

UNITED COMMUNITY CURRENT



JUNE 2023

Email: Unitedcommunitychurchucc@gmail.com

Website: UnitedCommunity.church



Pastor's Ponderings

Wherever You Are On Life's Journey, Chapter 2

May 22 was the one year anniversary of my Ordination Service in Arizona. This coming June 1st will mark the beginning of my second year as your Pastor. Wow! What a meaningful year it has been. This year has been filled with the joy of getting to know many of you, worshipping together, and meeting and supporting persons and groups in the community. It has also been a busy year for Ashton and I as we brought new life to the beautiful parsonage which had been vacant for some time.



We often say in the United Church of Christ "that no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here." Sometimes this wonderful slogan can seem a little elusive or abstract. Sometimes it can feel passive like a simple all are welcome that doesn't require much from us.



This statement that means so much to us is an invitation for each of us. It is an invitation for those who haven't been a part of our congregation to get to know us. It is an invitation for those of us in the church to get to be a part of the newcomer's journey. It is also a vision for our whole family of faith as we seek to build relationships with each other. By recognizing we each are on our own unique journeys we are equipped to celebrate and support one another along the way.

I look forward to continuing to journey with each of you in this second year of ministry together.

Blessings,

Rev. Andrew Ponder-Williams



Church Council Members

Phil Brown, Moderator
stjmusic@sover.net

Alice Kitchel, Assistant Moderator
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Vicki Scherer Spiritual Formation & Nurture
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Alice Kitchel, Outreach
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“The Church is not a building”; however . . .

I pray that I do not suffer from an “edifice complex”. I know that God would bless our worship whether we met in a storefront, in a tent or in our “cathedral” on the hill. I also know that our most important ministry is the ministry each of us does in the community, outside the walls of the building. Nevertheless, there are multiple ministries that we are able to provide because we have our building at 1325 Main Street. The ministry of space for community and family gatherings, support groups, and wider church missions only happens because we have the space available. The ministry of physical and spiritual nourishment through meals and fellowship occurs because people give of their time and talents, and also because of our remodeled kitchen and dining area. Our extensive ministry of music occurs through our majestic organ and extended set of handbells; and also through providing rehearsal and performance space for our musicians as well as musicians from the wider community. Our ministry of outreach includes activities in our large yard and participation in Main Street events including the Pet Parade, Haunted Sanctuary and Kingdom Maple Festival breakfast. In addition to providing a foundation for all these ministries, our building serves as a Main Street landmark for this community.



We spend a lot of time talking about how to preserve our financial endowment while also exercising good stewardship in its use. We should also recognize that our building is a physical endowment given to us by our forebearers. Preserving and exercising good stewardship of our physical endowment is an act of grace and gratitude for the sacrifices of previous generations. I hope that United Community Church never has to choose between preserving our financial and our physical endowments or that stewardship of one necessitates sacrifice of the other.

Of course, the building only provides the framework and opportunity for our ministries. It is the people – our congregation and staff – who fill these ministries and our building with life and purpose. “You are the church. We are the church together;” and Yes, we could provide some of these ministries in another location. Your generous contributions of time, talent and finances allow us to use our “cathedral” on the hill to provide all these ministries and more. I believe the cloud of witnesses who provided us with this building are happy to see that it is alive and overflowing with ministry.

Blessings for our ministry together,

Phil Brown, moderator



Beth Norris is looking for some help with food prep on Tuesdays and/or Thursdays. Now that we are serving over 100 meals both on Wednesday and Friday, it is necessary to do some food prep on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Prep would begin around noon and helpers need not stay all afternoon. Give what you can. Beth also wanted to remind everyone that over the summer, we do not get donations from St. Johnsbury Academy, therefore we will be looking for more donations from the community. Beth congratulates everyone who has donated so far and wants you all to know that your donations make a BIG difference. All edible donations are used.

Sunday School Students plant Herbs for the Community Lunch program

Sunday School students took time from their studies to plant seeds. The herbs and vegetables they planted are destined for use in the Community Lunch program. Grow lights were purchased to help with this project. During one of the days when the weather was nice, the fledging plants were placed outside the south lawn door. Sometime in the afternoon, someone decided they looked good and walked off with the healthy one. A notice has been put on front porch forum that we would like them back—no questions asked. If you can help us out thank you very much.



Ministry Reports

Worship & Care

May was an active worship month. At Easter we welcomed new members to join our congregation and once again, on May 7th, we welcomed another new member. This was also the Sunday when we blessed/dedicated the Church World Services kits that were picked up later in the week to be distributed to people and places in need. On May 14th, mother's day, we held our annual meeting following church. It was a time to reflect back on what we have accomplished in the past year and to focus on what we hope to do as we move forward. May 28th we celebrated Pentecost including non-English readers to go with Acts 2: 17-21. The first Sunday in June we will celebrate our graduates including two of them as readers in the service.

We continue to reach out to our members and neighbors as part of our Care outreach. And finally, as vacation season begins, we will have Donna Murray as a guest organist on a couple Sundays when Barbara is away, Steve Winkler as a guest minister in July when Andrew is away, with Maple Leaf 7 and a jazz quartet will join us in August.

And, of course, as usual, there is always a big thank you to all who participate in worship and I invite any and all to join us as volunteers – readers, greeters, acolytes. Please join us as we get into summer!

Outreach

This past month has been a chance for us to review our actions of the past year. We were pleased to put together 37 school kits, 47 hygiene kits, and 20 clean-up buckets. Our depot (8 churches in northern Vermont and New Hampshire) sent 284 school kits, 446 hygiene kits, and 20 clean-up buckets weighing a total of 1336 lbs. to the CWS warehouse to be distributed to disaster areas. We also collected money for Blankets. See page 6 for a list of those honored or in memory of. You can honor your father, son, or someone who has fathered you by making a donation to the CWS Tool kits. See page 6 for more information. This month, the United Church of Christ collects moneys for their 'Strengthen the Church' special offering. More information can be

found on page 7. Take time to read Beth Norris' report on the feeding of the Canadian tour group. Proceeds from that event have been put in the roof fund.

Spiritual Formation & Nurture

I would like to welcome our new ministry members, Ashton Beebe, Gretchen Steen and returning member Vicki Scherer.



We are excited to celebrate all of our graduates on June 4th. Please join us to bless these people on the next step of their journey.

Movies Under the Stars. Please join us this Summer for outside movies in a drive in theater style. Bring your own blanket/chair, we will have popcorn, and lemonade. We will be showing "Harvey" on June 13th, "The Music Man" on July 18th, and "101 Dalmations" on August 18th. This event is free and all are welcome.

Confirmation classes are going really well. The youth have enjoyed visiting other churches and learning from different pastors. The next class will be June 4th at the Congregational Church of Lancaster. This class will focus on UCC Identity and Purpose with Pastor Pam. This class begins at 3 pm.

Stewardship

Thank you to all who attended the annual meeting and passed the budget for fiscal year 2024. We continue to work towards a balanced budget. With that in mind, we have sent out a letter with a stewardship postcard where you can let us know your intentions for the next year. We know the roof will need to be taken care of and as of now, we are funding it from our endowment. We would love to be able to avoid this action so if you know of a way to raise the money let us know. We are also reviewing our membership lists and hope to get a more accurate count of active and inactive members. Please remember to bring your "postcards" to church on June 11 or drop them off at the office during regular office hours. Thanks to all of you for your support for the life of our church!

Reach Out

As we get into warm weather, we could benefit from donations of water for people that are living out of their cars or tents. This past *(continued on page 4)*



Have you visited our Facebook page? [UnitedCommunityChurchUCC](https://www.facebook.com/UnitedCommunityChurchUCC)

Did you know you can check the website three different ways?

UCCSTJ.com

UCCSTJ.org

Unitedcommunity.church



Ministry reports *(continued from page 3)*



month we assisted persons with 7 gas cards, 12 packs of diapers and 2 food bags from Ted & Frannie's. If you are in need of COVID tests, we have many we will be glad to give out. Thanks Pat for giving us your extra ones.

Apartments

Summer weather has kicked into gear. Paul has been working on mowing. Air conditioners can now be installed. Don't forget if you grill this summer that grills can not be stored on porches. Paul is also working on heating issues in 19 Steeple Place.



Special Events

Coming up

Don't miss them



Saturday, June 3 St. Johnsbury Pet Parade. United Community Church is a "watering hole" for the parade participants as well as a place for animal treats. Lollipops will also be available for the pet's human.

Sunday, June 4 we will be celebrating our graduates from college, high school and eighth grade. A special fellowship hour is planned.

Tuesday, June 13 will be the first of our three outdoor movie nights. Come enjoy the movie "Harvey" and have some popcorn, beverage, and fellowship. If we have inclement weather, the movie will be shown indoors. Movie time is 8:30 pm.

Sunday, June 18 is Father's Day. Celebrate with guest pastor, Steve Winkler, and also our guest organist, Donna Murray.

Sunday, June 25 Pastor Andrew will be back with us and guest organist, Donna Murray will be accompanying the hymns.

Sunday, July 2 Pastor Andrew will be at the General Synod in Indianapolis, IN and Rev. Winkler will be preaching. Special music will be provided by Paul Connelly.

Sunday, July 30 will be a work Sunday. We are still planning activities. If you have jobs that you need assistance with, let Karen Sayles know so we can include them in our service time.

Sunday, August 6 we will be hosting the MapleLeaf Seven at our traditional Dixieland Service. Invite your friends to come worship with us.

Offerings

	May	July-May(YTD)
Offering	3,003.00	55,266.60
In Kind offerings	5,921.07	7,407.98
Loose Offerings	476.15	3,655.06
VANCO Offerings	0.00	2,982.75
Total Offerings	11,668.86	69,312.39
Directed Donations (includes community meal site)	120.00	17,754.90
Wider Mission	355.00	2,752.50
Local Mission	55.00	1,771.90
Total Mission	493.50	4,524.40
	Mission	Offering
2023	\$4,780.00	\$70,000.00
% of budgeted amt	94.7%	99.0%

Projects from staff:

- Lollipop Wednesday
- Assisted Worship and Care with coverage and planning services.
- Meet weekly with stewardship.
- Welcome bags
- Helped people with questions about building use and scheduling
- Staff development
- Assisted "Caring" of parishioners
- Power point for worship service
- website/ facebook
- Contacting contractors for bids on various projects.
- Supporting and advertising community lunch
- Marketing/Advertising
- Gas cards
- Maintaining and opening of chapel.
- Newsletter
- Planning special services
- Organizing Church World Service items
- Ordering kitchen & cleaning supplies
- Restocking Diaper bank
- Membership & Stewardship campaigns
- Preparing for parades/ tabling

Please ministry chairs check your office mailbox

Mission Statement

As one body in communion with God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, we, the members of United Community Church covenant with one another to care for and love each other as Jesus Christ loves us, and to maintain, support, and foster a compassionate ministry in our community and throughout all God's creation

YOUNG AND THE YOUNG AT HEART PAGE

Children's bulletins are available at our worship services as well as downloadable from the Constant Contact with the worship materials and on the website: uccstj.com.

Puzzle!

Jesus instructs us to give and serve. What does Proverbs 3:27 (NIV) tell us *not* to do? To find out, cross out all the following letters. Then write the remaining letters in order on the spaces below.

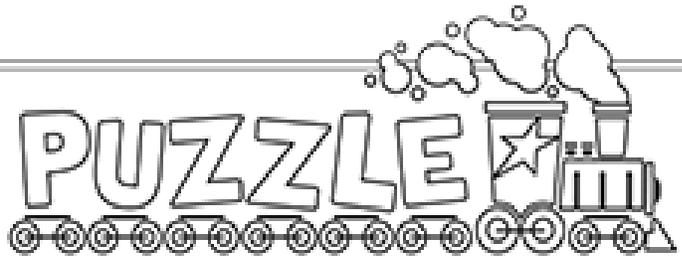
B J K Q X Z

BWJITJHQHOB LZDGBBOOK
DKFQROMTBHJOBSQEXZT
OKXWJHOBMIZTIJSDQKU
EWSBHEQNITKISIZNYOU
RPJZOWBEQRTOAXCZTXJ

DO NOT _____

PROVERBS 3:27, NIV

Answer: Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to act. Proverbs 3:27, NIV

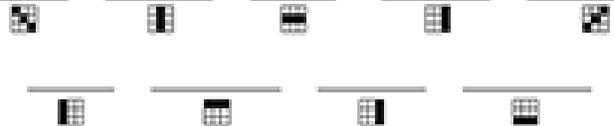
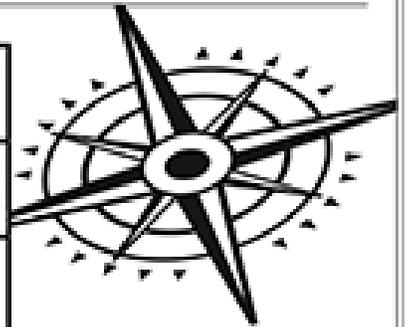


SEPARATION FROM SIN

David praises God for his love and compassion. What does God do for people who fear him?

Directions: Using each grid pattern marked below, find the word that appears in all three of those squares. Write the words in the spaces below to complete Psalm 103:12, NIV.

FROM as is can	WORTHY from far	at the EAST now
in AS South	do far EAST	the up as
WEST East	far WEST	THE be West



... so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

PSALM 103:12, NIV

Answer: As far as the east is from the west

Sprinkle and split

A sprinkle of pepper and a dab of soap illustrate a big concept from God's Word.

What you need:

- Shallow dish
- Water
- Black ground pepper
- Toothpick
- Dish soap
- Bible



What you do:

1. With the dish on a table, fill it halfway with water. Don't jiggle the dish.
2. Sprinkle pepper on the water.
3. Dab the toothpick into a drop of soap. Then touch its tip to the center of the water and observe.
4. Read Psalm 103:8-12.
5. How does this experiment illustrate God's forgiveness? Explain the science behind this experiment: The soap disturbs the water's surface tension. The soap molecules don't want to interact with the water. This repels the water molecules from the soap, causing the floating pepper to also move to the sides.

Honor Father with a Church World Service Tool kits

Father's Day, June 19, gives us an opportunity to honor your father, son, brother, father figure with a donation towards tool kits given out by Church World Service to people around the world who need them to help with food and/or water production. \$6 will provide 200 pieces of chalk, \$16 gives writing supplies for 12 students, \$30 will provide 20 concrete blocks, \$45 supplies maps & posters for a classroom and \$100 provides a bench for a classroom.

Checks can be made out to United Community Church and put blanket or tool kits in the memo line. Upon request, the church will send a Father's Day card (snail mail or email) telling Dad of your gift in his name. Please fill out a separate form for each gift.



Father's Day Tool Kit

given in Memory / Honor

of _____

by _____

Optional: address if you want a card sent:

Blankets Given in Honor of:

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Clara Borders | by Kate Fish |
| Sanne Brown | by Bertie Koelewijn & Greg Brown |
| Cynthia Charlotte Campbell | by Pat Campbell |
| Elizabeth Pearce Campbell | by Pat Campbell |
| Monica Campbell | by Pat Campbell |
| Barbara Connelly | by Crystal Connelly & Paul Connelly |
| Crystal Connelly | by the Connelly family |
| Rachel C. Corley | by Pat Campbell |
| Linda Damon | by Roger Damon & Pam Dearborn |
| Diane Fish | by Kate Fish |
| Farland Fish | by Kate Fish |
| Margo Fish | by Kate Fish |
| Amy Grover | by Roger Damon & Pam Dearborn |
| Laura W. Hood | by Gail Warnaar |
| Kathy Izquierdo | by Roger Damon & Pam Dearborn |
| Lucy A. F. Keller | by Betty Keller |
| Lucy Ann Keller | by Betty Keller |
| Rebecca C. Martell | by Pat Campbell |
| Britany McCall | by Roger Damon & Pam Dearborn |
| Susan Strayer | by Kate Fish |
| Deb Tirrell | by the Connelly family |
| Hollie Tirrell | by the Connelly family |
| Cristina Tirrell | by the Connelly family |
| Gail Vaucher | by the Connelly family |
| Linda Warnaar | by Gail Warnaar |
| All who mother | by Bertie Koelewijn & Greg Brown |

Blankets Given in Memory of:

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Agnus Bailey | by Mary Leadbeater |
| Debbie Warnaar Bauer | by Gail Warnaar |
| Charlotte Hubbard Campbell | by Pat Campbell |
| Doris Damon | by Roger Damon & Pam Dearborn |
| Esther Naomi Fuller | by Betty Keller |
| Lena Shaw Hayward | by Betty Keller |
| Bertha Keller | by Betty Keller |
| Barbara H. Lynch | by Betty Keller |
| Nellie Booker Richards | by Pat Campbell |
| Amy S. Stapleton | by Roger Damon & Pam Dearborn |
| Mary St. Peter | by Mary Leadbeater |
| Peg Tirrell | by Connelly family |
| Midge Whitcomb | by Roger Damon & |



Roof Fund Helped Through Tour Group Luncheon

On May 8, United Community Church hosted a tour group from St. John, New Brunswick for lunch. The tour company noticed our website and after a “secret” trip down, contacted us to see if we would host a luncheon on their tour of northern New England. Beth Norris spearheaded the event on our side and with lots of help from members and friends we were able to feed two busloads of tourists soup and sandwiches in our fellowship hall. The following is an accounting of this event. What isn’t mentioned is the appreciation of the tourists for the lunch and fellowship of UCC as well as the short tour of our building, welcome by Pastor Andrew and a demonstration of our organ by Barbara.

Hello Friends

I've tried to put together estimates of what we have spent in people-hours, in-kind donations, and money spent on the Canadian tour. I'll send the totals to Melanie so she has a good picture of what this cost us in actual dollars, as well as in congregational LOVE! We brought in \$1070.00, and about \$700 will go to our roof fund!

Based on the numbers you've sent me, these are my estimates:

People hours: 125 volunteer hours

In-kind \$ donations: \$143.82 (food and supplies)

Actual \$ spent: \$300.92 (food charges to White market)

Thank you all for this gargantuan effort!

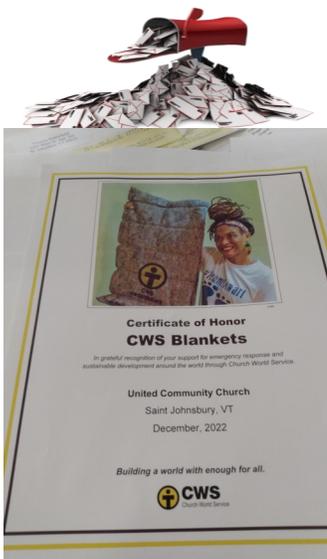
Beth Norris



June is **Strengthen the Church** Offering month

The Strengthen the Church (STC) Offering reflects the shared commitment of people across the United Church of Christ to cooperatively build up the UCC. Conferences and the national setting equally share the gifts given by members and friends through their local congregations. The funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations. **By your generosity to this offering, you build up the Body of Christ.**

As God calls our congregations to be the church in new ways, your generosity will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches and develop the spiritual life in our youth and young adults. Through the Strengthen the Church offering, we help support the work of conferences and the national setting as we become a multi-racial/multi-cultural church. Donations can be made through United Community Church. If in check form put STC in the memo line.



Dear Friends,

Thanks to generous supporters like you, CWS distributed over 228,000 kits and Blankets in 2022! Distributed to those in need were 45,570 school kits; 7,843 Baby kits & Welcome Back-packs; 108,390 Hygiene kits, 6,605 cleanup buckets; and 59,910 blankets. Your donation to the CWS Tools program empowers families and communities. Viable communities are being built using tools for such trades as carpentry, plumbing, and tailoring. Gardening tools and materials help to build vegetable gardens and also begin livelihoods such as beekeeping. Clean and safe water dams are being built to trap seasonal rains for year-round use by families and communities



CWS Picks Up Kits

May 10th was pick up day for the Church World Service depot here at United Community Church. The CWS eighteen wheeler backed into our parking lot from Main Street giving the students walking home from school a treat. The driver and his passenger easily collected the boxes and clean up buckets from the narthex of the church.

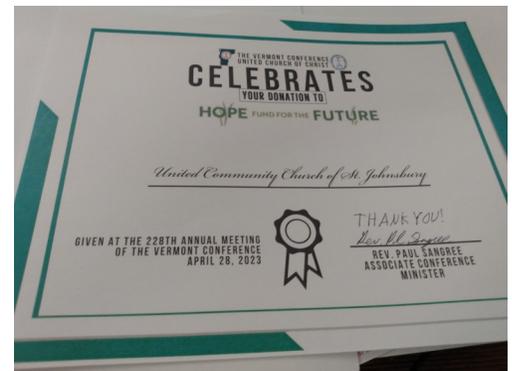


They wheeled them down the stairs with a dolly and loaded them into the truck. They have a special dolly for the clean up buckets. Within 20 minutes, they had loaded the boxes with 284 school kits, and 446 hygiene kits, and the 20 clean-up buckets weighing a total of 1336 lbs., and were on their way to Bow, New Hampshire to pick up from that depot. Outreach wants to thank all who donated items from the “eggs” and those who helped put the kits together and pack them in the boxes. Leaving off boxes of kits were representatives from 7 other churches in Northern Vermont and New Hampshire (Bradford Congregational Church, 1st Congregational Church of Haverhill, Greater Harford, UCC, Newbury Congregational Church, Peacham Congregational Church, United Congregational Church of Orford, and Bethany Congregational Church of Pike, NH). This mission project is a year round project, so as you see items on sale, don’t hesitate to purchase them and bring them to church. We have several shelves put aside to hold items as they come in.



Mission Recognitions at Vermont Conference Annual Meeting

Each year at the Vermont Conference Annual Meeting, churches are recognized for their contributions to “Our Church’s Wider Mission” and those churches who are 5 for 5. This year, United Community Church received certificates as a 2022 OCWM Church, and a 2022 5 for 5 church. The later means that we have donated towards the 5 special offerings of the United Church of Christ (Neighbors in Need, Strengthen the Church, One Great Hour of Sharing, Christmas Fund [Veterans of the Cross], and Our Church’s Wider Mission). New this year is the “Hope Fund for the Future,” a special fund created by the Vermont Conference. We were also recognized for contributing to that also.



VOLUNTEER READERS NEEDED

There are a couple ways to be a reader these days...we had started having one reader for the service in response to a request from a member of the congregation but that isn’t set in stone. So if you like that idea, and are willing to be a single reader, that’s fine. But if you would like to read but want to share duties we can make that work. Also, you can read from the pulpit (and sit with Andrew “up above,” if you like) or read from the new lectern down on the floor. Both ways work. See Karen Sayles (802-274-0986 or kmsayles@yahoo.com)



JUNE BIRTHDAYS

- 6/1 Philip Goss
- 6/3 Jay Sprout
- 6/13 Kuku Richards
- 6/15 Julie Brisson
- 6/20 Jonathan Lynch
- 6/21 Callahan Beck
Marie-Helene Belanger
Jane Vinton
- 6/23 Paul Bergeron
- 6/24 Carol Jensen
- 6/28 Lauren Rauert



JUNE ANNIVERSARIES

- 6/12 Ron and Dale Steen
- 6/13 Jayne & Keith Phelps
- 6/17 Gary and Sue Roberts
- 6/21 Betty Keller & Jonathan Lynch
- 6/25 David and Brynn Evans
- 6/26 Paul and Denise Scavitto
- 6/29 Maggie Sayles & Bryce Healy
- 6/30 Lillian & Joe Swainbank



Lance Abella—Franklin Pierce University

Callahan Beck—UVM

Kaci Cochran—Plymouth State University

Natalie Chapman—Lyndon Institute

Felicity Perreault—Lyndon Institute

Alexis Sanborn—Lyndon Institute

Cameron McGregor—St. Johnsbury Academy

Logan McGregor—St. Johnsbury Academy

David Evans—Barnet School

Jonah Raser—St. Johnsbury School



Joyce Magoon McCulloch

March 20, 1935 - April 11, 2023

Funeral June 6 at 10 am



Vicki Scherer received the Wels College 21st Century Leadership Award and scholarship



Gary Thornton is retiring from his daytime Driver's Education position at St. Johnsbury Academy. He will still be teaching the evening classes.

In our Thoughts and Prayers

Julie Brisson

Brodien family

Bob Chapman

Mary Feron

Dennis Goodhue

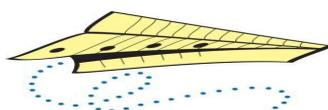
Joan Knutsen

Ed Magnus

McCulloch family

Kim O'Connor

Pam Smart



If we have missed your birthday or anniversary **please** let either Barbara or Erika know at 802-748-2603 or UnitedCommunityChurchUCC@gmail.com

United Community Church

United Church of Christ
1325 Main Street
St. Johnsbury, VT 05819



Just a reminder:

Although we don't require
mask wearing we ask you



respect one another's
choices to stay safe



SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES 10am

In- person and
Facebook Live /Zoom

Zoom etiquette:

[https://www.facebook.com/watch/?
ref=saved&v=209599687060439](https://www.facebook.com/watch/?ref=saved&v=209599687060439)

STAFF

<i>Pastor</i>	Rev. Andrew Ponder-Williams
<i>Music Director /Organist</i>	Barbara Connelly
<i>Handbell Director</i>	Phil Brown
<i>Virtual Worship Director</i>	Phil Brown
<i>Virtual Technicians</i>	Sean Cavanaugh, Betty Keller
<i>Secretaries</i>	Barbara Connelly, Erika Thompson
<i>Building Manager</i>	Paul Bergeron

CONTACT INFORMATION

United Community Phone number 748-2603
Email UnitedCommunityChurchUCC@gmail.com



June Lectionary



June 4

Genesis 1:1-2:4a
Psalm 8
2 Corinthians 13:11-13
Matthew 28:16-20



June 11

Genesis 12:1-9
Psalm 33:1-12
Romans 4:13-25
Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26



June 18

Genesis 18:1-15, 21:1-7
Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19
Romans 5:1-8
Matthew 9:35-10:23



June 25

Genesis 21:8-21
Psalm 86:1-10
Romans 6:1b-11
Matthew 10:24-39

