

# UNITED COMMUNITY CURRENT



MARCH 2023

Email: [Unitedcommunitychurchucc@gmail.com](mailto:Unitedcommunitychurchucc@gmail.com)

Website: [UCCSTJ.com](http://UCCSTJ.com)



## Pastor's Ponderings

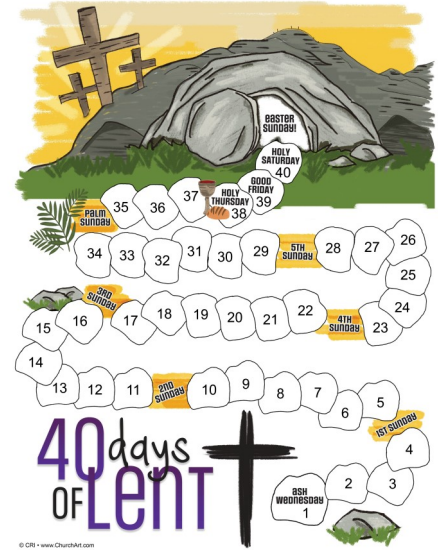
Typically when we think of these 40 days we consider what we might deprive ourselves of. We seem to always focus on things we do that are unhealthy. We think of what we eat that seems the worst for us, we think of being on social media too much, or maybe we try to work on our way of thinking.

Lent gives us an opportunity for deep reflection and consideration. Instead of just depriving ourselves of something we know is unhealthy, this is a time to try and understand why we do these things. What are the underlying causes of our stress and unease that lead us to do things we sense are harmful?

An incredible way to grow spiritually during this Lenten season is to hold space for other people. Instead of just giving up something we give space for others to share. This is my Lenten journey plan and I am hopeful for all the ways I might grow.



I am thankful for this season we share. May our prayers, our grieving, and our dreaming guide us into a new future filled with the possibilities that God promises.



Blessings,

*Rev. Andrew Ponder-Williams*



Welcome Everyone to Dessert & Dancing



Desserts set up



Tables all ready to turn off the lights



## Church Council Members

Phil Brown, Moderator  
[stjmusic@sover.net](mailto:stjmusic@sover.net)

Alice Kitchel, Assistant Moderator  
[alicekitchel@gmail.com](mailto:alicekitchel@gmail.com)

Elisa Rowell, Treasurer  
[elisamay1978@gmail.com](mailto:elisamay1978@gmail.com)

Helene Millas, Assistant Treasurer  
[frenchcutie289@yahoo.com](mailto:frenchcutie289@yahoo.com)

Karen Sayles, Clerk  
[kmsayles@yahoo.com](mailto:kmsayles@yahoo.com)

Pam Dearborn, past Moderator,  
[pamelad@nchcvt.org](mailto:pamelad@nchcvt.org)

Pam Dearborn, Member at Large  
[pamelad@nchcvt.org](mailto:pamelad@nchcvt.org)

Gail Warnaar, Member at Large  
[gailw@theoldhomestead.com](mailto:gailw@theoldhomestead.com)

Karen Sayles, Worship & Care  
[kmsayles@yahoo.com](mailto:kmsayles@yahoo.com)

Kris Norris, Stewardship  
[KristanNorris312@gmail.com](mailto:KristanNorris312@gmail.com)

Kathleen Haines, Spiritual Formation & Nurture  
[klehaines@gmail.com](mailto:klehaines@gmail.com)

Alice Kitchel, Outreach  
[alicekitchel@gmail.com](mailto:alicekitchel@gmail.com)

## Preparing for our future together

MODERATOR

The Church Council frequently addresses immediate, pressing issues as they come up in our church life. In addition, our bylaws state that, “The Council shall focus on the future and vision for the Church.” It’s not always easy to see beyond the current challenge; nevertheless, your Council representatives are working hard to prepare for our future together as United Community Church. Some of our “future focused” discussions/activities include:

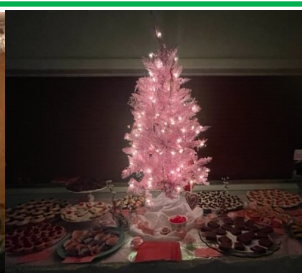


- ◆ Sponsoring the Healthy Interpersonal Relationships for Congregational Life session with Claire Bamberg following worship on Sunday, February 26. The goal of this session was to provide skills, tools, and understandings that we can all use to maintain clear and effective communication with each other within the church and in our personal relationships. Many people who attended the session found it helpful and hoped to be able to review the information again. Whether you missed the opportunity to attend the live session or want to study the information in more detail, here are the links.
  - ◆ Recording of presentation:  
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/gpg9ez2xk72bbp6/Healthy%20interpersonal%20relationships.mp4?dl=0>
  - ◆ Slide deck:  
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/cof06bifr15e3xz/Healthy%20interpersonal%20relationships%20for%20Congregational%20Life.pdf?dl=0>
- ◆ Visioning: Significant time during our monthly Council meetings has been devoted to visioning with Pastor Andrew. Some of the results of this process have been presented through sermons and in these newsletters. We hope you will study and respond to this visioning process so that we can build a future together.
- ◆ Budgeting: The Stewardship Ministry is currently preparing a proposed budget for FY’24 based on our current financial situation and our vision for the future. The Council will be reviewing this budget proposal over the next two months so that the budget presented at Annual Meeting in May will fully reflect our church’s vision for the next year and beyond.
- ◆ 20-year projections: The Staff and Stewardship Ministry have been working to develop 20-year maintenance plans/projections for all church properties. The Council is using these projections as we try to envision how our finances, properties, budgets, and endowments will be impacted in the years ahead.
- ◆ Nominating: A nominating committee of church members has been formed to develop a slate of officers and Ministry members for the next year. This slate will be voted at Annual Meeting in May and will be responsible for moving the church’s vision forward for FY’24 and beyond. Nominating committee members are seeking to match individual gifts and talents with the needs of each Ministry or office. When you are asked by a member of the nominating committee to serve on a Ministry or as an officer, please know that you have been specifically chosen for your unique talents and prayerfully consider accepting the invitation to serve.

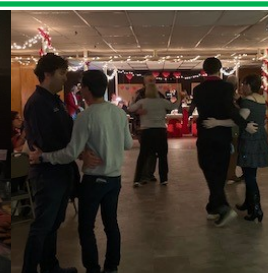
As we continue to grow together as United Community Church let us each listen for the Spirit’s urging and work to realize our vision of being Christ’s body in this community. Blessings for our ministry together,  
Phil Brown, moderator



Swing North Big Band Under the direction of Phil Brown



More Desserts



All ages dancing



## Ministry Reports

### Worship & Care

Although we were a small group we celebrated the new year January 1, 2023, with worship and communion at our regular 10 am time. On January 6, Epiphany, the sanctuary was swinging with the Swing North Big Band as they retold the story of Jesus' birth and the visit of the Magi using jazz standards. It was great to see the sanctuary full and feel the enjoyment of not only the musicians but the audience, too. We have a chance to enjoy the Swing North Big Band again on February 14 from 7—9 pm here at United Community Church. Dessert and Dancing will be held in the fellowship hall. Bring your favorite person and enjoy!

Coming up in February will be Ash Wednesday on February 22. We will be having a short meditative worship service in the sanctuary to begin the season of Lent. Instead of giving up something for Lent, why not add a good habit, help a neighbor, make our world a better place.

Thank you to all who volunteer to make our worship meaningful and a shared experience!

### Outreach

What a wonderful time everyone had at the Dessert and Dancing event on Valentine's Day. We estimate that we had 70—80 people come and enjoy the Swing North Big Band. Our share of the donations was over \$200 to be used for our local missions! A Big **THANK YOU** to all who helped with set up, clean up and especially making all the delicious desserts. One Great Hour of Sharing offerings will be received on March 19. Members of the Outreach Ministry have been sharing information about OGHS. Check out page 4 for more information. Outreach's next meeting is March 14<sup>th</sup>, 7 pm.

### Spiritual Formation & Nurture



Lenten Study began on February 28 at 10 am in the Chapel. We are excited to announce the long awaited return of Sunday School. It will look a little different from the past. We will meet on the second and fourth Sunday of every month. Classes will be for youth 6th grade and below. Following the anthem we will go to the back conference room and



read the Bible lessons together and then do a craft or project together. We can then meet our families for coffee hour. Erika is looking for an adult volunteer to help as we need two adults in the class as per Safe Church Policy. Our first session will be on March 12. Confirmation classes begins on March 5<sup>th</sup>. We are excited that we will be partnering with the Littleton UCC. For more information email Pastor Rev. Andrew Ponder William at [UCCSTJpator@gmail.com](mailto:UCCSTJpator@gmail.com)

Adult workshops around preparing for the future. (Signing up for Medicare, Advance directives, pre planning funerals and the 5 wishes) are in the works. If you have an opinion on the best time to hold these workshops, contact Erika at the office.

### Stewardship

February has been a month of paperwork, paperwork and more paperwork. We are changing our insurance company and the new company gave us 10+ pages of questions to fill out. We have had to do some research into replacement values of many of our items in the church and on the church properties. We have also been working on the 20 year plan for the church, apartment buildings, and food shelf. Again this has involved hours of research, discussion, and of course paperwork. Many projects had been put off and we are now trying to catch up with them. Foaming the apartment buildings and food shelf is already shown savings in oil usage.



### Reach Out

Erika and Andrew attended a NECKA staff meeting, opening up lines of communication on how we can work together to support the community. We learned of the additional services that NECKA can provide. They also gained a better understanding of what we provide. Natisha from ABC & LOL daycare came to refill our diaper bank. She informed us that the daycare is now the diaper bank depot. Pastor Andrew has been attending the St. Johnsbury Community Partners meeting. Frannie's and Ted's cupboard continues to be used. Donations are always welcome. In February, we assisted with 2 gas cards, diapers for 4 families and gave out 10 COVID tests.



### Apartments

We were able to finish the 20 year projection for the apartments and will now be working on scheduling repairs that need to be done.



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](http://UCCSTJ.com)

[UCCSTJ.org](http://UCCSTJ.org)

[Unitedcommunity.church](http://Unitedcommunity.church)





For over 70 years, the one Great Hour of Sharing Offering also known as Week of Compassion, has been helping American and Canadian Christians bring God's hope and healing to people both in the US and around the world. OGHS has raised funds to support domestic and international development, fight poverty and its consequences, and bring aid and relief to communities torn by war or ravaged by natural disasters. OGHS helps organizations confront food insecurity and hunger. They partner with other organizations to provide immediate aid to those affected by disasters, poverty or fleeing conflict. OGHS provides food, water, shelter, and companionship during times of distress. They also support soup kitchens and food pantries.

Besides immediate aid, OGHS allows families to plant crops, produce fertilizers and receive the physical seeds needed for planting. They also teach women and men the practices of irrigation and sustainable farming as well as teaching about food and nutrition, hygiene, waste management and environmental protection.

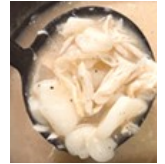
Esmerelda Robies lives in rural Honduras. She and her neighbors participate in a "pass chain" program. A family receives a pregnant pig, sheep or cow; families are taught how to feed and care for the animals. When the next piglet, lamb, or calf is born, it is passed on to another family which in turn will do the same. "A dream we have as a family is to have a micro-business for the production and sale of meat," Esmerelda says. Families now envision a future not possible before. This is just one part of a program to improve food security. This program and its components are made possible because of your contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing.

Envelopes are in the pews or you can send a check made out to United Community Church and put OGHS in the memo.



**Special Events  
Coming up  
Don't miss them**

**Friday, March 24 Chowder Supper**  
Come have some homemade chowder in special United Community Church mugs that you can take home! Chowder will be served from 5:30—7:30 pm



**Sunday, April 2 Palm Sunday**  
*Hallelujah!* Wave your palm as we celebrate the beginning of Holy Week.

**Thursday, April 6 Maundy Thursday  
Dinner Church and Tenebrae**  
Participate in a remembrance of the Last Supper and Jesus' night in Gethsemane and the service of Darkness. Reservations are requested so we have enough food and seating around the table. You can call the church office at 802-748-2603 and leave a message or email at: [Unitedcommunitychurchucc@gmail.com](mailto:Unitedcommunitychurchucc@gmail.com)



**Friday, April 7 Good Friday Prayer & Meditation**  
The sanctuary will be open for personal prayer and meditation from 9 am to 2 pm. Devotionals will be available for those who wish to use them



**Saturday, April 8 Easter Vigil**  
The sanctuary will be available from 8—10 pm for those who wish to continue their reflections on Holy Week and how it is a part of your faith and life.



**Sunday, April 9 Easter Early Service 7 am**  
Walk the road in Mount Pleasant Cemetery from Good Friday to Easter and the road to Emmaus and break bread together. Easter Breakfast will follow at United Community Church.



**Sunday, April 9 Easter Worship 10 am**  
Celebrate Jesus' Resurrection with joyful music, flowers, and scripture. New Members will be received during this service. If you are interested in becoming a member of United Community Church, see Pastor Andrew.



## Confirmation Class Begins

This year confirmation will be offered in conjunction with the Congregational Church of Lancaster and First Congregational Church in Littleton. Pastor Andrew, Pastor Pam, and Paster Peter will be sharing the instruction allowing the confirmands to experience a wider community of believers. March 5th will be the initial meeting followed by classes on the first Sunday of the month for April, May and June. During the summer classes will meet on July 23, August 27 and September 10 culminating with a weekend retreat, September 29—October 1 at Horton Center. A Service of Confirmation at each congregation will be held on Sunday, October 15.



## Lenten Bible Study and Sunday School begin

Tuesday mornings in the tower chapel, the Lenten Bible study convenes. Using the Lenten lectionary, students will discuss the meanings of the scripture and how it applies to their lives. Pastor Andrew is leading this Bible study. All are welcome to come, you do not have to attend every Tuesday if it doesn't fit with your schedule.

Sunday School for students grade 6 and under will be offered on the second and fourth Sundays of the month. Students will be in worship until after the anthem and then adjourn to the conference room to read the lectionary scripture, discuss it, and also have a chance to do a related craft. Erika is leading this class however she needs a second adult so we conform to the Safe Church policy. If you are interested in helping see Erika in the office.



## Sign up for Summer camp now

Students going into grade 3 and up  
Scholarships available see Erika  
Listing of camps are available at:

<https://hortoncenter.org/summer-camp-sessions/>



## Offerings

	Feb	July-Feb (YTD)
Offering	4,303.05	38, 954.05
In Kind offerings	0.00	1,158.70
Loose Offerings	153.05	2,029.10
VANCO Offerings	200.00	2,652.75
<b>Total Offerings</b>	<b>4,656.10</b>	<b>44,794.60</b>
Directed Donations	0.00	3,940.27
Wider Mission	293.00	1479.00
Local Mission	0.00	1428.85
<b>Total Mission</b>	<b>293.00</b>	<b>2907.85</b>
	<b>Mission</b>	<b>Offering</b>
<b>2023</b>	\$4,780.00	\$70,000.00
<b>% of budgeted amt</b>	60.8%	64.0%

## Projects from staff:

- Lollipop Wednesday
- Assisted Worship and Care with coverage and planning services.
- Erika & Paul meets weekly with stewardship.
- Welcome bags
- Helped people with questions about building use and scheduling
- Staff development
- Working on 20 yr projection for all buildings
- Organizing and cleaning "SS room"
- Advertising
- Power point for worship service
- website/ facebook
- Contacting contractors for bids on various projects.
- Supporting and advertising community lunch
- Marketing
- Gas cards
- Maintaining and opening of chapel.
- newsletter


\*\*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](http://uccstj.com).



## A seasonal reminder

Signs of spring remind us of God's promises.

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**Directions:** Use the picture code and clues to complete Isaiah 61:11, NIV.

plants grow here

to coil and jump  
*(also a season of the year)*

to expand and get bigger

seeds are planted in this

when watered, these make plants

another word for seedling

For as the \_\_\_\_\_ makes the \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ come up and a \_\_\_\_\_ causes  
 \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_, so the  
 Sovereign LORD will make righteousness  
 and praise \_\_\_\_\_ up before all nations.

ISAIAH 61:11, NIV

# Puzzle!

Slow down and uncover this message and Bible verse, using the code below.

A 1 B	F 2 G	K 3 L	O 4 R	U 5 V
D E	H I	M N	S T	W Y

W  
 5 1    3 5 4 4

4 1 3 3    4 4    2 4 1

1 3 1    3 2 4 4 1 3

2 4 4    2 4 1


" 1 1    4 4 2 3 3    1 3 1

3 3 4 5    4 2 1 4

2    1 3    2 4 1"

Answer: We must talk to God and listen for God. "Be still, and know that I am God." (Psalm 46:10)

## SPRINGTIME SNACKS



Whip up a plate of these cute, healthy treats!

**What you need:**

- Celery sticks
- Cherry tomatoes
- Cucumber circles
- Olives
- Cream cheese spread
- Fresh basil leaves (optional)
- Adult help

**What you do:**

1. Have an adult help you wash and cut the veggies.
2. Spread cream cheese inside the celery rods.
3. Place a cucumber circle upright in the cream cheese to make a bug body.
4. Add the tomato as a head.
5. Arrange basil leaves on a plate and place the veggie bugs on them.
6. Making different-shaped bugs with your favorite veggies. Enjoy!



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Easter Flowers

		# of flowers	Total
7" Easter Lily/ 1 plant per pot	\$14.00	_____	_____
8" Easter Lily/ 3 plants per pot	\$27.50	_____	_____
10" Easter Lily/ 4 plants per pot	\$36.50	_____	_____
7" Asiatic Lily	\$15.00	_____	_____
8" Oriental Lily	\$23.50	_____	_____
7" Hydrangea pink	\$22.50	_____	_____
7" Hydrangea blue	\$22.50	_____	_____
8" Azalea	\$29.50	_____	_____
4" Hyacinths	\$ 7.00	_____	_____
4" Iris	\$ 7.00	_____	_____
4" Mini Daffs	\$ 7.00	_____	_____
4" Crocus	\$ 7.00	_____	_____
7" Tulips	\$12.50	_____	_____
7" Daffodils	\$12.50	_____	_____
8" Tulips	\$16.50	_____	_____
8" Daffodils	\$16.50	_____	_____
10" Tulip	\$28.50	_____	_____
<b>Total</b>		_____	_____



**Flowers are given in memory / honor (circle one) of**

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UNITED COMMUNITY CHURCH

## CHURCH APPAREL ORDER FORM



Hoodie (\$35)

Small

Medium

Large

XL

XXL

Hat (\$20)



Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please make out a check to United Community Church and put "apparel" in memo line. If paying in cash please put in an envelope and label it "apparel order" and provide your name. Please submit this form and payment to Church Office.

**Add up your total:**



UNITED COMMUNITY CHURCH

## CHURCH APPAREL ORDER FORM



Cathedral T-Shirt (\$25)

Women's

Men's

Small

Medium

Large

XL

XXL

St. J Scale T-Shirt (\$25)

Women's

Men's

Small

Medium

Large

XL

XXL



### White Market "2023 Coins for Community" Organizations Voting

White Market offers it's customers the option of rounding up their grocery total and donating the extra to community organizations. Voting for the monthly recipients of the 2023 Coins for community is now taking place. Go to [Whitemarket.com](http://Whitemarket.com); use the tab Coins for Community Poll; Fill out the form and vote for your favorites—this year "United Community Church Meal Site" is one of the choices!!! You can only vote once so choose wisely.





### MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- 3/3 Andrew McCulloch  
Dale Morse
- 3/5 Gehrig Beck
- 3/6 Jonathan R. Potter
- 3/7 Marcus Jacobus
- 3/9 Elisa Lucozzi
- 3/13 Robin Burnash
- 3/15 Andrew Benoit
- 3/17 Virginia Cremer
- 3/22 Lance Abella
- 3/23 Peter Schweigert
- 3/25 Jo Braman
- 3/29 Connor Decker
- 3/30 Kathy Creaser
- 3/31 Dale Steen



Jonah Raser placed second overall in the regional math competition on Saturday, February 11. He was also a member of the St. Johnsbury School team which placed first. They will advance to the State Math Counts competition in April.



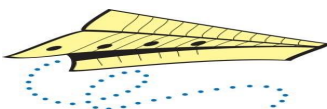
**After Church  
Choir Rehearsals  
March 5 & 19**



Ashley Scherer was accepted into Upward Bound., a program designed to assist high school students to prepare for college entrance.

### In our Thoughts and Prayers

- |               |   |                         |
|---------------|---|-------------------------|
| Julie Brisson |  | Kim O'Connor            |
| Bob Chapman   |   | Raser family            |
| Mary Feron    |   | Lorraine Scherer        |
| Duane Knight  |   | Pam Smart               |
| Joan Knutsen  |   | Gail Warnaar and family |
| Ed Magnus     |   |                         |



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

**United Community Church**

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



**March 12**



**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>

**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

**March Lectionary**



**March 5**

Genesis 12:1-4a  
Psalm 121  
Romans 4:1-5, 13-17  
John 3:1-17



**March 12**

Exodus 17:1-7  
Psalm 95  
Romans 5:1-11  
John 4:5-42



**March 19**

1 Samuel 16:1-13  
Psalm 23  
Ephesians 5:8-14  
John 9:1-41



**March 26**

Ezekial 37:1-14  
Psalm 130  
Romans 8:6-11  
John 11:1-45

