

CHURCH LIFE



June 2022



**Middlebury Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
The Green
1242 Whittamore Rd.
Middlebury CT 06762
203-758-2671
www.middleburyucc.org**

FROM THE PASTOR

This June is an exciting time here at the church. We have Pentecost, Confirmation, and Strawberry Festival on the 5th, Celebration Sunday and a picnic after worship is on 6/12. We also have Vacation Bible School from 6/27-7/1.

Pentecost is one of the major feasts/celebrations of the Church. In the Western church, different celebrations in the life of the Church are ranked in importance, and Pentecost, Christmas, Epiphany, and the Ascension of the Lord are the most important festivals, only outranked by Easter/the last three days of Holy Week.

Pentecost celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit to the disciples in Jerusalem 50 days after Easter. The word Pentecost actually just means “fiftieth,” which is a reference to its celebration being 50 days after Easter. But, the name Pentecost is also a name for the Jewish festival, Shavuot, which takes place the fiftieth day of Passover and is a harvest festival often linked to celebrating Moses being given the law at Mt. Sinai. Our English bibles usually translate Shavuot as “Festival of Weeks.” The disciples were actually in Jerusalem to celebrate the Festival of Weeks aka Pentecost, and as time went on, a distinct Christian festival called Pentecost developed as the culmination of the Easter season.

Pentecost celebrates the Holy Spirit, and the day is often observed as the birthday of the Church. This focus on the Holy Spirit and church beginnings has meant Pentecost is one of the prime days for baptisms to happen. There’s an English tradition of calling Pentecost “Whitsunday” in reference to the white clothing worn at baptism. (The term Whitsunday used to be widely used in Congregational churches as well. The *Pilgrim Hymnal* uses both “Pentecost” and “Whitsunday” in its thematic index.) Many churches have new members join or have confirmation on Pentecost as both occasions are about affirmation of baptism and celebratory moments in the life of the church.

Here at MCC, we have confirmation on Pentecost this year, and if you want to be extra festive (and ready for the Strawberry Festival), you can wear red to worship on June 5th. Red is the color traditionally associated with the Holy Spirit.

As head towards Pentecost, I want to share this prayer St. Augustine with you:



Freshly Made
All Natural
Strawberry Shortcake
Sunday, June 5, 2022
5:00~7:30 pm
Middlebury Congregational Church
On The Green (Rt. 188)
Middlebury, CT
\$8.00 per serving

*Take out or eat in
Or bring chairs, listen to the music
and enjoy it on The Town Green*

(Credit Cards will be accepted)

Pre-orders encouraged:
203-758-2671
www.middleburyucc.org



“Breathe in me, Holy Spirit,
that I may think what is holy.
Move me, Holy Spirit,
that I may do what is holy.
Attract me, Holy Spirit,
that I may love what is holy.
Strengthen me, Holy Spirit,
that I may guard what is holy.
Guard me, Holy Spirit,
that I may keep what is holy.”

Peace,

Katrina Manzi
Minister

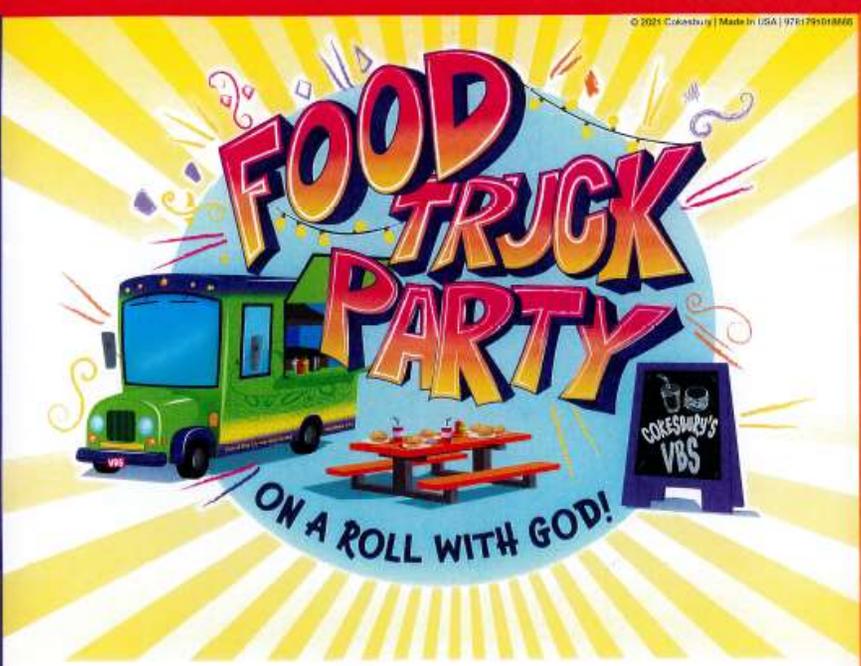
Faith Formation

Our May Sunday School lessons all focused on Peter and telling the good news of Jesus. Thank you to our teachers: Robbie Kamide, Pam Albon, Norma Solberg, Liz Walker, and Kristine Zold. I appreciate all of our volunteers throughout the last school year! It was great to be back in the classrooms again.

June will be a very busy month! We are looking forward to having our Cherub Choir sing a couple times. On Celebration Sunday, our third graders will receive their bibles. After Celebration Sunday, we take our summer break from Sunday School classes until Homecoming Sunday in September. There will still be nursery care throughout the summer.

I am also so excited to welcome back our Vacation Bible School program! Cokesbury's Food Truck Party will be coming to MCC June 26-July 1st. The week will focus on Matthew 6:11, “Give us this day our daily bread”, and remind the children that everything we have comes from God, and by turning to God in prayer, our daily needs can be met. Registration ends June 10th, so please sign up now online!

Valerie Beard



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FOOD TRUCK PARTY

ON A ROLL WITH GOD!

COKEsbury's VBS

June 27- July 1
Date

Middlebury Congregational Church
Place 1242 Whittamore Rd, Middlebury

<https://middleburycc.breezechorns.com/form/VBS2022>
Address

Register NOW online

9-12:15
Time deadline June 10th

K-5 \$40
Ages

Music Notes

The Joy of Music

We've all come a long way since March 2020. After months when many events were better avoided or closed to the public, Dave and I have slowly found our footing in public spaces. We've returned to attending basketball games, concerts and movies. One of the handful of movies we've seen was the remake of "West Side Story", a musical of which we're both very fond.

We loved the remake almost as much as the original movie, which had me thinking about the life of Leonard Bernstein. I've long been a fan of Bernstein. Wikipedia describes him as: **an American conductor, composer, pianist, music educator, author, and humanitarian.** His life was not without controversy but was certainly full of accomplishments. Many of us of a certain age may remember his *Young People's Concerts*, broadcast periodically over a decade and a half. He also was a consummate music educator for adults with numerous lectures, conversations and essays.

If you spend a little time listening to Bernstein talk about music, you become aware of the sheer joy he experienced as a musician. (A well-known collection of his essays is titled, "The Joy of Music".) And if you listen to his own compositions, they are full of light-hearted or humorous passages mixed among the serious moment.

Just like with the rest of life, we are working back to a full choir and music program at MCC. One of the things I appreciate the most is that the choir enjoys their time together. We never seem to rehearse without moments of laughter mixed in. Bernstein would be pleased. And I hope God is pleased- after all, scripture tells us to sing "rejoicing".

Donna Obarowski



The Deacons' Bench

At this writing, spring and all its glory has sprung. I positioned a birdhouse, outside a window, in view of my recliner chair. Its feathered visitors are plentiful and the chirps and songs of the day can rejuvenate the soul.

Meanwhile my world outlook, admittedly, carries more pessimism. One crisis seems to follow the last. Global warming, the pandemic, and the war in Ukraine all jockey for top billing, along with other "B" list worries. My prayers for peace in Ukraine seem to go unanswered. The devastation, destruction and human suffering are unworldly to fathom.

Jesus talked about human suffering in his teachings. In Matthew, 6:25-6:27, Jesus extolls us to, " Look at the birds of the air, they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?" His metaphor seems to focus on feeding and clothing oneself and not on my earlier topics. Our daily survival, Vis a ve, feeding and clothing oneself isn't lacking; although Ukraines ability to maintain its "breadbasket to the world" may alter that outlook here, sooner or later,

In Philippians, 4:4 - 4:7, Paul writes; "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

The birds in my yard have a better grasp of God's message than I. I have work to do and learn to "Rejoice" in the moment and free myself from worry. They happily gather and build, while singing and chirping their happiness; but God has assured us we are "more valuable." Gentleness is in all our control and a worthy practice.

Here is a copy of a prayer from my "Book of Daily Devotion

Our Father, we thank Thee for the life of Jesus. He has taught us how to live and serve. It is our hope that we may have more of the mind and spirit which was in Thy Son, that others, looking in our faces, may know we are walking with Him. May our hearts find peace in Thee, and may it be our joy to pass that peace to others that they may come to serve thee and magnify Thy holy name. In this moment of prayer we would ask that Thou help us to live clean, upright lives in this world. Give unto us a joy in serving, a patience in suffering. Give us humble, contrite hearts, and may the talent or talents Thou has given us be wisely invested so as to hasten the coming of Thy kingdom on earth. Amen. *Cecil D. Jones.*

Sincerely; Michael J. Granja for the Board of Deacons



From the Mission Board

As we enter the summer season, the Mission board begins to reflect on the past year to look to what we did well in the past and want we want to do again in the future. We have been very fortunate, here on the mission board, to have been supported by all of you this year. The many projects such as holiday baskets and the book sale would not have been successful without all the support of the parishioners and their willingness to give back to the community.

As we look to the upcoming year, we have so many fun things in store! On October 22nd this year we will once again have our Books and Baked Goods sale. Start putting aside those unwanted books for the fall!

We also plant to have a raffle and silent auction during the tree lighting ceremony this year. We are really looking forward to this great idea from our board member, Erika!

And as always, we will be collecting school supplies throughout the summer to help those students in need for the upcoming school year. Keep a look out for the list of items we will need!

Again, thank you for all your contributions and happy summer!

Katie Pasko



OPERATION PAPERBACK

Operation Paperback is a national, non-profit organization, whose volunteers collect gently-used **Paperback** books in good shape and send them to American troops overseas, as well as veterans and military families here at home. The most requested books are:

Science Fiction	History
True Crime	Biographies
Action	Horror
Fantasy	Memoirs
Best Sellers	Mysteries

You may leave your donations on the Multiplication Table or bring them to the church office during office hours.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

After taking the April meeting off for Easter and Holy Week, the Trustees were back in May doing the work of the church.

The annual spring cleanup of the church grounds was a big success, with help from members, friends, and the Scout troops. Thanks to all of you for your time and help.

The Church Council approved our recommendation to renew the BSA charters for Troops 5 and 6 and Pack 6 through the end of the year. We met briefly with Drew Kwashnak, our charter organizational representative to the troops, to discuss ways to make sure we are meeting our responsibilities under the agreement. The local Scout council conducts background checks and training for all adult volunteers.

Our big project for the spring is finishing work on the front of the church. We'll also get an estimate from a contractor for work on the interior of the parsonage, including wall repairs, painting, and tile work. Inside the main building, the emergency lighting, exit signs, fire extinguishers, and fire alarm system have been reviewed and passed inspection.

Unfortunately, our order for an Automated External Defibrillator, or AED, that we placed last fall has still not arrived. The company is still facing supply chain problems.

Heather Heme and Valerie Beard gave us a quick rundown where the preschool stands now and their plans for the fall. The new director is hard at work, and we say welcome to you from MCC!

Several ideas were suggested for fundraiser projects. Russ has printed up some note/thank you cards featuring a pen-and-ink sketch of the Middlebury Green by his mother, Alice Tolles. We might sell those through the church office and at the Strawberry Festival. Other suggestions included a car wash and selling hot dogs at the Memorial Day parade, although time was short to pull that off this year.

Respectfully submitted for the Trustees, Russ Tolles

Board of Stewardship: Signs of spring

Where does your church get the money to meet its mission year after year? Most people think of stewardship as a once-a-year pledge drive done by a handful of people, but it's much more than that.

That work was especially important during the pandemic, when your pledges and regular online gifts kept us going through our livestream and outdoor worship services. But stewardship is really about what we all do together to use all our resources, including time and talent, to further the mission of the church.

That mission consists of four points: worship, spiritual growth, service, and fellowship. As the weather warmed up and covid cooled down this spring, all started showing signs of growth again. And each part feeds the others.

During worship, we were able to expand our musical offerings again, with more hymns and choral pieces. The choir's return meant we could reinstate the offertory, which we had suspended not for health reasons but because of logistics. There was no good time in an abbreviated service to pass the plate.

At one time, the weekly offering may have been a church's biggest source of revenue. These days, most pledging and giving is done electronically. This year, that's truer than ever. Pledges in the first four months have come in faster than we expected.

Still, passing the plate gives visitors and guests the opportunity to participate as well. And many members do both: They give their pledges online and chip a little extra into the collection. Bringing back the offertory has put us ahead on that budget income line, which was cut back during the pandemic simply because people weren't in church on Sundays.

Another opportunity that's coming back: fundraisers. These are as important to the fellowship of the church as they are to the finances. Because of our experiences during the pandemic, we didn't expect any income from fundraisers in the first months of

the year. But so far, our low-key fundraisers such as takeout meals have raised nearly \$1,000. That's before the big Strawberry Festival on June 5, which will include music and fellowship on the Green! Things are starting to get back to normal.

After the long covid winter of our discontent, you are all making this glorious spring for our faith and fellowship as well as our finances. Thanks! Keep it up.

Howard Fielding for the Board of Stewardship

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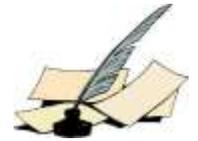
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Katie Pasko

Days Gone By



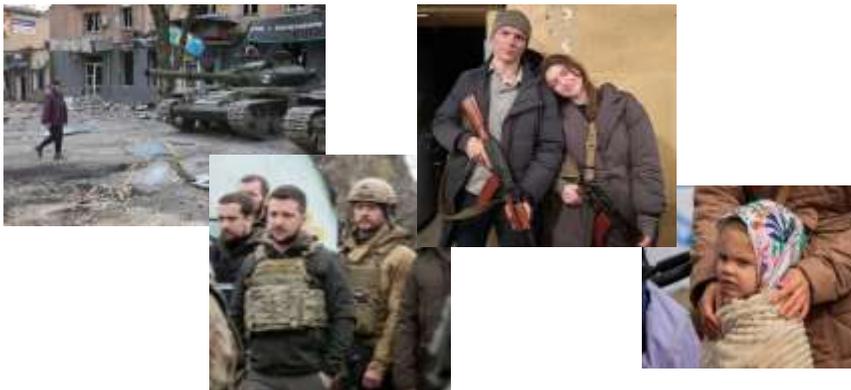
I had every intention on writing some more about fundraising, fellowship and fun when I started doing my research last week, but I changed my mind in the middle of it. Usually I pretty much stick with my topic, even though what I write often turns out to be quite different from what I had originally envisioned. This time I found a different topic in our church's past that made a light go on in my 2022 head.



In 1956, Hungary had a short, spontaneous revolution and the Soviet Army crushed it. In October of that year, there were a whole lot of people who were very unhappy with life in post World War II Hungary, under a ruthless communist dictatorship that was dominated by the Soviet Union. On October 22nd, 5,000 students met in Budapest and approved a manifesto calling for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary, free elections, freedom of association and economic reform. The next day thousands took to the streets and went wild, chanting "Russians go home!" and ended up pulling down a giant statue of Stalin. On the 24th, at the behest of the Government, Russian tanks rolled into the city to 'restore order' and fierce fighting broke out. The next 12 days were chaotic and euphoric at the same time. The newly appointed Prime Minister, Imre Nagy, asked the Soviets to withdraw their troops and they did. The people thought they had won. Then Nagy abolished one-party rule and announced that Hungary was withdrawing from the Warsaw Pact and Nikita Khrushchev changed his mind. On November 4th, Soviet tanks, supported by

artillery, returned to Budapest, along with thousands of troops. Although Moscow announced that the uprising had been crushed by midday, organized resistance continued until the 14th and there was sporadic fighting in the countryside into 1957. An estimated 2,000-3,000 Hungarians were killed and 13,000 were wounded.

Some 200,000 people fled Hungary during this time. Over 35,000 of these refugees came to the United States. How did the Middlebury Congregational Church react to all of this? Well, first of all, Hungarian Relief received contributions of \$450 from offerings at Thanksgiving of 1956. Then at a special meeting on December 9th, the Prudential Committee voted unanimously to sponsor a refugee family or group of individuals in Middlebury. The church would work through Pastor Emil Nagy, Jr., of the First Hungarian Church of Bridgeport. Pastor Nagy had preached in our church during a pulpit exchange the previous April. He put the church in touch with Frank and Alex Csomos, who had made their way to Austria as refugees and came to the US on December 28th. The church arranged for jobs for them, transportation and entertainment, learning English, finances and furnishings, and an apartment. On February 16th of 1957, Alex was married to Irene Pinter who, with her brother George, had escaped with him and Frank. The service was held in our church with Mr. Ives and Pastor Nagy officiating. The wedding was followed by a reception in the parsonage and Irene was given a set of china and silver. Their daughter, Irene Adel, was born the following December, and she was baptized in the church in January of 1958.



So now, here I am in 2022, reminded of what is happening in Ukraine, worrying about the people there and wondering how things will turn out.

Hopefully, it will be much better than Hungary in 1956. Our Mission Board voted in March to donate \$1,000 to the First Church in Marlborough (UCC), Massachusetts whose pastor, Rev. Kazimierz Bem, a native of Poland, has connections with the Lutheran Church in Poland's relief efforts for Ukrainian refugees. Poland has taken in well over 3 million Ukrainian refugees since the Russian invasion at the end of February. Hungary has taken in over 600,000.

Alberta Weller, Church Historian

CHURCH RECORDS

DEATHS

Margaret Auger Kennerly on May 17th.*

*The Deadline for
July Church Life:
June 22nd @ 9:00 a.m.*



**Monday - Friday
June 20th ~ August 22nd
9:00am – 12:00pm**



The excitement is building! The end is close and the children are very excited about the little shows they are preparing for their parents! As much as it always feels like we aren't quite ready to pull it off, it is always so adorable!

All classes just had their field trips to Flanders Nature Center which were enjoyed by all. It's so nice to see the children appreciate and have fun with the baby animals or the numerous critters they've scooped out from the pond.

As many of you have heard, I will be moving on to a new stage of retirement. The Preschool Committee found a great new director and she is wonderful. If you see Marissa around the building, please say hello and make her feel welcome. She is a Middlebury native and therefore will probably be familiar with many of the families that we are lucky enough to have at Preschool on the Green.

Have a relaxing and awesome summer!

Linda Kohler

Retiring Director of Preschool On The Green

~•••~

My name is Marissa Houle and I will be taking over the position as Director/Head Teacher of Preschool on the Green. I grew up in Middlebury and went through Region 15 schools. I hold a Bachelor degree in Curriculum & Instruction from Lasell University and currently working towards a Master's of Education at Post University. I have been teaching preschool for over twelve years, five of which were spent as a special education preschool teacher. I am very excited to join the program here at Preschool on the Green!

Marissa Houle

Forthcoming Director of Preschool On the Green



SUNDAES ON SUNDAY

Limited time only!

June 19th and June 26th

5:30 - 7:00

Take sundaes home or bring a chair to enjoy outdoors.

\$3.00 per Ice Cream Sundae

Vanilla ice cream with home-made hot fudge sauce or salted caramel sauce and assorted toppings.



June 2022



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p><i>Happiness is . . .</i> Strawberry Shortcake <i>On a June evening!</i></p>			1	2 10:30 AA 7:00 Scouts – T5&6 & Committee Mtg.	3	4 9:00 Hulling 10:30 AA
5 8:30 Adult Choir 10:00 Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour 5:30-7:00  Strawberry Shortcake	6 6:30 Preschool Graduation	7 12:00 AA 7:30 AA	8 8:00 Stewardship	9 10:30 AA 7:00 Scouts – T5&6	10	11 10:30 AA 11:00 Memorial Svc. & Reception John Spain
12 8:30 Adult Choir 10:00 Worship 11:00 Church Picnic	13 5:30 Mission Brd. 7:00 Preschool Comm.	14 12:00 AA 6:30 Troop 6 - BOR 6:30 Trustees 7:30 AA	15	16 10:30 AA 6:30 ONA Meeting 7:00 Scouts – T5&6	17	18 8:00-2:00 Troop Scout Training 10:30 AA
19 8:30 Adult Choir 10:00 Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour 5:30-7:00 <i>Sundaes on Sunday</i> Father's Day	20 Summer Office Hours Begin 9:00-12:00	21 12:00 AA 6:30 Church Council 7:30 AA	22	23 10:30 AA 7:00 Scouts – T5&6	24	25 10:30 AA
26 8:30 Adult Choir 10:00 Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour 11:15 Diaconate 5:30-7:00 <i>Sundaes on Sunday</i>	27 Vacation Bible School 9:00 – 12:15 	28 Vacation Bible School 9:00 – 12:15 12:00 AA 7:30 AA 	29 Vacation Bible School 9:00 – 12:15 	30 Vacation Bible School 9:00 – 12:15 10:30 AA 7:00 Scouts – T5&6 	1 Vacation Bible School 9:00 – 12:15 	2 10:30 AA