

NOTICES FOR SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2025

Woodbury United Methodist Church

We are a welcoming Christian fellowship who celebrate and share God's love with everyone. We seek a closer relationship with Jesus Christ. Inspired by His example, we strive to be God's hands in this world. Empowered by God's word, we proclaim the Gospel and serve through worship, study, mission, and community support.

The Rev. Dr. Brian R. Bodt, Pastor Jeff and Barbara Hunt, Lay Leaders
Christopher Shay, Minister of Music Matti Paparazzo, Admin. Assistant

WELCOME TO WOODBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH!
IF YOU ARE A VISITOR PLEASE COMPLETE A VISITOR'S CARD AND PLACE IT IN THE OFFERING. Our desire is that you experience the warmth of Christ's welcome and ours in this church.

VISION 2025 EMPHASIS TODAY is "*Spiritual Wellness.*" Emphases are Evangelism, Missions, Affirmation and Inclusion, Communications, Youth and Young Adults and Congregational Vitality and Growth (Spiritual Wellness, Financial Health, Inviting Facilities).

WE THANK TODAY'S WORSHIP LEADERS:

Liturgist: Mark Davis

A.V. Techs: Christine Shupenis and Dan Guinipero

Ushers and Greeters: Jay Hockenberry and Mary Schivera

Fellowship Time Host: Michael Pinevich and Eileen Bennett

PASTOR BRIAN WILL SWITCH WORK DAYS THIS WEEK to accommodate pastoral and program needs at both our church and Greenfield Hill Congregational Church in Fairfield. This week he will be at WUMC on Tuesday instead of Monday, along with his regular on site Thursday, when he will arrive around noon. As always if you need to contact him urgently, please use his cell phone at 203-747-1781. You may also email him at pastor.woodburyumc@gmail.com.

"GRIEF, HEALING AND THE HOLIDAYS"

follows worship **today** at 11:45 a.m. The Rev. Garrett Walkup will discuss the difficulties of the "holiday season," especially for those grieving the loss of a loved one. While Christmas and holiday traditions are meant to bring comfort and joy, they can stir memories and emotions leading to sorrow and heartache.

Join us for a compassionate conversation on navigating grief during the holidays. Rev. Walkup is known to many and is a RVNAhealth

Spiritual Care and Bereavement Coordinator. He will share insights and strategies to help us manage our emotions, find meaningful ways to honor our loved ones, and care for ourselves during “the holidays. Let’s support one another and find hope in the season.

“OPEN HEARTS, OPEN MINDS, OPEN DOORS” PRAYER

This Tuesday, December 16 from 7-7:45 p.m. we resume in the sanctuary on the theme “Hopeful Readings and Reflections: Responses in Uncertain Times.” We received nice press in the December 3rd edition of the “Voices” newspaper.

MEMBER CARE

Family Nurture and Hospitality is excited to introduce our new “Member Care” initiative. Our hope is to assist church members dealing with current hardships for which they need assistance with meals, light housekeeping, transportation to appointments, grocery/prescriptions pickup, pastoral care, and/or church family visitation. Member care is different from Helping Hands in that it is specific to church members. Helping Hands provides community support, especially for seniors in Woodbury, Bethlehem, Watertown, and Southbury, offering help with home tasks, food, and general assistance through volunteers and coordination with town resources. To learn more, please contact Cathy Riefenhauser at 203.768.7680 or ccrief88@gmail.com.

MENORAH LIGHTING AT CONGREGATION B’NAI ISRAEL

A lovely interfaith opportunity will be held **this Thursday, December 18, 5 p.m.** at Congregation B’nai Israel, 444 Main Street South, Southbury at their annual community menorah lighting ceremony. The service is brief – 15 to 20 minutes since it is outside – and a lovely opportunity to interact with our Jewish neighbors. I attended last year and will again this year, and invite as many WUMC-ers as can to be present. – *Pastor Brian*

“GOD IS HERE” STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

We thank God for every person in our church family! Your faithfulness in praying intentionally about the possibility of making a Pledge for 2026, and then acting on whatever decision you were inspired to take, is your witness that, indeed, God Is Here, providing and guiding to keep His WUMC Lighthouse shining in this corner of His world!

With gratitude we can report that 30 Pledge Cards were completed with a Total Pledge Amount for 2026 of \$145,256.50. The 30 Pledges represent: 6 New, 13 Increase from 2025, 8 the same as 2025, and 3 Decrease from 2025. This amount represents a \$8,078.50 increase from our 2025 Total Pledges and is a solid foundation for our planning for ministry and outreach in the new year.

With the same gratitude we thank God for those in our church family who are not led to complete a Pledge Card, but who have donated over \$13,000 so far in 2025 through their consistent, committed giving.

We are blessed! May we continue to be good stewards of these gifts from God so that He can bless others through us!

Jon Ossewaarde, Finance Chair

Pastor Brian Bodt, Chair, 2026 Stewardship Campaign

THANK YOU FOR CHRISTMAS CAFE

Thank you to all the bakers, decorators, kitchen helpers, servers and dishwashers who helped to make this year's Christmas Café a success. Special thanks to Judy Wilhelms for heading up the kitchen crew and overseeing the cooking (and cooling!) of our soups. And thank you to Jay Hockenberry for providing tours of our sanctuary. While the Café was not as busy as in years past, it was just right for the amount of our staff of volunteers. Everyone enjoyed a festive and delicious lunch. Proceeds from the Café and from the sale of the leftover soup on Sunday amounted to \$460.00.....a success for fundraising and for FUN raising!

Merry Christmas to you all!~ Joann King, Christmas Café Chair

CHRISTMAS CARDS FOR CSCW

Please bring a Christmas card this Sunday, or any time through Christmas Eve, to hang on our sanctuary Christmas tree with greetings to your WUMC church family. We will have hole punches and ribbons ready before worship. Since we are not having a Praise Band Celebration this year, we ask you to consider what you might spend on cards and postage as a Christmas gift to the Community Services Council of Woodbury. You may gift by check to WUMC with "CSCW" on the memo line; or cash in an envelope well-marked "CSCW," or by visiting the CSCW giving option on our website, www.woodburyumc.net. Giving continues to Christmas Eve.

CHRISTMAS CARDS FOR JOY

Our hearts are filled with joy and anticipation as we wait for the Lord to come and set us free. Trusting in the Lord, we can be freed from the death dealing structures of oppression and destruction around us. We trust that God is powerful enough to bring the powerful down from their thrones, lift up the lowly, and fill our hungry neighbors with good things. This joy can open our eyes and stir our hearts out of the complacency so that we might shine the light of Christ's joy to our neighbors and friends, and so that we are not satisfied with things as they are. Moreover, it moves us to participate in building God's kingdom here on earth.

Woodbury, with a population of 9,787 people, has a food insecurity rate of 11.5%. That about 1,126 people who can't always count on having enough food. Food insecurity occurs when a household cannot access enough food due to a lack of money and other essential resources. It is often linked to one or multiple factors that lead to food insecurity, creating a cycle that can be hard to break. These factors can be related to household income, expenses, access to affordable health care, the surrounding social and physical environment, and barriers to opportunity which play a role in preventing some households and communities from being food secure.

The quantity of households that experience food insecurity and do not qualify for SNAP further underscores the importance of charitable food assistance. In a recent Hunger in America study, our neighbors told us about the choices they face due to limited resources:

- 69% had to choose between food and utilities
- 67% had to choose between food and transportation
- 66% had to choose between food and medical care
- 57% had to choose between food and housing
- 31% had to choose between food and education

This Christmas season won't you add one more recipient to your Christmas card list complete with a donation to the CSCW to help in their mission to fight hunger? Please see the details on how you can contribute elsewhere in this newsletter.

God, your presence fills our hearts with joy. We're moved to do good in the world by helping our neighbors near and far who are

experiencing hunger. Please guide our efforts and allow us to spread the joy, peace love and hope you have graciously given to us without measure.

OUR PRAYER INTENTIONS

Ian Ramsden and family, and Lynne Ramsden-Calabrese, on the sudden death of their niece, Laura, leaving an 8-year-old daughter. For Michael Hennessey, Carol Hennessey's brother-in-law.

For Brett, the Behlman's son-in-law as he recovers from surgery; and their daughter Lindsey, caring for her husband Brett.

For Carol Quinby, with thanksgiving for improved vision.

For Nancy Ossewaarde, with thanksgiving for continued healing.

For the Voyak family (friends of Pastor Brian and Carol), grieving the deaths of both brother Robert and granddaughter Ayanna.

For Carolyn Shay, being treated for a medical condition.

For conflicts in the Middle East and our troops stationed there; and for the conflicts in the Ukraine and the Sudan.

Bishop Bickerton; our new District Superintendent, the Rev. Heather Sinclair; and the churches and clergy of the NY Conference.

For Missionaries, especially Sarah Flores (Ecuador) and Rev. Dexter Ceballos (Mongolia) as well as prayers this week for Mutwale Ntambo, Wa Mushidi, Umba Llunga Kalangwa, Sandra Raasch, and David Guinkpa

For those facing life's difficulties and medical challenges, especially Carol Hennessey, Eni Mucco (friend of Jane Hutter) and Jean Lilly (Meg Temple's mother).

Christmas Eve Luminaria - Save the Date

Please help assemble the Luminaria for Christmas Eve. We'll have an assembly line table set up in Fellowship Hall on December 21 after service to make this a quick and easy process. We'll also need 3-4 volunteers to set up and light the luminaria before the Christmas Eve service (about 4:30). Please contact Joann King at joenu78@earthlink.net, if you have any questions.

ON-GOING MINISTRY

CURRENT WOODBURY FOOD BANK NEEDS are pumpkin, cherry or apple pie filling, pie crust mix, crispy onion rings (for green bean casserole). Please leave them in the Foyer box.

"I was hungry and you gave me food...." Jesus, Matthew 25:35

WEBSITE MIGRATION

WUMC will migrate our website, woodburyumc.net to a different hosting platform by year's end, still with that same web address.

During this migration process, please know that Breeze (the app we use for Giving & the Directory) can be accessed directly through our page on the Breeze website. This page can be found at <https://woodburyumc.breezechms.com/> —> either click this link or type woodburyumc,breezechms.com directly into a web browser like Chrome or Safari.

Questions regarding the migration? Please contact Catherine Mason or Rod Carnes. If you need technical assistance, please contact Catherine Mason (outside of regular business hours please) at 203-707-6571 or catherine.mason02@outlook.com. Should you text her, please tell her who you are. We appreciate your understanding and patience as we work through this process.

FOR THE CHURCH COMMUNITY

PASTOR BRIAN WILL SWITCH WORK DAYS THIS WEEK to accommodate pastoral and program needs at both our church and Greenfield Hill Congregational Church in Fairfield. This week he will be at WUMC on Tuesday instead of Monday, along with his regular on site Thursday, when he will arrive around noon. As always if you need to contact him urgently, please use his cell phone at 203-747-1781. You may also email him at pastor.woodburyumc@gmail.com.

Pastor Brian can be reached at pastor.woodburyumc@gmail.com or 203.747.1781 for pastoral care. Want a visit? Please let him know. He'd love to meet with you!

Are you on our "Living through Grace" weekly email? If not, please contact Matti Paparazzo at wumc@woodburyumc.net She'll get you on!

Publication deadline for the weekly bulletin and "*Living through Grace*" e-newsletter is **10 a.m. THURSDAY.** Thanks in advance for your cooperation.

OPEN HEARTS, OPEN MINDS, OPEN DOORS
JOIN US FOR

Hopeful Readings & Reflections

RESPONSES IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

7-7:45 pm

Tuesdays

10/21, 11/18, 12/16

Woodbury United Methodist Church Sanctuary
4 Church Street, Woodbury, CT

Scan for
Readings



Scan for
Parking Info



Event Format:

1. Welcome & quiet centering
2. Reading & conversation
3. Prayer & meditation
4. Sending forth

WOODBURYUMC.NET
203-263-4775 | WUMC@WOODBURYUMC.NET



Celebrate Chanukah

with your Friends and Neighbors at



B'nai Israel!



DECEMBER 18, 2025

5PM

We invite our friends from
the interfaith community to join us on
Thursday, December 18th at 5pm
for a festive Chanukah celebration

Join us as we light the outdoor Menorah
Stay for latkes, donuts, and
a friendly cornhole competition in the Social Hall

All are Welcome, open to all ages
There is no charge for attendance

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For more information
visit our website at www.bnaiisraelsouthbury
or call us at 203.267.3394
Hope to see you there!