

UNITED COMMUNITY CURRENT



SEPTEMBER 2023

Email: Unitedcommunitychurchucc@gmail.com

Website: UnitedCommunity.church



Pastor's Ponderings

On Sunday, September 24 we will celebrate our Confirmands. Since March the youth of United Community Church, First Congregation Littleton, and the Congregational Church of Lancaster have been gathering one Sunday afternoon a month to learn more about the UCC and to explore their faith together.



Here are some pictures from our sessions together. The highlight of our journey was when the youth determined what social concerns they were most called to witness about. They used their personal convictions based on what their faith has led them to believe. We got lots of great horn honks when we shared our signs out in front of First Congregational Church in Littleton.



Please join us in worship on September 24 to formally welcome our Confirmands into full membership with United Community Church and the United Church of Christ.

Blessings,

Rev. Andrew Ponder-Williams

(Left to Right—front row: Ashley Scherer, Elijah Scherer; first step: Jessica Sanville, Luke Raser, Jonah Raser, Pastor Peter; top step: Pastor Andrew, Corinne)



Church Council Members

Phil Brown, Moderator
stjmusic@sover.net

Alice Kitchel, Assistant Moderator
alicekitchel@gmail.com

Elisa Rowell, Treasurer
elisamay1978@gmail.com

Helene Millas, Assistant Treasurer
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Karen Sayles, Clerk
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Kathy Brown, Assistant Clerk
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Pam Dearborn, past Moderator,
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Pam Dearborn, Member at Large
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Gail Warnaar, Member at Large
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Karen Sayles, Worship & Care
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Kris Norris, Stewardship
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Vicki Scherer Spiritual Formation & Nurture
vickyscherer@gmail.com

Alice Kitchel, Outreach
alicekitchel@gmail.com



Supporting our “Next Generation Leader”

Your Church Council has agreed to support our Pastor in his participation in the Next Generation Leadership Initiative sponsored by the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance. The Next Generation Leadership Initiative (NGLI) equips, energizes, and empowers younger United

Church of Christ, local church pastors to build vibrant congregations that change lives and further God’s mission in the world.



“NGLI seeks to honor and challenge younger clergy who demonstrate significant potential, who have accepted the high calling to parish ministry, who view parish ministry as a career path, and are willing to make a long-term commitment to service in congregational settings of the United Church of Christ. Those selected for NGLI will be provided with advanced training to hone their skills and gifts to serve as transformational leaders.”

Pastor Andrew applied to participate in NGLI with the blessing and support of the Church Council. Of the 60 applicants, Andrew was selected as one of the ten who will begin this 6-year program on September 17. Andrew will be in Memphis for this program, returning to St. Johnsbury to lead us in worship on September 24. Andrew will also be using some vacation time in conjunction with this week of training. We will have guest preachers for worship on September 10 and 17.

As a participant in the NGLI program, Andrew has agreed to several conditions including to:

- Be committed to long-term ministry in local churches of the United Church of Christ.
- Communicate throughout the entirety of the program with the congregation regarding NGLI expectations, experiences, and learnings so that these insights may enhance congregational vitality and outreach.

As Andrew’s sponsoring congregation we agree to support him and participate in the program by:

- Partnering with our pastor as they ask new questions, offer new ideas, practice new skills in ministry, and advance the mission and vision of the congregation.
- Provide the time for our pastor to attend NGLI events, which occur twice a year for approximately one week each in Years 1-4. Years 5-6 are more self-directed but will also likely need time away to study and deepen their spiritual practices. NGLI participation is continuing education time, not vacation since the pastor will be hard at work learning and growing.
- Providing for worship leadership, pastoral care coverage, and other critical ministerial duties while our pastor is away.

Your Church Council agreed to support Andrew’s application to and participation in NGLI because we believe that this program will not only help Andrew become a stronger and more effective pastor; it will also help our congregation become a stronger and more effective church within the St. Johnsbury community.

As we all grow through this program there will be many opportunities for us to stretch and deepen our ministry together. Right now we ask for your support and understanding during Andrew’s time away, September 9 - 23. Most questions can be addressed to the church office. For pressing pastoral care or facilities issues please contact Phil Brown, ucstjmoderator@gmail.com, or Kris Norris, stewardshipucstj@gmail.com, respectively.

Seeking to strengthen our ministry together,
Phil Brown, moderator



St. Jay Jazz Quartet, under the direction of Phil Brown, provided special music on August 27. Originally scheduled to be outside on the South Lawn, it was moved inside due to Mother Nature giving us more rain. We enjoyed the jazz arrangements of our traditional hymns.

Ministry Reports

Worship & Care

August was a month for special music in worship. On August 6th Maple Leaf 7 joined us, on the 13th Pat, Alice, and Pam provided the music, on the 20th we had Luke and Ellie Raser providing special music and on the 27th it was the St J Jazz Quartet who joined us. A huge thank you to all for making August a stand-out month of unique music! August 27th had been planned to be an outdoor service but, as seemed to be the case this summer, Mother Nature brought us rain and cancelled those plans! Maybe we will be able to be outdoors once this fall before we settle indoors for the winter...

In September we will have 2 guest ministers join us while Andrew takes part in the Next Generation Leadership Initiative conference (with some vacation time too). September 10th Ann Hockridge will be our guest minister and Jay Sprout will join us for September 17th. Confirmation Sunday will be held on September 24th.

It is September (real soon!) so both Voice Choir and Bell Choir are starting up again after a summer recess! Choir will begin rehearsals Sunday, September 3rd at 9 am before church and after church at 11:30. Bell Choir started rehearsals last night (Aug 30th) and will rehearse Wednesdays 6:00 to 7:30. New members are welcome to join either or both!

Finally, as always, there will be a need for participants for weekly worship – readers, greeters, acolytes. Please contact Karen Sayles, kmsayles@yahoo.com, if you want to volunteer (and don't be surprised to receive an email on occasion!) Thank you to everyone who makes worship meaningful!

Outreach

Where did the summer go? It's September and time to start planning for our fall activities. Outreach will be heading up the "Fall for St. Johnsbury" lunch on October 7th. We will be offering quiche, fruit salad, bread, beverage, and apple crisp from 11 am to 1 pm. If you can help with either baking, set up, serving, clean up see Beth Norris or Alice Kitchel. Outreach is also beginning to plan our Haunted Sanctuary event for Halloween. We will be needing volunteers to set up, "act" and clean up this fun night for all the St. Johnsbury ghouls and goblins. October is also the month that we collect the special



mission offering, Neighbors in Need. See page 6 for more information.

Looking ahead, November brings us Thanksgiving and we will be asking for assistance with this community dinner. If you have extra Christmas cards—like the ones you get in the mail from organizations looking for your donation— that you don't want, we can arrange to have them donated to either the food shelf clients or the correctional center. They can be dropped off at the office during office hours.

Spiritual Formation & Nurture

Confirmation class had their last class on August 27th. The United Community Church students will be confirmed on Sunday September 24th. We will be starting up Sunday School classes on September 10th. Again like last year we will leave the worship service after the anthem to go to our class. Sunday School will meet on the second and fourth Sundays. The second Sunday of every month the Spiritual Formation Ministry will meet after church and fellowship time.



Stewardship

Any thanks to the volunteers who have been helping out as we transition to using Garrett's Properties to manage the apartment buildings. We have a cleaning service for the church building that is working with Jess. For those who haven't noticed, the north side of the roof was redone all in a week's time. Amazing to see them take off the old and put on the new one. We are still fundraising to repay the endowment fund for the new roof. We have had several donations for the roof and we thank you very much for your assistance in paying for the roof.

As the fall begins, we start to think about all the cool and cold weather chores that need to be done. Just as a reminder, if you haven't had a chance to turn in your pledge, we'll still take it.

Reach Out

This month we assisted with 3 gas cards, 6 requests for diapers and one food assistance on a day when the food shelf wasn't open. Looking forward we would like to have some warm socks and mittens/gloves that we can distribute during the colder months ahead.

(continued on page 4)



Have you visited our Facebook page? [UnitedCommunityChurchUCC](#)

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

UCCSTJ.com

UCCSTJ.org

Unitedcommunity.church



Ministry reports *(continued from page 3)*

Apartments



Apartments are now managed by Garrett properties. We now provide dumpsters for trash and recycling for tenants and the church. We have switched all buildings to Fred's propane. I would like to thank Kris Norris and Randall Northrop for assisting me with this transition.

Archives

We have started to go through boxes of random stuff that has been placed in the archive room. There are now extra file cabinets to file away more of the North Church bulletins. Archives has an email: stjuccarchives@gmail.com



Meal Site



Hello fellow ministers of the United Community Church! August was a busy month with 864 delicious and nutritious meals served from 8/2 to

8/25. Of that number, 231 meals were in the form of sack lunches that were carried to the Salvation Army store so that folks who are without homes could find a little love; because, for our crew at the mealsite, food is love. During that time, we also showed a little love to the roofing crew as we fed them every day that they were here risking their lives on the roof of our beautiful church home.

Thank you for the work you put into the Carrot Project! We now have a freezer full of vacuum-packed carrots which is a great gift. We also have a nicely stocked larder thanks to your generosity. As I said in church, "you got us through the summer!" If it's part of your routine to drop food in our collection box, please continue to do so. We use everything! Bread is a hot commodity, and we will always welcome extra.

One busy morning, our kitchen was visited by three lovely children and their dad who came down to peel and chop carrots. Hearing their chatter as they worked reminded me of three of Jesus's most important messages: "Love God, Love your Neighbor, and Feed My Sheep!" Participating in the mealsite is a 3-fer!



Lollipop Wednesday has begun again now that school has started. Anyone who wishes to join Erika and Barbara from 2:30—3 pm handing out lollipops to school students returning home are welcome.

Offerings

	Jul/Aug	July-AugYTD)
Offering	17,134.60	17,134.60
Other directed offerings	349.91	349.91
Roof Fund	1,264.23	1,264.23
Community meal	1,546.66	1,546.66
Total Offerings	20,495.40	20,495.40

Wider Mission	115.00	115.00
Local Mission	95.00	95.00
Total Mission	210.00	210.00

	Mission	Offering
2023	\$4,780.00	\$70,000.00
% of budgeted amt	4.4%	29.3%

Projects from staff:

- Sunday morning services slide show
- Starting a membership drive
- Assist with worship planning
- Addressing current issues with building use
- Moving archive room
- Organize third floor
- Support members of congregation
- Help with movie nights
- Worship and care
- Order supplies for meal site
- Lollipop Wednesday has started back
- Transition of management of apartments
- Gas cards
- Welcomed church cleaning company
- Put stewardship in contact with security
- Performed background checks
- Sharing Church and Dr. Bob history
- Organized confirmation field trip
- Organized special music
- Coordinate maintenance request

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!

Starting on the bold word, follow the maze to read a Bible passage. Move from one box to another if the sides or corners touch. Some boxes are used multiple times.

PROVERBS 2:3-5, NIV

Answer: If you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. Proverbs 2:3-5, NIV

PUZZLE

A PATH TO PRAYER

God's Word offers lots of insights about how to pray.

Directions: Use the code to fill in the blanks and complete a Bible passage about prayer.

1:3-4, NIV

Answer: I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy. Philippians 1:3-4, NIV

SEARCHING FOR SILVER

Godly, biblical wisdom is more valuable than gold or silver. Make this do-it-yourself toy to practice your searching skills.

What you need:

- 12 small, smooth rocks
- An empty, clean egg carton
- Paintbrush
- Acrylic paint (gold or silver)
- Black permanent marker

What you do:

1. Clean the rocks and egg carton. Place newspaper on a table to protect it from paint.
2. Paint all sides of the rocks and carton. Let dry. Add a second coat, if desired.
3. When rocks are dry, number each rock (1-12) with marker. Place rocks in the carton.
4. Play hide-and-seek with a friend. Take turns hiding the rocks in a room, sandbox or backyard. Give clues, if needed, and count the rocks as they're returned.
5. Use your imagination to incorporate a treasure hunt into study time or family devotions.



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST
NEIGHBORS IN NEED 2023
ucornet

Neighbors in Need offering collected in October

In 2023, the Neighbors in Need “BEHOLD!” theme continues. This year’s focus is on environmental justice. Plastics, electronics, and other non-compostable wastes are being shipped across, and even tossed into, our waterways, launched into space, as well as buried in landfills. As people of faith, we believe these egregious acts are sinful and unholy. We must be better stewards of our planet! One-third of the offering

supports Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds are used by Justice and Witness Ministries to provide grants to UCC churches and organizations as well as supporting a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects.

Envelopes will be in the pews during September and October. You can also donate via check, make it out to United Community Church and put NIN in the memo.



Special Events Coming up Don't miss them

September 10 Worship service
Guest preacher, Rev. Ann Hockridge

September 17 Worship service
Guest preacher, Rev. Jay Sprout

September 24 Worship service
Confirmation of Jonah Raser, Luke Raser,
Jessica Sanville, Ashley Scherer

October 7 Fall for St. Johnsbury
Community Lunch (volunteers needed)

October 29 after worship service
Decorate for Haunted Sanctuary

October 31 Haunted Sanctuary

Maple Leaf Seven August 6, 2023



Directed by Phil Brown (*right*), the Maple Leaf Seven provided Dixie-land music for our August 6 worship service. What a joyful time!



Dear Friends,



You may have been asking, “Where’s Jo?” Well, Jo Braman has moved to Connecticut to be near her daughter, Dawn. If you would like to reach out to her, her address and phone number are available in the church office.

Dawn Feole

Pam Smart is back in St Johnsbury! That’s great news! If you would like to contact her, her address and phone number are also available in the church office.

And, if you know of anyone in the congregation who would appreciate calls or notes, please let either the church office (802=748=2603) or Karen Sayles (kmsayles@yahoo.com) know. Worship and CARE is here to reach out!



SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 9/3 Mary Leadbeater
- 9/4 David Reynolds
- 9/6 Paul Scavitto
- 9/10 Pat Campbell
- Casey Leadbeater
- 9/13 Diane Nelson
- 9/17 Dan Brodien
- 9/18 Danielle Locklin
- Paul Soltysiak
- Andrew Ponder
- Williams
- 9/19 Amelia Evans
- 9/20 Dianne Lambert
- 9/22 David Evans
- 9/24 John Michalski
- 9/27 Kelly Colgrove
- 9/28 Helene Radley
- 9/30 Dianne Wylie



SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 9/12 Nancy and David Reynolds
- 9/14 Cindy and Andrew McCulloch
- 9/20 Paige and Peter Crosby
- 9/25 Helene and Rich Radley



Virginia Mae Kimball Johnson

July 7, 1925 - August 13, 2023



CHOIR REHEARSALS
9 AM SUNDAYS
11:30 AM—12:30 PM
SEPTEMBER 3



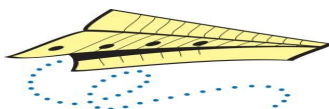
UNITED COMMUNITY
HANDBELL ENSEMBLE
REHEARSALS
6—7:30 PM WEDNESDAYS



SUNDAY SCHOOL PRE K—6TH GRADE
2ND AND 4TH SUNDAYS
STUDENTS LEAVE SANCTUARY FOR
CLASS FOLLOWING THE ANTHEM

In our Thoughts and Prayers

- | | |
|----------------|----------------------|
| Julie Brisson | Joan Knutsen |
| Bob Chapman | Ed Magnus |
| Mary Feron | Sandy & Donna Murray |
| Johnson family | Pam Smart |
| Lamont family | Kim Wood |



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>

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

CONTACT INFORMATION

<i>United Community Phone number</i>	748-2603
<i>Email</i>	UnitedCommunityChurchUCC@gmail.com
<i>Website</i>	UnitedCommunity.church



September Lectionary



September 3

Exodus 3:1-15
Psalm 105:1-6
Romans 12:9-21
Matthew 16:21-28



September 10

Exodus 12:1-14
Psalm 149
Romans 13:8-14
Matthew 18:15-20



September 17

Exodus 14:19-31
Psalm 114
Romans 14:1-12
Matthew 18:21-35



September 24

Exodus 16:2-15
Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45
Philippians 1:21-30
Matthew 20:1-16

