The Crossroads Connection

A Newsletter for United Churches of Durham & Middlefield Federated Church

Volume 8, Sept. 2026
Office: (860) 349-3683

September at a Glance

Saturday, Sept. 5
Men's Breakfast
Time: 8:30am
Loc: Athenian Diner II

Sunday, Sept. 6
Communion Sunday
Time: 10:00am
Loc: Sanctuary

Saturday, Sept. 8
Ladies Luncheon
Time: 12:00pm
Loc: Fellowship Hall

Sunday, Sept. 13
Sunday Worship
Time: 10:00am
Loc: Sanctuary

Sunday, Sept. 20
Sunday Worship
Time: 10:00am
Loc: Sanctuary

Thursday, Sept. 24
Celebrate America Parade
Time: 7:00pm
Loc: Durham Fairgrounds

Sunday, Sept.27
Durham Fair Worship
Time: 9:30am
Loc: Durham Fairgrounds

Visit our website for more upcoming events and services!

"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord!'"
— Psalm 122:1

Dear Friends…

There is something special about a new beginning. A new season brings with it a mixture of emotions. There may be excitement and anticipation, but perhaps also a bit of uncertainty. We may wonder what the days ahead will bring, what challenges we will face, and whether we are truly prepared for all that lies before us. Naturally, for us in Durham and Middlefield, our ministry season doesn't "really" begin until after The Fair, but there is still change. The choir returns, school and work schedules resume, and there's different scent in the air on cooler mornings.

And the psalm offers a great place to begin: **"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord!'"** It is such a simple declaration of joy, —not because everything in life is easy or because the future is certain, but because there is joy in gathering with the people of God and being together into God's presence. That is a great spirit for us to carry into every new beginning in ministry! Ministry is not simply about the work we do. It is about the people we share the ministry with, and the God who calls us together. We gather to worship, to pray, to learn, to serve, and to care for one another. We bring all our differences, experiences, hopes, and even our doubts. And somehow, through all of these things, God forms us into a community.

But we need to remember that we do not begin alone. God is already ahead of us. Before we enter a new season of service and ministry, God is present there. Before we meet the people we are called to serve, God already knows them and loves them. Before we face the challenges that may come, God has already promised to be faithful. As someone wise once said: we may not know exactly what the future holds, but we know the One who holds the future. When we enter into ministry, we don't need to have all the answers. We need to remain faithful. Sometimes faithfulness means planting seeds whose growth we may never see. Sometimes it means tending what someone else has begun. Sometimes it means offering a listening ear, speaking a word of hope, visiting someone who is lonely, or simply being present in a moment when another person needs to know they are not alone. These acts may seem small, but in God's hands, small acts of love are signs of God's kingdom. And we know that most "great things" began with small acts.

So as we begin this new season of ministry together, perhaps we can echo the words from psalms: **"I was glad."** Glad to gather. Glad to worship. Glad to serve. Glad to walk alongside one another. Glad to discover what God will do among us.

(*continued…*)

We know there will likely be challenges ahead; moments when we grow tired or discouraged. But there will also be moments of grace, unexpected joy, renewed faith, and the deep satisfaction of knowing that we are part of something larger than ourselves.

So let us enter this new beginning with open hearts. Let us bring our gifts and our willingness to serve. Let us be patient with one another and generous in spirit. And above all, let us trust that God, who has been faithful in the past, will continue to guide us into the future.

May we truly be glad when we gather in the house of the Lord—and may that joy lead us from worship into service, from hope into action, and from this new beginning into all that God has yet to do among us.

Pastor Eva

SEPTEMBER WORSHIP

Sept. 6 Communion 15th Sun. a. Pentecost	**Sept. 13** 16th Sun. a. Pentecost	**Sept. 20** 17th Sun. a. Pentecost	**Sept. 27** **Durham Fair Sunday** 18th Sun. a. Pentecost
Exodus 12:1-14 Psalm 149 Romans 13:8-14 **Matthew 18:15-20**	Exodus 12:1-14 Psalm 149 Romans 13:8-14 **Matthew 18:15-20**	Exodus 12:1-14 Psalm 149 Romans 13:8-14 **Matthew 18:15-20**	Exodus 12:1-14 Psalm 149 Romans 13:8-14 **Matthew 18:15-20**
Liturgist TBD	**Liturgist** Bridget Melien	**Liturgist** Carolyn Cairns	**Liturgist** N/A
Ushers/DOD Carol Francis, Jennifer DiPentima, Sue Reynolds	**Ushers/DOD** John Lyman	**Ushers/DOD** Linda Shulz, Scott Cairns	**Ushers/DOD** N/A
Coffee Hour UCD Missions	**Coffee Hour** UCD Deacons	**Coffee Hour** WSCS	**Coffee Hour** N/A

Annual Durham Fair, September 24–27

It's that time of year again! The Annual Durham Fair is quickly approaching, and we are still looking for volunteers to help staff our famous **Lime Rickey** booth, as well as to assist with the **parking lot** operations throughout the fair. The links for both sign-up sheets can be found by scanning our Link Tree QR Code on the back page, or by visiting it on the web here: (https://linktr.ee/unitedchurches).

As always, we will be holding an ecumenical worship service at the fair. However, this year, we are making a slight change by holding our service at **9:30am** on the **Durham Fairgrounds Center Stage**. As such, this will be our one and only service of the day, so we hope you join us!

We will also be participating in the **Celebrate America Parade on Thursday, September 24 at 7:00 PM**. Everyone who signs up to help will receive a **free ticket to the Durham Fair** as a thank-you for helping out. Want to help in another way? We can always use an extra hand, so feel free to contact **Derek Cummings or John Hogarth** as soon as possible. We look forward to another fun and productive year!

Confirmation

Confirmation!

Beginning in October, we will offer a confirmation program for all high school students starting 8th grade this year. We will meet every other Sunday from 4PM-6PM and will conclude the Sunday after Easter, April 4th.

An information meeting for both students and parents will be held October 4th after worship, **or** possibly later if preferred. Just let us know.

Please contact Pastor Eva or the church office if you would like more information or plan to bring a student. We are also looking for volunteers to assist with the program!

SAVE THE DATE

September 5: Men's Breakfast, 8:30am
The men of our two congregations will be meeting at the Athenian Diner II in Middletown for breakfast.

September 8: Ladies Luncheon, 12:00pm
The ladies of our two congregations will be joining together in the Fellowship Hall for a relaxed time of food and friendship!

September 19: HELO Contra Dance, 6:00pm
Our friends at HELO invite you to a night of traditional contra dancing at the Bay Point Club in East Hampton.

September 24: Celebrate America Parade, 7:00pm
Kick off the Durham Fair with us as we represent our church community in a special parade to celebrate America's 250th Birthday. If you want to march with us, please contact Derek Cummings (every marcher gets a free ticket to the fair!).

September 27: Durham Fair Service, 9:30am
Join us on the Center Stage at the Durham Fairgrounds for a special ecumenical worship service!

Check out our website or contact the office for any additional information on any of these special events!

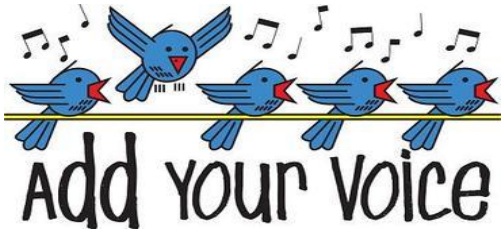
Open and Affirming: A Conversation

Exploring Open and Affirming (ONA)

There is interest among members of our congregation in beginning a conversation about the possibility of pursuing an official **Open and Affirming (ONA)** designation within the *United Church of Christ*. At this time, this is **not an official church initiative**, but rather a member-led effort to learn more about the ONA process and to determine whether there is interest in bringing the conversation before the wider congregation.

The Open and Affirming (ONA) designation is the UCC's public covenant of welcome, affirming the full participation of people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions in the life and ministry of the church.

The ONA discernment process is often thoughtful and takes time, involving education, conversation, and prayer. Since this is a lengthy process, we hope to begin the exploratory work soon. If you are interested in being part of this important conversation from the beginning, please reach out to **Bronwyn Commins** by email at bcwriter16@gmail.com.



Come Sing with Our Choir!

Have you ever thought about joining the church choir? We'd love to have you! Whether you're an experienced singer or simply enjoy making music, our choir is a wonderful way to worship, build friendships, and enrich our church services through song.

We rehearse most **Thursday evenings from 7:00–8:00 PM**, from **September through June**. We understand that work, family, and life's unexpected events can sometimes get in the way, so we don't expect everyone to be at every rehearsal or service. We simply ask that members make a sincere effort to attend consistently so we can prepare meaningful music together.

If you've been thinking about singing with us, this is the perfect time to give it a try. Come as you are; we would love to welcome you into our choir family! For more info, please contact Mike at mevis0130@gmail.com or simply join us at a rehearsal starting in September! We look forward to singing with you!

1. Amazing Grace (SOS). Our commitment to **SOS** (**Support Our Shelves**) at Amazing Grace is **75 pounds per month**. Beans should be **15-16 OUNCE ONLY**! Items for Amazing Grace may be left in the designated baked bean totes in either of 2 areas at UCD---Fellowship Hall or the church narthex OR contact Sydney Mintz or Pam Hogarth for other options. **NO DENTED OR OUTDATED CANS PLEASE**!

2. Durham Food Pantry: The Durham Food Pantry is currently seeking donations of unopened, unexpired items, including: ***dinner side packets, tomato sauce, peanut butter, baked beans, canned chili, black beans, lentil soup, low-sodium protein-based soups, canned chicken, diced tomatoes, mac & cheese, crackers, healthy snacks, rice, instant potatoes, jelly or jam, pancake mix and syrup, ketchup, mayonnaise, shelf-stable milk, canned fruit, coffee, tinfoil, zip-top storage bags, deodorant, hand soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, all-purpose cleaning spray, Lysol wipes, and laundry detergent***. Durham Pantry Items can be left in our Pantry Collection Tubs.

3. Middlefield Food Bank: The Middlefield Food Bank needs our help. They need the following: ***Shampoo, deodorant, body soap, laundry care, cleaning supplies, sponges, dish detergents, dishwasher detergent, pastas & sauce, rice, coffee, & tea, condiments, toilet paper, paper towels, snacks and baking items, & gluten free items***. For more information, contact Susan D'Orvilliers at sdorvilliers@middlefieldct.org.

4. Eddy Shelter. Our **chili ministry** to the Eddy Shelter continues on the **3rd Sunday of each month** (*schedule may adjust for holidays or weather*)! Volunteers are needed to assist with purchasing fresh meats and veggies (***$40/month***). The sign-up sheet is located by the **coffee station** in **Fellowship Hall**. Desserts are always welcome and can be dropped off at **Jo-Ann Halibozek's home** on Sunday afternoon, **Sept. 20** (**4-5 PM**). A **HUGE** thank you to everyone who has already pitched in!

6. Recycling Bin (Save the Earth). The recycle bin is located between the office and Fellowship Hall at UCD. **SAVE** your bottles, cans and plastics and place them in the appropriate "hole" in the recycle bin. A member from MFC will recycle them. **RINSE CONTAINERS BEFORE PUTTING THEM IN THE BIN AND** be sure to save the can tabs for Shriners.

7. Care Cards. We continually send cards to members and get great enjoyment in doing so!

With the success of our May and June events, we are excited to announce that we will once again be hosting a Red Cross Blood Drive at the Fellowship Hall on **Thursday**, **October 22**, from **1:00 PM to 6:00 PM**! Every donation can help save lives, and the need for blood donations remains constant.

The Red Cross encourages donors to schedule an appointment in advance through their website, which we have linked here: (https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/find-drive). Simply visit the link, enter our code **(Durham CT**) or our ZIP (**06422**), and scroll down to our event this Friday for a list of available time blocks.

Donors may give:

- **Whole Blood Donation** – The most common type of donation, during which approximately one pint of blood is collected. This process usually takes about an hour.
- **Power Red Donation** – A specialized donation that collects red blood cells while returning most of the plasma and platelets to the donor. Power Red donors must meet specific eligibility requirements and have blood type A Negative, B Negative, or O.

Whether you are a first-time donor or a regular supporter, your generosity makes a real difference. We hope you will consider signing up and helping meet this critical need. If you have any questions about the drive, please contact the office.

As you may know, our AED has been installed in its well-marked cabinet on the wall in Fellowship Hall and the Trustees are in process of arranging an in-service training session in the immediate future on AED operations presented by Rob Chadd or one of his Durham First Responder colleagues at Fellowship Hall.

Anyone interested in attending that training session, please reach out to Bob Guynn directly, phone/text at **860-982-2831**, or by email at **rguynn8@comcast.net**, as soon as possible.

Elaine Diaz	September 4
Landon Watts	September 4
Tucker Fowler	September 5
Alex Mach	September 5
Bridgette Schlicker	September 6
Sharon Roundtree-Brewer	September 8
Peg Atwell	September 11
Laura Hastings	September 11
Gib Ryan	September 12
Aleta Cromack	September 15
Kevin Ryan	September 15
Pamela Huntley	September 17
Mae Spooner	September 21
Susan Oakley	September 24
Alexis Meurs	September 25
Lily Montgomery	September 25
Isabella Weissburg	September 27
Regan Dills	September 29
Kathy Cutler	September 29

Derek & Sue Cummings September 23

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:** September 29

We are always happy to receive corrections, updates, and additional information. If you notice anything in this newsletter that needs to be changed, corrected, or updated, please let us know. We are glad to make adjustments so that we keep our information as accurate as possible. Happy reading!

DAYS FOR GIRLS

The year for Days for Girls is quickly coming to a close, with their final meeting of the year taking place in October. If you have been thinking about joining or would simply like to learn more about what they do, now is the perfect time to visit for a meeting!

For those who were unable to attend June's presentation, here is a brief introduction to the mission of Days for Girls:

■ **Empowering Women. Restoring Dignity. Changing Lives.**
Days for Girls is dedicated to eliminating the stigma and limitations surrounding menstruation so that women and girls can experience improved health, education, and economic opportunity. To date, Days for Girls has reached more than 3.5 million women and girls around the world with life-changing menstrual health solutions.

Period Poverty—the lack of access to safe, affordable menstrual supplies and education. Period poverty leads to missed school days, lost income, poor mental and physical health, and deep-rooted stigma.

■ **Global Impact**
Recently, we've partnered with Jean Scialabba from the Orange, CT Chapter, expanding our reach through missions that serve communities most in need in Tanzania, Liberia, Cameroon, Chad and Bangladesh.

■ **Get Involved**
For eight years, our incredible Rocky Hill team has been showing up—every third Saturday from January through October—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. 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. Every task makes a difference.

■ **2026 Remaining Workshop Dates**
• Sep 20 • Oct 17

Together, we're creating a world where periods don't pause potential. Thank you for being part of this powerful mission.

THE MIDDLEFIELD MINUTE

MIDDLEFIELD DEACON'S CORNER

Simple Questions

It has been a tradition at MFC that we hold a devotional at the end of our monthly deacon's meetings. The topics can range from the deeply spiritual to simply playing a game. Knowing that our May meeting would be held jointly with both the UCD and MFC deacons, Ed Holden suggested that I repeat a devotional that we did last year. The point of the devotional was to ask several simple questions with the goal of helping us get to know each other a little better. This is what I asked:

- Where were you born and/or raised?
- What is your earliest memory and can you describe it?
- What was your favorite school subject?
- If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go?

Simple questions, but they opened up dialogue and helped us better connect with one another. We had fun sharing a little bit of our backgrounds and it generated interesting conversation. Fun fact, did you know that Pastor Eva was born in the Democratic Republic of Congo?

Our two congregations have been worshipping together for a while, but we probably do not know each other as well as we should. Instead of just having polite conversation at coffee hour, maybe we should ask those simple, open-ended questions that will help us better connect with one another.

Getting to know a person takes time, but we also know that building a strong faith community is what Jesus preached. Let us take that first step, ask a simple question.

Peace to all,
Paul Bergenholtz
MFC Deacons

HELPING Hands

At a recent MFC Deacons meeting, we discussed how MFC/UCD can help those in our community who need help, but are unable or unwilling to ask for it. The help we can offer may be small tasks, such as weeding a garden, taking someone to a doctor's appointment, taking an item to the transfer station, etc.

We believe there is a great need in our community, but we do not know who might need help and whether we have the people to help in this endeavor. This is where you come in. If you know of a person(s) who need some assistance, please send that concern to Paul Bergenholtz at bergenholtzp@gmail.com or contact the church office. Please be specific as to the need. Also, since we need people to help, please let us know if you are willing to be put on a list as a volunteer and how you may be able to help.

MFC Deacons

MFC Bylaw Review

Most churches have some type of internal document that sets the rules and expectations for its members in relation to the ministry. Usually, this document is referred to as the bylaws. Basically, this document acts as a type of contract between the church and its members. It details topics like the ministry's purpose, organizational structure and leadership roles.

It is often the foundation of any church's internal rules and self- governance. Keeping bylaws current and up-to-date to remain compliant is necessary for any church and particularly now for us as MFC moves forward in our planning process for the future. MFC's by-laws have not been reviewed, updated or amended for many years and it is time this work gets done.

If you want to be part of a small committee that will be carrying out this work, please email the church at (church.mfc@gmail.com) and/or leave a voicemail message (860-349-9881). Our church administrator Aren will be collecting your communications.

Thank you!

HELO PRESENTS

CONTRA Dance

Featuring music by Mickey Koth and John Kalinowski with caller Jen Jasenski

SEPTEMBER 19 6:00 PM

BUY TICKET

HELO is a non-profit 501c3 who provides home, education, love and opportunity for children in Southern Haiti.
When purchasing tickets, please make a note for Contra Dance.

PLEASE PURCHASE TICKETS BY SEPTEMBER 10TH

THE BAY POINT CLUB EAST HAMPTON

24 SPELLMAN RD, EAST HAMPTON, CT

TICKETS

$40/person
$75/couple

Price includes food, drinks, dancing!
Come out for a fun event to support HELO Haiti.
50/50 raffle tickets available.

PURCHASE TICKETS: https://helohaiti.networkforgood.com/

The Crossroads Connection
A Newsletter for Sept. 2026

Sunday Worship: 10am
Communion is celebrated on the 1st Sunday of every month. Can't make it in person? We stream services live on our Facebook: https://linktr.ee/unitedchurches

www.unitedchurches.net

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