



CHURCH LIFE

JULY 2026



**UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
OPEN & AFFIRMING
MIDDLEBURYUCC.ORG**



FROM THE PASTOR

Happy summer everyone! I hope you're getting the chance to enjoy the warmer weather.

We are continuing our tradition of combined summer worship with St. George's Episcopal Church, just down the hill from us. Our worship services will remain at 10am throughout the summer except for the services in July where we are at St. George's. Here is the schedule:

July 5 worship at 9:30am @ St. George's

July 12 worship at 9:30am @ St. George's

July 19 worship at 10am @ MCC

July 26 worship a 10am @ MCC

A quick update about our capital campaign, Foundations for Our Future, as I write this article in mid June, we have initial pledges in totaling about 62% of our \$350,000 goal. The campaign mailing to most of our friends and members has just been dropped off at the Post Office. Church leadership and I are very optimistic we will meet our goal, and we have been blown away by the generosity of people who have pledged so far. We look to have pledges for the campaign by Homecoming Sunday on September 13th, so we can celebrate this great success and the 230th anniversary of our church.

As we approach the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, I have been reflecting a lot about what it means to celebrate American independence in these troubled and uncertain times. I love so much about what American stands for on its best days and what we often hope to stand for in our best dreams, but I sometimes find the gap between our best dreams and cold, hard reality makes it difficult for me to feel the same sort of uncomplicated love and patriotism I remember from a large part of my post 9/11 childhood.

I have been reminded of a sort of unofficial motto and guiding principle of our Reformed branch of Protestantism: "Ecclesia

reformata, semper reformanda.” It’s a Latin phrase that’s colloquially translated as “the church reformed, ever reforming.” However, it’s better translated as “the church reformed, ever being reformed” since that last verb is passive.

One of the core theological claims of Reformed Protestantism is that human beings are inherently flawed and fallible; we are sinners. We are going to fall short, mess up, and miss the mark; it’s an inherent part of being human. As a result of this flawed human nature, the Church Universal, made up of human beings, is similarly flawed.

What this means for us as individual Christians and for the Church as a whole is that we are always in the process of becoming. We are always in the process of being reformed by God’s action. God loves us and the Church just as we are, but God loves us too much to let us stay that way. Through God’s grace, the life of true faith is a process of being reformed, of being made more as God would have us be.

There is a four hour PBS documentary on the U.S. women’s suffrage movement that’s available free on YouTube. I’ve been watching it lately, and I appreciated how the documentary acknowledges both the heroic work of so many women and also how the issue of racism pervaded the movement and even the beliefs of some of its best leaders. White women and black women were drawn together in solidarity in some moments and pulled apart by racism at others. Would all women win the right to vote or would it be easier, better for white women to try to get the vote first? Did it make sense to leave black women behind so at least white women could vote? This back and forth wager between holding true to the conviction that women as a whole deserved the vote and the political expediency of needing to create alliances and gain the support of certain white and white Southern allies is a through line of the American women’s suffrage movement.

Watching that documentary for me was a good reminder that America is always in a process of becoming, just like the Church, and just like all of us. America is always being changed and reformed because the

gap between our founding values of equality, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness and reality has always been there. I might not be able to always celebrate and be proud of the America we have at particular moments, but there is so much to celebrate in our process of becoming more what the America of our best days and best dreams could be and hopefully one day will be.

One of our most beloved patriotic hymns “America the Beautiful” is actually at its core a sincere prayer for this ongoing process of becoming for our nation, and you can see this best with the end of the second verse:

America! America! God mend thine every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self control, thy liberty in law.

So, on this 250th anniversary of independence, my prayer is that God keeps working mending all those flaws so that one day the America we are on our best day, the America we hope to be, is actually who we are every day, with true love and brotherhood from sea to shining sea.

Peace,
Katrina Manzi
Minister



THE DEACONS' BENCH

The Annual MCC Strawberry Festival was a lot of fun, and huge success! This event is not only a (successful) fund-raiser for the church, but also a great source of fellowship among our members, and a real treat for the community. Speaking with folks who came, everyone was having a wonderful time, and the food (newly updated recipe for the strawberries and cream, and the switch to the Perfect Picnic Box) got rave reviews.

To pull off something that big takes a lot of cheerful, willing hands and hearts and we had that in spades. So a huge thank you to all of the following 63 (!!) volunteers who helped out with the Strawberry Festival in some way... and in some cases, in many ways! The support ranged from planning, making arrangements for storage, to making a lot of great hoagies, biscuits, whipped cream, preparing strawberries, kids' games and activities, serving, sales, signs, shopping, set-up and clean up, and providing music. Thanks also to the many folks who donated things for the terrific raffles and silent auctions and manned those tables.

Ellen Aronheim – for everything!
Janine Sullivan-Wiley
Kent Sullivan-Wiley
John DiCorpo
Diane Bernard
Carol Rollins
Dave Zold
Kalman Zold
Austin Zold
Sean Coughlin
Ian Coughlin
Josh Coughlin
Erika Carrington
Scottie Carrington
Deb Barlow
Norma Solberg
Ginny Grandell
Robbie Kamide
Jean Peterson
Meg (Sena) McGovern
Pam Albon
Roz Teleposky
Shari Morris
Donna Hine
Coreine Fabian

Paul Fabian
Insook Kim
Liz Walker
Doug Walker
Gabe Walker
Sam Walker
Edie Hardwick
Mya Lance
John Lance
JoLee Weimar
Brenda Romaniello
Cathy Albert
Stephanie Tiso
Meredith Tiso
Natalie Tiso
Grace Avcollie
Deb Barlow
Stephen Dunn
Dara Dunn
Tait Dunn
Tess Dunn
Jane Walsh
Daniel Weise
Charlie Weise
Melanie Penasi
Bill Cooper

Michele Finn
Drew Kwashnak
Sara Hubbard
Josh Hubbard
Callie Hubbard
Charis Hubbard

Thea Andrews
Shaelyn Walsh
Keela Walsh
Sal Sena
Chris Renado
Bob Giannini

Special thanks to Pastor Katrina, Sarah Kwashnak for office support, and Alltown Fresh (stored the prepared berries for us) and Costco (let us order ahead)

With deepest appreciation (and a sigh of relief)
Janine Sullivan-Wiley

FROM THE MISSION BOARD

Our monthly food contribution to GWIM will be Jelly.

We had a successful Strawberry Festival for the Missions Raffle, Silent Auction and Tag Sale. Just a big thank you to all those who donated baskets and items for baskets and Silent Auction. The Silent Auction alone generated \$495.00. We are still waiting on figure for the Raffle Baskets and Tag Sale.

A reminder that again this summer we will support the Wellmore Foundation with book bags and school supplies in August. Can't believe I'm writing this now but you know time flies by in the summer and before you know it we will be at the start of a new school year. Keep your eyes open for those sales on school supplies.

The Missions Board extends its sincere gratitude for your continued generosity and faithful support, which make all of these outreach efforts possible.

Mission Board
Carol Rollins

MUSIC NOTES

Summer has truly arrived. The days are long, the gardens are lovely (including the grounds at MCC), the lawns are green, and many of us are enjoying a break from routine, spending time outdoors and participating in seasonal activities. Meanwhile church remains a constant, although with, perhaps, a lighter feel. MCC music in July will definitely have a different feel.

As you've read elsewhere, July worship is going to be a collaboration between St. George's Church and MCC. It's also going to be a collaboration between our joint choirs. St. George's Church has invited our choir members to sing with their choir members when worship is down the road. Similarly, we extend an invitation to their choir when worship is held at MCC.

I hope you agree that music has a special way of connecting us to God and to each other. In this case, it will even connect us with our neighbor Christian community. If you see unfamiliar faces in the choir loft this July, I hope you'll greet them- they are possibly your neighbors!

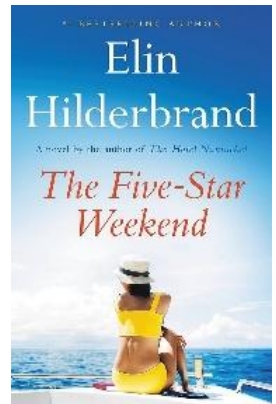
Blessings,
Donna Obarowski

MCC JULY BOOK GROUP

The Five Star Weekend by Elin Hildebrand

Wednesday, July 24th at 6:00pm

Meet in the parlor or the outdoor chapel, weather permitting



FRIENDS OF SILVER LAKE

Friends of Silver Lake, Inc. is a new nonprofit formed to unite the dispersed community that values Silver Lake and to work toward a vision of future ministry in line with its historic mission. Created just after the announcement of Silver Lake's closing in November, FOSL is moving with strength to continue this sacred legacy's ministry. It is a membership organization and we encourage you to join in this future-oriented ministry. Whether you were ever a camper or simply loved retreats, served as a volunteer or just know others whose lives were transformed there, we hope you'll go to <https://www.friendsofsilverlake.com> and click on "Stay connected" to learn more and join this important movement of the Holy Spirit! Friends of Silver Lake has put in a proposal with the Southern New England Conference to purchase the Silver Lake property to ensure the ministry of Silver Lake will continue.

CLASSIFIEDS

Looking for Car to buy, Garage to Rent, Offering Handyman/Yardwork Services (Volunteer or Paid)

David Haase dshinwtbyct@hotmail.com 860-993-9285

- looking for a 2002 or older 4cyl. or 6cyl. pickup truck or hatchback car
- looking for a garage to rent for storage.
- Looking for paid work or willing to help people as a volunteer if they need a helping hand
- I have work, personal, volunteer, references. I have background checks done with two different sources

Scions

Wanted: Branch clippings (scions) from Old Apple Trees and Native Dogwood trees. Willing to gift very young Red Japanese Maple saplings.

ShawnaLee / artist@shawnalee.com. Can leave message with Sarah in office too. Thanks!

Running Club

Established in July 2025, the Middlebury, CT Run Club meets twice a week, Thursdays at 6pm and Saturdays at 9am. Currently each meetup gathers at the Middlebury Volunteer Fire Department at 65 Tucker Hill Road we run on the safe and off street Middlebury Greenway Trail. ALL are welcome as well as ALL skill levels. We are a no pressure group that is comprised of walkers and beginner runners all the way up to competitive marathon runners. Run/walk at your own pace or bring your leashed dog and just take a nice stroll and meet some new people. We have occasional team events, theme nights, raffles, swag, etc. Also, each meetup will always have a first aid kit on hand, bug spray, and a water bowl and healthy treats for the puppies. We practice SAFE: S(Safety) A(Accountability) F(Fun) E(Exercise). So what are you waiting for?! Check us out, you may have just found your new favorite weekly event.



Portraiture

Bring the joy of portraiture into your home! Commission a quality hand drawn or painted portrait in Charcoals or Oils. See examples of my work on Wenty's poster or at www.shawnalee.com



Dorm Fridge

Thank you to Dave Haase for providing us with extra refrigeration during our Strawberry Festival!! It was very appreciated!

Classifieds

If you want to include a classified in the July Church Life, please email your classified information to the main office at office@middleburyucc.org by Friday, July 22nd.



SAVE THE DATE

Save the date for a very special
homecoming on
September 13th, 2026



WE WELCOME MCC'S NEW MEMBERS

Dara Dunn
Stephen Dunn
Raeghan O'Connor
Shaelyn Walsh
Brooke Weise
Charlie Weise
Dan Weise
C.J. Zold

IMPORTANT DATES

6/29-7/3: Vacation Bible School
7/5: 9:30am Worship @ St. George's
7/12: 9:30am Worship @ St. George's
7/19: 10am Worship @ MCC
7/24: 6pm Book Group Meeting
7/26: 10am Worship @ MCC

**Middlebury Congregational Church
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