

THE GOOD NEWS
From The
Stratford United Methodist Church

2600 MAIN STREET • STRATFORD, CT 06615-5893
SUMC phone: 203-375-5851 ~ fax: 203-375-6890

SUMC & Good News email: secretary@sumcct.org
SUMC website: www.sumcct.org

APRIL 2025



The Rev. Suhee Kim, Pastor
Student Pastor: Abby Langford
Affiliated Pastors: Rev. Caroly Gibson,
Rev. George Hilton, Rev. James Stinson
Chris Muller, Director of Music
Beth Buckmir, Preschool Director
Church Office: Beth Sullivan, Secretary
Worship Technology: Jayden Zeleznik

APRIL WORSHIP SCHEDULE

April 6th - Confirmation Sunday

**No 8:15 Chapel Service; 10:00 a.m. Worship Service
No Sunday School**

April 13th - Palm Sunday

**No 8:15 a.m. Chapel Service and 10:00 a.m. Worship Service
Cantata Pt. 1 during 10:00 a.m. Worship Service
Sunday School Meets
Egg Hunt hosted by Sunday School**

April 20th - Easter Sunday

**No 8:15 a.m. Chapel Service; 10:00 a.m. Worship Service
Cantata Pt. 2 during 10:00 a.m. Worship Service
No Sunday School**

April 27th

**8:15 a.m. Chapel Service and 10:00 a.m. Worship Service
Sunday School Meets**

Holy Week Services

Palm Sunday - April 13th

**Cantata - "Worthy is the Lamb" by Lloyd Larson
Egg Hunt following the 10:00 a.m. service**

Maundy Thursday - April 17th

**6:30 pm, in person
A celebration of the Last Supper in the All-Purpose room
Potluck meal will be served**

Good Friday - April 18th

**7:00 p.m. Worship Service
Huntington UMC
338 Walnut Tree Hill Rd., Shelton, CT 06484**

Easter Sunday - April 20th

**10:00 a.m. Worship Service only
A celebration of the resurrection with Communion
Cantata - "Worthy is the Lamb" by Lloyd Larson**



Sunday School Schedule

April 6th - Confirmation Sunday - No Sunday School

April 13th - Palm Sunday - Easter Egg Hunt and Visit from the Easter Bunny During Coffee Hour

April 20th - Easter - No Sunday School

April 27th - Sunday School

May 4th - Sunday School

May 11th - Mother's Day - No Sunday School

May 18th - Sunday School

May 25th - Memorial Day weekend - No Sunday School

June 1st - Sunday School Sunday - Penny Fair - Ice Cream Social

Intergenerational Pen Pal Program

Our Intergenerational Pen Pal Program between the congregation and the Sunday School begins April 6th. Thank you to all who are participating.

Heifer Project

The Sunday School is currently hosting their annual Heifer Project with a goal to raise \$500 by Palm Sunday.

Heifer Month Through Palm Sunday, April 13th

It's Heifer Month – Please Donate!



- Heifer has helped more than 32 million families in 19 countries achieve a living wage.
- A living wage allows families to send their children to school and provide housing and other essential resources.

OUR FUNDS WILL PURCHASE LIVESTOCK

- Livestock provides families with nutrition and income to help build successful lives.
- Some examples:
 - Flocks of chicks (\$20)
 - Sheep or Goat (\$120)
 - Heifer (\$500)

*Please join us in supporting our Heifer project!
~ SJMC Sunday School*



Here are some facts about Heifer:

- **Heifer is currently working in 19 countries**
- **Over 1 million households participate in Heifer**
- **\$76 million in sales by Heifer supported agriculture enterprise in 2024**
- **Heifer has trained over 9 million people in sustainable farming and agriculture enterprises since 2012.**
- **67% of Heifer participants were women in 2024**

Heifer has assisted 52 million households since 1944

MYF @ SUMC

Thanks to the help of Pam Robertson and Cal Robertson, MYF is back at SUMC. MYF will be open to youth ages 10 and older.



**Methodist
Youth
Fellowship**
@sumc

Join us for our Methodist Youth Fellowship project at the Greater Bridgeport CROP WALK for Hunger, benefitting area food pantries!

Session 1

4/26 11am @ Sterling House Food Pantry

2283 Main St Stratford

Info Session with pizza lunch

CROP WALK

5/4 1:30pm @ United Congregational Church

2200 North Ave Bridgeport.

Ride Share can be arranged.

Session 2

5/10 @ Stratford United Methodist Church

Youth Group meeting to plan Summer Project

Bring a friend. All are welcome!

Send an email stefanieknight01@gmail.com to join.



Choir News

Holy Week Cantata

For Holy Week this year, our Choir will be presenting the cantata "Worthy is the Lamb" by Lloyd Larson, a piece that spans Palm Sunday, the events of Holy Week, and Easter.

The cantata will be presented in two parts during the 10:00 a.m. Worship Services - the Palm Sunday and Holy Week segments on Palm Sunday, April 13th, and the Easter segments on Easter Sunday, April 20th.

**We are always looking for members for the Choir and
Grace Notes Handbell Choir.**

**If you or someone you know loves to sing, can read music,
or would like to learn to play the handbells, please join us!**

**You can commit to the entire year, or join us for the Lenten Season.
Lenten Season rehearsals continue through Easter Sunday.**

**If you play an instrument, please share your talents with us in worship!
An audition is required.**

If you have questions, please speak to Chris after worship or email music.director@sumcct.org.

**Required rehearsal times are flexible. Rehearsals are on Thursday evenings, and pieces are
rehearsed several weeks in advance of presentation in worship.**

Support our Music Program

**If you would like to support the music program, donations can be made to the Church with a
note/notation intending their direct support of this important ministry.**

**Your support allows us to hire extra musicians and singers for special events such as our seasonal
Cantatas (Palm Sunday and Christmas) and Easter services.**

**Thank you!
*Chris Muller, Director of Music***

INCIDENTS AND HAPPENINGS OUT OF OUR PAST

Easter in our Stained Glass

Recently Joyce and Chris Fuller sent out their bimonthly mailing to shut-ins, containing a copy of the Upper Room. A beautiful Easter card accompanied it with a photo of 2 of our sanctuary stained-glass windows that represent Easter.

Stand just inside the sanctuary and look to the left. On the lower side are a series of stained-glass windows designed to teach and to witness to our faith. Near the front is a clear window with a stained glass window cross on the left, and a lily on the right. The cross reminds us that Jesus died on a cross. Jesus was shamed, rejected, and suffered terribly on the cross. But the cross here is empty! It is the cross of victory, of God's triumph, of his grace and love to and for us. The lily also represents Jesus rising from the dead, and that he lives with us today. The lily is pure white in color, and it grows from a bulb buried deep in the earth. From below the earth the lily springs forth, bringing new life, just as Jesus rose from the dead. The last stained-glass windows in the series have a candle, a bible, the crown of glory, and a globe showing the foundations and reach of our faith.

Above these windows are a series of five stained glass windows which are smaller and more abstract in design. The glass is also different, thicker deeper in color. The first and last windows depict the Alpha and Omega, Greek letters for the first and the last, the beginning and the end. God is described as such in Isaiah 44:6 and Revelation 1:8. But in Revelation 21:6 and 22:13 Jesus takes on that role, as the first and the last. The central three windows depict the Last Supper: the basin and towel to wash the feet of the disciples, a basket with a loaf of bread, and the cup of wine. These all remind us that Christ died for us and through his sacrifice gave us all eternal life.

Let your eyes wonder to the windows this Lent and Easter. Study them as the sun reflects through them, or not. Do they stir your imagination, thoughts?



Arts and Crafts will meet at 1 pm in the All Purpose Room on Wednesday April 9th. We will be doing a project for the Neighborhood Breakfast



Neighborhood Breakfast

The Neighborhood Breakfast is **every third Saturday at SUMC**. Eat-in breakfast will be served from 8:30am to 10am. Guests will be greeted at the back parking lot entrance. We would greatly appreciate your help serving breakfast, donating items, or your time, if you can. If you are interested in helping, send a message to missions@sumcct.org.

Next month's **breakfast will be Saturday, April 19th.**

**Please donate breakfast items such as fruit, granola bars, muffins, yogurt, etc.
Thank you for your donations!**

Toiletry Items are Being Accepted!

Our team has been sharing donated toiletry items with guests who attend our monthly Neighborhood Breakfast. These items are greatly appreciated, and we could use more donations to offer at breakfasts in the months ahead.

There is a donation bin located in the narthex, and both men's and women's items are being accepted. We will gladly accept any size item (full size, samples, etc.). Donations suggestions include (but are not limited to): soap, shampoo/conditioner, toothpaste/toothbrush, deodorant, razors/shaving cream, lotion, tissues, and feminine products.

A special thank you to our friends at Nichols United Methodist for their interest and support of the Neighborhood Breakfast over the past 2 months. We hope our collaboration can continue and grow!

Golden Hill UMC Community Supper - Volunteers Needed

The Golden Hill United Methodist Church in downtown Bridgeport is one of several Bridgeport churches that provide evening meals for those in need on different evenings of the week. Golden Hill hosts a meal every Wednesday. They provide the food, the location, and the planning. Others volunteer to provide the labor.

Our upcoming turn at Golden Hill UMC Community Supper is April 16th.

A cook and about 3 additional volunteers will be needed to start around 2:30 - 3:00 to prepare the meals. One to two volunteers will be needed to stay and help pack the meals from 5:30 on. Please contact Pat Knebel (pknebel@yahoo.com) if you are interested in volunteering.

The Lord's Kitchen

The next Lord's Kitchen will be on Monday, June 16th.

I Belong to Jesus

A meditation using excerpts from Matriculation Sermon preached September 23, 1993, by
Walter G. Muelder, Dean Emeritus, Boston University School of Theology*

.... As I begin my 60th consecutive year of teaching, ...I have chosen a sermon topic which is a simple confession: "I belong to Jesus." I want to tell you why he is the inescapable focus of a coherent theology and philosophy of life for me.

1. First, I belong to Jesus because of his goodness.... I have lived long enough to know his goodness.... The meaning of good in the moral life is twofold: first, as something to be done.... Second, goodness is also something to be, that is, to become.... Jesus is Christ, not because he recommended and taught goodness, but because he embodied it. I belong to Jesus because, with the first disciples, I have to address him as "Good Master."

2. Closely related to this point is a second. I belong to Jesus as a real historical person. All interpretations of history and of world religions...must take full account of the fact that this good person really existed in history, in my history, and that he ushered in a new era of history.

3. As a real historical person, Jesus is, in the third place, a leader of an historical movement, and I belong to the covenanted people of that movement. I belong to a historical Messiah who came to do a historical task. It is an unfinished task – a revolutionary task. In this task there are no impartial by-standers. Remember this when you celebrate the Eucharist. Remember that it is a sacrament of historical engagement with a real presence. Here is no place for recommended idealism; here is an historical movement with an embodied Messiah.

4. I belong to Jesus because he was a healer of body and mind; and therefore, I am called to be a healer also.... He offered wholeness; he forgave; he restored. Healing is indeed a part of the Kingdom of God mission by anyone who belongs to Jesus.

5. I belong to Jesus, in the next place, because he forgave sins and revealed the unmerited grace of God for all sinners. Forgiveness means reconciliation, breaking down the barriers, restoring relationships, and affirming love that never lets the lost person remain alienated and excluded. Jesus teaches me how to forgive [and] shows me that a workable society must be an inclusive community, where every sinner is on the agenda of redemption.

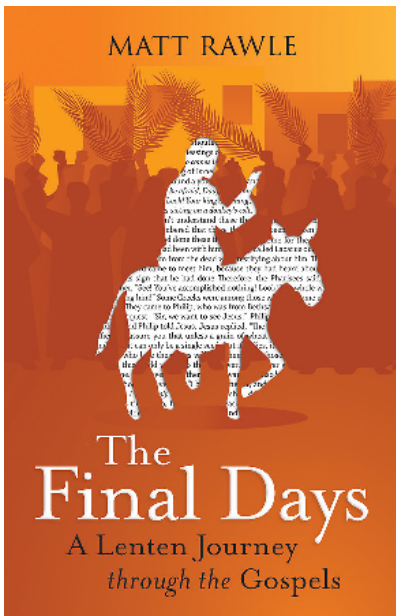
6. Finally, I belong to Jesus because he has called me, as he called Peter and others, to be a permanent member of this community and hence to minister to the least, the lowliest and the lost. Jesus was communitarian. Society is an extended family. The church is a community called to serve, to revolutionize, and to restore true community. The church is a special part of the family of God. I only wish in the ninth decade of my life that I could articulate better what it means to say that I belong to Jesus with my whole mind, heart, strength, and soul. I fail at every point, but I know what belonging means... I belong to Jesus.... You have to belong somewhere.

I Belong to Jesus (continued)

*Boston University School of Theology, founded in 1839, is the oldest theological seminary of American Methodism. Walter G. Muelder (1907-2004), father of Sonja Devitt, was dean of the seminary from 1945-1972. He believed that the strongest force in the universe is love, and that all peoples of the world are one human family. He specialized in social ethics and non-violent social change. He was active in the World Council of Churches, was one of the two Official Observers from the World Methodist Council at the second session of Vatican II and was recognized as an eminent theologian of his day.



Bible Study meets every Tuesday at 2:00 p.m. on Zoom.



This is the book we are doing for the Lenten season.

"The Final Day" by Matt Rawler,

The cost is \$14 per book.

Join Zoom Meeting:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2160664239?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2160664239?pwd=K3U5b21WS0duQ2VIOXRQM0gvRUtPdZ09&omn=86183795830)

[pwd=K3U5b21WS0duQ2VIOXRQM0gvRUtPdZ09&omn=86183795830](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2160664239?pwd=K3U5b21WS0duQ2VIOXRQM0gvRUtPdZ09&omn=86183795830)

Meeting ID: 216 066 4239 / Passcode: 06614



Food Donations for the [Sterling House Food Pantry](#) are always being collected in the bins in the narthex. Visit their [Food Pantry Donation Page](#) for lists of needed items and a link to their Amazon Wish List.

Nichols UMC Vacation Bible School
July 7th to 11th, 2025



Take a road trip with SUMC this summer as we join Nichols UMC for Vacation Bible School! This year's theme is Road Trip: On the Go with God, where travelers will explore timeless Bible stories that teach us how "the LORD your God is with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9). VBS will take place Monday, July 7th through Friday, July 11th from 5:30-7:45 pm for children entering PreK-4 through entering 6th grade at Nichols UMC in Trumbull, CT.

Are you interested in volunteering for VBS? We welcome any help to make this a memorable experience for children in our community!

Contact Pastor Abby Langford (337-256-9095 or abby.langford@yale.edu) for more information about registration or volunteering.



Staying in The Loop

There are two churches that have begun to rent space from us. The Anglican Nigerian Church of the Advent meets in the chapel on Sundays. The Shekinah II Haitian Seventh Day Adventist Church is using the sanctuary, All Purpose Room and kitchen on Saturdays as well as the chapel on Wednesday evenings for a prayer service. Please join the Church Council in welcoming these two groups to our sacred space.

~ Burdette James, Church Council Chair

WE HAVE A WONDERFUL NEW OVEN

New Oven Controls - PLEASE READ

If you find that the oven control is in the off position, you will have to light the pilot for the oven - instructions are on the drop down panel below the right oven door - when you finish using the oven please 🙏 turn the oven dial until you reach the stop, and the oven will be off - if you push the dial in and turn to the off position the pilot will be extinguished and the next user will have to light the pilot to use the oven



CROP Hunger Walk – It's our 51st!

Sunday, May 4, 2025

at 1:30 – 4:00 pm for 2+ mile walk (Rain or Shine)

**Beginning at United Congregational Church
2200 North Avenue, Bridgeport, CT**

25 % of monies raised goes to hunger related programs in the Bridgeport Area.

For more info, call 203-375-1284 or go to www.crophungerwalk.org/bridgeportct





February 21, 2025

A Call to Prayer and Support for Ukraine

On this solemn anniversary marking three years since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, we, the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church extend our support and hope in the midst of the ongoing conflict and war.

We stand with you in prayer and in solidarity. The people of The United Methodist Church mourn with you—for the lives that have been lost, the families who have been displaced, the homes that have been destroyed and the communities torn apart by war.

We acknowledge the enduring pain, fear and uncertainty you face, yet we also witness the remarkable strength and hope you continue to demonstrate. Scripture reminds us, “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit” (Psalm 34:18). We trust that God is ever near, upholding you in your grief and surrounding you with grace.

We urge all United Methodists around the world to continue to pray for and support The United Methodist Church of Ukraine and the people of Ukraine.

We pray for God’s intervention to end the violence and lead the nations’ leaders toward justice, so that peace may prevail, communities be restored, and families reunited.

We pray for peace, a deep lasting peace that comes from God’s justice and mercy. Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (Matthew 5:9).

May you draw strength from God our creator, who walks with you in suffering and remains ever faithful. May the prayers and support of United Methodists around the world bring you comfort and hope.

Grace and Peace,

Bishop Tracy S. Malone
President, Council of Bishops
The United Methodist Church

Council of Bishops, The United Methodist Church – 110 Maryland Avenue NE, Suite 301 – Washington, D.C. USA – 202-547-6270

A Call to Prayer and Support for Ukraine



UMCOR MONTH

This month is the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). This is the humanitarian relief and development arm of The United Methodist Church. Through UMCOR we can make a difference in the lives of communities and individuals whose lives have been upset by storms, wars, fires, displacement, and climate change. We support the operating activities and administrative costs of this worldwide relief agency through this offering. This enables UMCOR to ensure that 100% of every designated gift goes directly to those in need. UMCOR responds to U.S. and international disasters, addresses diseases and poverty, assists refugees and immigrants, provides clean water, and works to reduce hunger. From training Conference Disaster Coordinators and Early Response Teams to keeping the office lights on, the UMCOR Sunday special offering equips the organization to respond quickly to disasters. Please give generously. Checks may be made payable to NUMC and should indicate "UMCOR Sunday" in the memo. Thank you.



Immigration Justice Resources

Recently, heads of UMC boards and agencies gathered together to discuss the United Methodist response to immigration. The webinar included ways United Methodists could respond to this critical concern. You can view the "Solidarity with the Sojourner" webinar recording at:

<https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/solidarity-with-the-sojourners>

Recently, I interviewed Rev. Paul Fleck, Executive Director of Immigration Law and Justice, about Why Immigration matters to United Methodists. Rev. Fleck tells some great stories that illustrate why immigration justice matters to us, and what we can do about it. Check out the interview:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=97YxL3ZVHas>

For more articles and information about immigration justice and United Methodism, visit:

<https://www.resourceumc.org/en/topics/advocacy/immigration-and-global-migration>

Footsteps in the Sand



Dear Pastor,

Would your members benefit from a Spiritual Renewal Weekend?

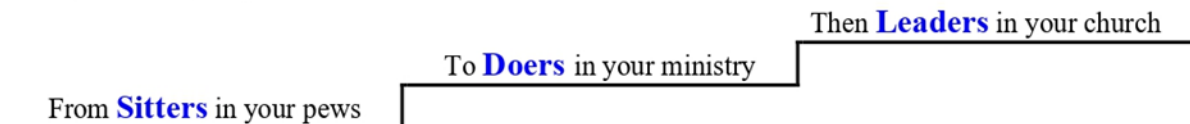
Would you love to have more members active in your ministry?

Would you like to empower more lay leaders for your church?

Footsteps in the Sand is an all-volunteer community of Christians that has been doing just that for over 40 years, serving dozens of mainline churches from many denominations, by holding three-day lay-led Spiritual Renewal Weekends with clergy support. Our weekends are currently held at a retreat center in Farmington, Ct.

What do Footsteps Weekends do?

They move people:



Please Join Us for a Pastor Informational Zoom

Bring your coffee and join us for a less than an hour event.

Choose one date at 8:00am:

Friday Feb. 28, Saturday March 29, or Monday April 28

There is never a cost to the local church. Participants simply pay for the retreat center fee and cover our minimal expenses. Scholarships are available and we cover the cost for all pastors.

Our Spring Weekends: **Men's May 16-18 & Women's May 30-June 1**

www.Footsteps-Sand.org/For-Pastors

Easter Word Search

G S N O I T P M E D E R Y Y M
J J U Y K I R Y T T F X E O L
R L K F W E E C I O J E R C K
X Y N G Q C U W V U P C M C K
R C R O S S H R E D P H M N E
I F V A I B Q U I R G P Q R N
S A Q Z M T M I R A C L E T S
E I A O I R C H R C O Y I U E
N T T P R C G E Y O H S S R L
I H H S O O C A R K I E P V K
N W O R C S D U B R J V R G T
O H T N G N T E S F U L A M I
D P V O U Q F L D K A S Y S H
Z M E S B Z Z W E M L Y E D F
E T G L M E G K B S L T R R U

APOSTLES
CROWN
LAMB
PRAYER
RESURRECTION
SON

CHURCH
FAITH
MARY
REDEMPTION
RISEN
SUNDAY

CROSS
JESUS
MIRACLE
REJOICE
SAVIOR
TOMB

