



The Crossroads Connection

Volume 2, February 2026
Office: (860) 349-3683

February at a Glance

Sunday, February 1st

Communion Service

Time: 10am

Loc: Sanctuary

Sunday, February 8th

Worship Service

Time: 10am

Loc: Sanctuary

Sunday, February 15th

Worship Service

Time: 10am

Loc: Sanctuary

Sunday, February 15th

UCD/MFC Annual Meetings

Time: 11:30am

Loc: Fellowship Hall

Wednesday, February 18th

"Ashes-to-Go"

Time: 11:00am

Loc: Parking Lot

Sunday, February 22nd

Worship Service

Time: 10am

Loc: Sanctuary

Sunday, February 22nd

Soup Dinner

Time: 4pm

Loc: Fellowship Hall

For more upcoming events and service details, visit our website.

The Pastor's Thoughts

"What do you believe in? What is your faith?" Most of us have been asked that some time. What is your response? How do you reply? What are your answers, your thoughts? According to the dictionaries, this is how they define the two words at the core of the questions.

"Believe": *Verb, Definition* Accept (something) as true; feel sure of the truth of; Hold (something) as an opinion; think or suppose.

"Faith": *Noun, Definition* Complete trust or confidence in someone or something.

However, using the terms somewhat synonymously, faith as a concept and a phenomenon has as many dissidents as adherers. Still, every person lives with some kind of faith: faith that the sun will rise again tomorrow, faith that spring will follow winter, faith that love is stronger than hate. In many ways, whether a believer in God or not, faith directs our lives.

Believing in God is important, but having faith is much more than that. Our faith, like just about everything else, has its origin in God. More specifically, in *God's faith in us*. God's faith that we actually can become the kind of persons we are created to be. Persons who love, have compassion, forgive, are peace keepers, and are filled with hope. Persons who want to love and serve God, and sincerely try to do the right thing. Persons who take every opportunity to act in accordance with goodness, beauty, justice, and truth.

God believes and has faith in us! That's why we were made partners with him. God created the earth with humans in mind and then invited us to steward this creation. That's how it was in the beginning and that's how it is even today. God invites, and we respond. But somewhere along the way we started believing that the provision for God to do *anything* with and for us, to answer our prayers and act in our lives, is contingent on us believing in God. But the truth is the absolute opposite: *God has faith in us* and finds *us* to be worth the cost that through Jesus become human, show us how to love, even die for us, and show us all that we can be.

God believes in you and sees a beloved person. And God acts in faith that we as humans will want to live in fellowship, and accept his love. And all God wants is from us is to live and act according to that love, and in best case also return it.

Continued...

Continued...

It is easy to feel powerless and even hopeless when we look to the world and see all the hatred and destruction. Yet God still has faith in us, and has equipped and empowered us to be ambassadors of peace, of hope, forgiveness, justice, and compassion. To live like Jesus and love like Jesus! In other words: Our best response to the world's hatred is to step out in faith and ask God to help us be who we are created to be. Nothing more. Nothing less.

When it looks like the world is falling apart, the message of Easter is God's defiant cry of victory and hope piercing through the shadows of the tomb: Christ is Risen!

So take heart! As we enter this season of Lent, boldly live out your faith in the resurrected Christ through thoughts, words, prayers, and deeds and to live out God's faith in you. Because with Christ, all things are possible.

Pastor Eva

FEBRUARY WORSHIP

February 1st Communion 4 th Sun. after Epiphany	February 8th 5 th Sun. after Epiphany	February 15th UCD/MFC Meeting Transfiguration	February 22nd Soup Dinner @ 4pm 1 st Sun. in Lent
OT: Mic. 6:1-8 NT: 1 Cor. 1:18-31 Gospel: Matt 5:1-12	OT: Isa. 58:1-12 NT: 1 Cor. 2:1-16 Gospel: Matt 5:13-20	OT: Ex. 21:12-18 NT: 2 Pet. 1:16-21 Gospel: Matt 17:1-9	OT: Gen. 2:15-17 NT: Rom. 5:12-19 Gospel: Matt 4:1-11
Liturgist Tracy Olsen	Liturgist Jennifer DiPentima	Liturgist TBD	Liturgist TBD
Ushers/DOD Linda Schulz	Ushers/DOD Stacy Cummings	Ushers/DOD TBD	Ushers/DOD TBD
Coffee Hour MFC	Coffee Hour UCD Missions	Coffee Hour UCD Deacons	Coffee Hour UCD WSCS
Worship Leader Rev. John Clarke	Worship Leader Derek Cummings	Worship Leader Pastor Eva	Worship Leader Pastor Eva



Details regarding our annual Ash Wednesday "Ashes-to-Go" offering will be shared soon via our weekly newsletter and Sunday bulletins. For now, plan on our usual offering of ashes in the church parking lot from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.



Call to UCD Annual Meeting Feb. 15th, 11:30am

The Annual Meeting of the United Churches of Durham will be held February 15, 2026 at 11:30 in Durham at the United Churches of Durham following the Sunday service.

The Annual Congregational Meeting of the First Church of Christ, Congregational, UCC and The Annual Charge Conference of the United Methodist Church of Durham will take place during this time.

Please note that we need 30 members present to meet quorum.

DEADLINE

Annual Reports Needed Extended Deadline: February 4th

Church officers and committee chairs/heads for both the United Churches of Durham and Middlefield Federated Church are asked to please submit their written reports by Wednesday, **February 4th at 12:00 PM** in order to be included in the Annual Meeting materials as we are hoping to have copies ready for review on **Sunday, February 8th**. This report should include: 1) a list of all committee members and officers, 2) a brief summary of the committee's activity during the calendar year of 2025.

Thank you for your timely cooperation.

-Office Administrator

WCS of United Churches Presents



**The United Churches of Durham
Fellowship Hall
228 Main Street, Durham CT 06422**

welcome
TO THE
TEAM

WELCOME JENNY-JOY!

Jenny-Joy will be beginning her position as Associate Minister of Music, starting in February. A more formal presentation of her will be coming. Jenny-Joy is relocating to our area from Kentucky and thus needs some assistance in "landing well" as she has no other family or friends here. She needs help with the following:

1. **Other employment:** She has extensive experience in caring for people with dementia, Alzheimer, memory issues, as well as end of life care. She is open to live-in care.
2. **Relocation costs:** Moving, along with first and last rental payments and loss of income for a time, all adds up. If you're able to contribute, you may put your gift in the offering with a note stating "JJ" or simply hand it to Mike or Pastor Eva.

Interested in learning more about her story? Well, look no further than our article on "Getting to Know Jenny-Joy", conveniently located on the next page of this very newsletter!

Getting to Know Jenny-Joy

Jenny-Joy was born into a musical family, on her father's side. As a young child, she, with her sister and father, would travel to various churches to sing. Her father played guitar. But behind closed doors, family life oscillated between being like a battlefield and a minefield. Jenny-Joy found solace in her music practice, and in being outside.

By age 3, Jenny-Joy was begging for piano lessons. In the 4th grade, she began playing trumpet, changed to tuba in the 6th grade. While in 6th grade, her band director, Mr. Larry Acker, asked her to play tuba in the Bellefonte Community Band. One of her favorite songs to play with the band was Them Basses.

In high school, she attended regional and state bands. Due to back issues on sousaphone, she switched to trombone for marching band. She also learned flute and saxophone in her spare time. She earned a piano scholarship to college in 1994, but her parents refused to allow her to attend.

After she graduated high school, life took over. She was 46 years old when she realized she could compose, and that composing is her Passion. She most enjoys learning about sound and studying how music works. Her favorite thing to do is to listen deeply, hear the theme or melody, and write it down on staff paper. Then she discovers what other layers to add, to make a composition. She tends to compose symphonic fugues, but has also written singer/songwriter songs, sacred music, and music for smaller ensembles and band.

Jenny-Joy credits Bellefonte Community Band Conductor, Dr. Meg Pedlow Smith, Leigh Hurtz, and Jenna Spinelle for helping her to see her true passion. It was during the shutdown of covid that Meg and Leigh held a book group, on the book: "What To Listen For In Music" by Aaron Copeland. As Jenny-Joy read this book, she began to understand that she could compose, and that it is her True Passion. She also credits a high-school teacher, who allowed her to practice on his synthesizer before school began each morning. As she worked out melodies and harmonies on the 8 recording tracks (a new thing in 1992), Mr. Shaw told Jenny-Joy to never give up. Now Jenny-Joy understands what he meant.

Continued...

Continued...

Jenny-Joy is fascinated by sound. What creates sound? How is it processed by the human ear and brain? How is each sound perceived by the human mind and body? How can we use sound and music toward greater healing? And, what sounds can go together to make music? Or, how can sounds be added to music to make it more interesting? She is most fascinated with the sounds of nature, from the singing of a bird or cricket, to the notion that there is a black hole that emits a B flat, 57 octaves below middle C! To Jenny-Joy, nature provides the best symphony. She often wonders if, many centuries ago, someone heard the wind through some reeds near the water, thus was inspired to make an instrument of it.

Being creative requires one to be calm. Practicing music, especially any wind instrument, helps her to be calm, and provides a sense of discipline to keep her on track. She has enjoyed playing in Madison Community Band, in Kentucky, and in an orchestra at her local church. Before leaving Pennsylvania, she was also a member of Bellefonte Community Band, Nittany Highland Pipe Band, UUFCC Jazz band, as well as other jam sessions.

In addition to composing and working as a caregiver, she also enjoys time spent outside. She most enjoys riding bicycle (no motor), walking, doing yoga and prana vidya (breathing practices), and meditating by the river. She also loves animals. She is a member of Berea Quaker Meeting, and has enjoyed volunteering with Room at the Inn, RITI, which provides food and shelter for those in need during the colder months. She currently resides in Meriden, Ct, grateful for the opportunity to Serve United Churches of Durham by way of music. She also enjoys being a member of Braver Angels, whose mission is to help those who differ politically learn to listen to one another without judging. She often presents music and songs she has written, in online concerts, to further the cause and create more peace and understanding.

Jenny-Joy hopes that the music she composes will speak deeply to those who wish to hear, to change lives for the better, to create community. Overall, she hopes that the music she composes helps make the world a better place to live, even if for just one person.



Church Choir

The MFC/UCD choir meets at 7:00pm in the choir room.
Please join us!



February

Mike Decker	Feb. 2 nd
Rachel Footit	Feb 9 th
Bob Guynn	Feb 9 th
Grayson Carras	Feb 10 th
Don Smith	Feb 10 th
Emily Perkins	Feb 14 th
Hailey Spooner	Feb 14 th
John Lyman	Feb 15 th
Steve Kalber	Feb 16 th
Owen Lussier	Feb 17 th
Katharine Chase	Feb 17 th
Geoffrey Belair	Feb 22 nd
Alex Nick	Feb 22 nd
Allison Whitaker	Feb 23 rd
Bert Plant	Feb 25 th
Nico Webster	Feb 26 th



Opening for CO-Moderator

After many years of faithful service, Derek Cumming's term as Church Moderator will come to end in January. Therefore, the Nominating Committee is searching for a CO-Moderator. The CO-Moderator will serve with John Biddiscombe in providing leadership to the congregation in presiding at Congregational Meetings. The Moderator also sits on the Church Council, confers with the Pastor, and, when needed, makes announcements at church services. If you have an interest in this position, or would like more information, please contact a member of the Nominating Committee.

John Hogarth, Tracy Olsen, John Biddiscombe



Our Rocky Hill Team: 8 Years Strong

For eight years, our incredible Rocky Hill team has been showing up to sew, pack, and prepare menstrual health kits for distribution across the globe. Though small in size, our group is mighty in impact—creating an average of 2,800 feminine hygiene kits for women and girls around the world.

Get Involved

Our team runs entirely on donations and volunteers. We are always in need of:

- 100% cotton fabric
- Underwear (girls' and women's sizes)
- Washcloths

You don't need to sew to help! There's plenty to do—washing and cutting fabric, ironing, stringing ribbons, pinning pieces, or tracing liner patterns.

2026 Workshop Dates

We meet every third Saturday, January through October:

- Feb 21 • Mar 21 • Apr 18 • May 16 • Jun 20 • Jul 18 •



Senior's Lunch

Every Monday and Wednesday

DURHAM COMMUNITY CENTER
144 Pickett Lane, Durham, CT

Lunches for folks aged 60 or older will be held from 11:00am to 1:00pm with lunch served at noon. A voluntary donation of \$3.00 is suggested for eligible participants, however, no one will be denied a meal if unable to pay.

Please sign up by Wednesday each week for the following week by calling, emailing, or using the sign-up sheets available during lunch. Join us!

(Morgan Perry 860-349- 3153

mperry@townofdurhamct.org)



UCD Bylaws Update

Our Church Bylaws are being updated. Committee members John Biddescombe, Bob Guynn, Pam Hogarth, and Tracy Olsen are hard at work revising the Bylaws from 2014 and Amendments from 2017 into a new document which will be presented to the congregation for approval. Please see one of us if you have questions.



Thank you to all those who have already pledged! Through our gifts of time, talent, and treasure, we help strengthen the ministries and mission that make our church family thrive. **You can still return your pledge cards by mail or bring them to the church office during our regular hours (Wednesdays and Fridays, 9 AM–2 PM) or drop them in the offering plate during Sunday worship.** Extra pledge cards are available in the office.



Children's Program

We continue to explore the idea of a new children's program for Sunday mornings, starting in the new year, and are looking for volunteers to help bring it to life. Whether you can assist regularly or just occasionally, your support would make a big difference! If you are interested in being a part of this meaningful work. Please contact Pastor Eva with any additional questions!



Missions Moment

The "Mighty Missions of the Mission's Committee" are revving up and we continually focus on these 2 things:

* **CARE CARDS:** We continually send cards to members and get great enjoyment in doing so!

* **FOOD DONATIONS:** Collections are continually brought to The Durham Pantry and to Amazing Grace. For drop-offs, you can leave items in the bins on the porch at the Fairchild House and in the church sanctuary. You can use the reusable bags that are in the bins!

1. These basic items are needed:

(Please, nothing opened or expired!)

- ▶ Protein-based, low sodium soups
- ▶ Baked beans
- ▶ Black beans
- ▶ Canned chicken
- ▶ Mac and cheese
- ▶ Instant potatoes
- ▶ Jelly/jam
- ▶ Coffee
- ▶ Canned tomatoes (crushed, diced)
- ▶ Sauce
- ▶ Condiments (ketchup, mayonnaise, salad dressing)
- ▶ Rice
- ▶ Granola bars, crackers, healthy snacks
- ▶ Cleaning products (laundry detergent, disinfectant sprays)
- ▶ Paper towels
- ▶ Hygiene products (deodorant, shampoo, body wash)

Thank you so much for your continual support!!

The Mission's Committee: Pam Hogarth (Chair), Nancy Hennick (Co-chair), Lynn Breton, Clara Chapman, Elaine Lowe, Tracy Olsen, Heather Petit and Jan Wenzel



Newsletter

If you have updates, announcements, or events you'd like included in our newsletters, please remember to send them in!

- **Weekly Newsletter Deadline:** Wednesdays @ Noon
- **Monthly Newsletter Deadline:** February 18th

Your contributions help keep our community informed and engaged—thank you!

The Middlefield Minute

Call to MFC Annual Meeting – Feb. 15th, 11:30am

A meeting of the Middlefield Federated Church will be called to order on February 15, 2026, for the purpose of receiving the 2025 annual report, discerning proposals, and fellowship and celebration. All are invited to attend. **A quorum of 20 active members is required for any official action to take place.**

IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE PET TEAM!

The PET team would like to report that Friday 1/16/26 we closed with St. Sava on the sale of our property. The next chapter of the Middlefield Federated Church story is about to begin!

An important part of that story will take place during our Annual Meeting on February 15th. At that meeting, in addition to addressing administrative business, we will be having conversations about our future. What should we be doing to build and strengthen relationships with God, one another, and our world? We will be discussing this in terms of Spiritual Growth, Worship, Mission, and Fellowship/Community Life. Because this is our future, your future, your participation in these conversations is critically important. Please reach out if you have any questions and we look forward to seeing you on February 15th.

The Property Evaluation Team

Amazing Grace Food Pantry

Our commitment to SOS (Support Our Shelves) at Amazing Grace Food Pantry is 75 pounds per month. Cans of Baked Beans **15-16 OUNCE ONLY** may be left in designated totes in either of 2 areas at UCD---Fellowship Hall or the church narthex OR contact Sydney Mintz for other options.

Eddy Shelter Update

Our Chili ministry to the Eddy Shelter will continue as usual on the 3rd Sunday of each month (subject to change for holidays and weather disruptions). Desserts can be delivered to **UCD on Sunday, February 15th**, or to **Jo-Ann Halibozek's home on Sunday afternoon** between **4pm and 5pm**.

Contacting MFC?

Please use PO Box 200 as we will continue to receive mail addressed to us at the same PO box as always. For the months of January and February, we are keeping the church's phone number. (860) 349-9881. This number is forwarded to UCD and is monitored by our office administrator.

The Middlefield Deacons Corner

So, now what?

Guess what? We're still here! The Middlefield Federated Church is about to begin its newest chapter of a very long and proud story. There are a lot of emotions involved in the type of change we are experiencing. It's easy to overlook an important one – hope. This is an opportunity for us to prayerfully consider who we are and who we should be. What should we be doing to build and strengthen relationships with God, one another, and our world?

People have different relationships with Middlefield Federated Church. Some have a very important and meaningful relationship with MFC that is based primarily on Sunday worship. Others have a very important and meaningful relationship with MFC that has little or nothing to do with Sunday worship. Other people's relationships include both. We need to include and minister to all those people and all those relationships.

As we move forward, in addition to existing relationships, we should consider things that might change. This includes at least four important elements. First, there are many people who have been spending a lot of their time dealing with the building. I'm not just talking about the PET committee. It includes the countless hours preparing and clearing out the building in preparation for the sale. It includes maintaining the kitchen, decorating the church, supporting the cans and bottle collections, working with Middlefield Children's Center, and many other unnoticed ministries. That time will now be available. How do those people want to move forward?

Second, we need to think about the relationships we currently have and could strengthen with other local organizations. Could we work more closely with Middlefield Senior Services, Durham & Middlefield Youth and Family Services, the Middlefield food pantry? How can we partner with St.Sava? Who and what else? Third, we need to consider the people we haven't yet met. How can we establish an identity that will attract new folks, young and old, to develop a relationship with our church and its ministries?

Finally, we need to consider all of this within the context of our growing relationship with United Churches of Durham. During the Annual Meeting on February 15th we will be spending time talking about our future. These current and future relationships should be part of those discussions. Because this is such an important time in our history, every voice should be heard. Please attend if you are able and interested in our future.

Ed Holden, MFC Deacons

The Crossroads Connection

A Combined Newsletter

Worship

Join us every Sunday at 10am, with Communion celebrated on the first Sunday of the month. We also stream services live on our Facebook:

<https://linktr.ee/unitedchurches>



www.unitedchurches.net

United Churches of Durham

228 Main Street,
Durham, CT 06422

Middlefield Federated Church

PO Box 200,
Middlefield, CT, 06455

Administrator

Aren Alberico

Office Email:

office@unitedchurches.net

Office Phone:

(860) 349-3683

Office Hours:

Weds/Fri

9am-2pm

Mon: Appointment Only

Pastor

Rev. Eva Cudmore

Email:

burgencudmore@gmail.com

Cell:

(860) 227-0722

Office Hours:

Weds/Fri

9am-2pm

Thurs: Flexible

Music Director

Michael Meurs

Email:

Mevis0130@gmail.com

Assistant Music Director

Jenny-Joy Moore

Email:

Coming Soon!