer/
- ◆ Day 28: Light an actual candle
- ◆ (Sunday)
- ◆ Day 29: Write a thank you note to your favorite teacher
- ◆ Day 30: Invest in canvas shopping bags
- ◆ Day 31: Use Freecycle www.freecycle.org
- ◆ Day 32: Donate art supplies to your local elementary school
- ◆ Day 33: Read John 8:1-11
<http://bible.oremus.org>
- ◆ Day 34: Worship at a friend's mosque, synagogue or church and look for the beauty
- ◆ (Sunday)
- ◆ Day 35: Confess a secret
- ◆ Day 36: No sugar day – where else is there sweetness in your life?
- ◆ Day 37: Give \$20 to a local non-profit
- ◆ Day 38: Educate yourself about a saint
www.catholic.org/saints
- ◆ Day 39: Pray for peace
- ◆ Day 40: Pray for your enemies (you probably have new ones by now) then decide which of these exercises you'll keep for good

From House for All Sinners and Saints

CHILDREN'S CHURCH

I am delighted to announce that Children's Church is in full swing and going well. The children and I are exploring who Jesus/God is and how he impacts our lives. We learn and worship through games, stories, song and crafts with a focus on love and forgiveness. The children are particularly drawn to the idea that Jesus/God is always with us.

I have been surprised at how my own spirituality has grown as I teach these children. Simplifying the basic bible teaching for child minds has reminded me of the little things I can do every day to live in the Christian way.

Every Sunday, we need a volunteer to be extra hands and thoughts at Children's Church. Don't worry; you will not have to teach. We will have a signup sheet in the church entrance and I can give out a copy of the planned curriculum on the Sunday before.

All are welcome to join the joyful chaos of Children's Church.
No Children's Church on Feb 18 – Winter school break time
Special Children's Church on March 11 – Girl Scout Sunday

Katrina Rathbun - Children's Church Teacher, Mom and Girl Scout Leader



OUTREACH COMMITTEE – Where Does the Money Go?

Many of you are wondering where the profits from our Chicken and Biscuit Suppers go. Until October, 2017, they went into the Men's Club Treasury. In October, 2017, the Men's Club transferred over \$3,000 in profits from the Suppers over the past two years to the Outreach Committee. We began depositing all future profits from our Suppers into the Outreach account to be distributed to UMC Organizations and local charities that many of us want to support.

During 2017, the Outreach Committee gave the following contributions on behalf of our Church: \$75 each for five UMC Special Sundays, \$151.50 for UMCOR Sunday, \$300 to HOPE, \$300 to CVOEO, \$300 to WomenSafe, \$300 to Charter House Coalition, \$500 to MiddSummer Lunch and Recreation, \$200 to Habitat for Humanity, \$500 to the NEUMC Nicaragua Covenant, and \$500 to the Chicuque Hospital Advance. As you can see, we gave \$3,426.50 in contributions this past year!

We hope, with your contributions of money, food, and service at Chicken and Biscuit Suppers and in our Celebrations collections, to be able to continue to support these worthy causes on your behalf in the future.

TRUSTEES

Improvements to our building are in the works ---- soon to be installed, new flooring for the kitchen and downstairs areas !!



(Tom C & Don R can you relate to this picture??)

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

The year 2017 proved to be another busy year for the Middlebury United Methodist Women. Our main source of income is our spring and fall rummage sales. So far this year, our rummage sale profits total \$9,071. This figure is higher than usual for two reasons. We are grateful for the generosity of the Needham family for their very generous donations to our items sold in May, and we are grateful to Donna Doty for the time she spends taking some of our unsold items to the Compass Center in Brandon, where many are sold and we receive a percentage of the sales. Other unsold items have been taken to HOPE and Goodwill this year.

We have hosted five funeral receptions this year, for the Nourse, Wesley, Roy, and Covey families.

We have purchased a table for the church office, three gift certificates for graduating seniors, a trash can, a commercial vacuum cleaner and bags, four new 8' tables, and various other cleaning supplies and paper products.

We have donated \$250.00 so far this year to the Vermont District UMW and will be sending them another \$250.00 after our December 18 meeting.

As always, the UMW is very generous in supporting local and global missions. We have contributed to Helen Porter(\$200), the Puzey Foundation (\$240), MidSummer Lunch and Recreation (\$200), WomenSafe (\$200), CVOEO (\$600), UMCOR (\$1500) for Houston hurricane relief and Montana wildfire relief), Elderly Services (\$200), and Chicouque Hospital (\$500 for the Franca covenant), UMW Legacy Fund (\$700), Camp Agape (\$600) & Homeward Bound (\$500).

Members of the UMW have participated in the Crop Walk, the Trick or Trunk, the chicken and biscuit dinners, and the warm clothing giveaway.

We are a small group, but an energetic and hard-working one. Lastly, we remember Margaret Wesley, who tirelessly served as our president and treasurer for 40 years.

AND ---- speaking of Rummage Sales!! Our **SPRING RUMMAGE SALE** will be **April 27th and 28th**. WE NEED YOUR DONATIONS!!! If you would like to drop things off before the week of the sale please put them in the storage room where the "clothes racks" are stored until the basement floor is done in the hallway and the two small Sunday School rooms off this hallway. Thanks much!

NEW CRAFTS MINISTRY ANNOUNCEMENT FROM JULIE COONS



A new ministry group is forming!

My dream for this group is that we have fun and use our talents to serve the community. That could mean making hats for the winter clothing giveaway (which takes place at our church in November), scarves for the homeless, prayer shawls or pocket prayer cloths for folks in our congregation, blankets or hats for hospitalized babies and children, sweaters for Guideposts/World Vision, cloth menstrual pads for distribution overseas, etc. There are many

needs... My personal goal is to make 10 hats for the giveaway in the fall—one down, 9 to go!

Just bring a project that you're knitting, crocheting or creating (sewing?), but if you don't have something started come anyway. I have several patterns and project ideas for us to consider.

We will meet at my home on the first and third Thursdays from 10:00 – noon. Our format is very informal, so come whenever you can but don't feel pressured if you cannot make it sometimes. Please let me know if you need directions, or if you think of others who might like to join us.

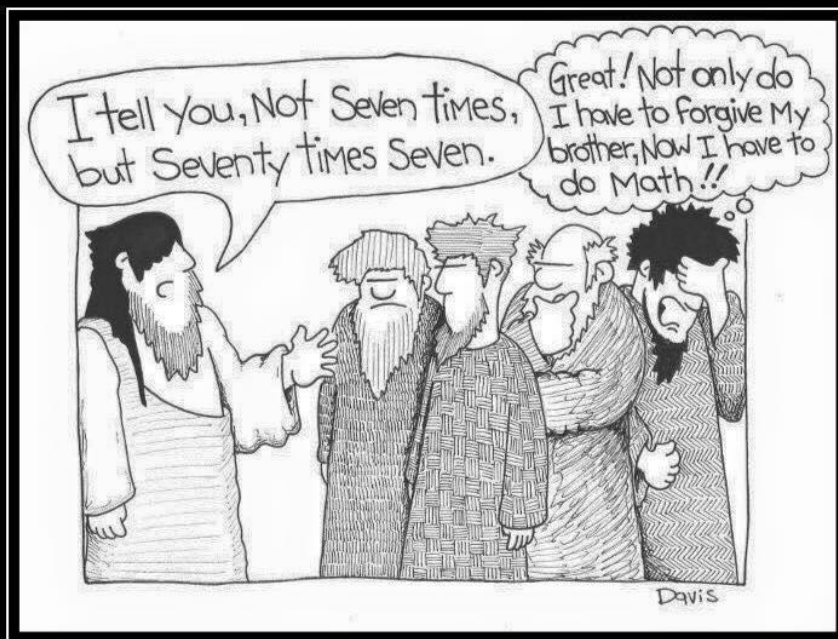
REMINDERS

UMCOR SUNDAY MARCH 11

In the wake of disasters, UMCOR is present among the devastation to provide relief and hope. All of us can make a difference in these times of need by participating in UMCOR Sunday (formerly One Great Hour of Sharing).

If you have any changes to the Church directory. please contact Joyce Sargent directly or leave a message at the Church office 388-2510 or email, newsletter@umcmiddlebury.org

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The Church office, 388-2510 or by email, newsletter@umcmiddlebury.org



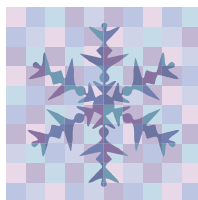
FORGIVE

Because it's easier than math. Math is hard.

The Middlebury United Methodist Church
43 North Pleasant Street
Middlebury, VT 05753

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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The newsletter of the Middlebury UMC
43 North Pleasant Street Middlebury, VT 05753
Telephone: 388-2510 Email: middumc@gmail.com
www.umcmiddlebury.org www.neumc.org

Quarter-time Pastor
Minister of Congregational Care
Minister of Music
Editor/Publisher
Production

Rev. Mary Kay Schueneman revmkschue.129@gmail.com
Rev. Mary Kay Schueneman revmkschue.129@gmail.com
Dr. Kevin Parizo
Emmy Alford (newsletter@umcmiddlebury.org)
Joyce Sargent