

Holmdel Community, UCC – March 22, 2026



***“The Good News is
...rooted in justice, mercy and faithfulness.”***

HOLMDEL COMMUNITY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

40 W. Main Street, Holmdel, NJ 07733

*Our mission is to deepen our relationship with God,
follow Jesus in service to our community,
and work for justice and peace.*

March 22, 2026

Fifth Sunday in Lent – Confirmation!

bold type denotes collective response

❖ means please rise in body or in spirit.

Large print bibles, bulletins and hymnals are available from the ushers.

Hearing enhancement devices are also available.

Please remember to turn off your cell phones.

Words for Meditation

...Mercy is what we ask for when we have messed up so mightily in our relationships, our marriages, our parenting, our friendships, that we face either the death of that relationship or the death of who we thought we were.

Rev. Lizzie McManus-Dail
Commentator, *Tell Me Something Good*

PRELUDE

March Jubilant

Lorie Line

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Nada B. Sellers

❖ GREETING YOUR NEIGHBOR

(Don't forget to turn around and wave to our church family online!)

May the peace of Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

INTROIT

Come, Come, Whoever You Are

Adapted from Rumi/
Lynn Adair Ungar

❖ **CALL TO WORSHIP** (*people – bold*)

Confirmands

Welcome to the weary and the worn.

Welcome to the wiggly and the eager.

Welcome to the skeptical and the seeking.

Welcome to the early risers and those still trying to wake up.

Welcome to the rule followers and the rule breakers.

Welcome to those hungry for justice and those desperate for mercy.

Welcome to the sinners and the saints.

This is God's house.

You can make yourself at home here.

ALL: Let us worship our just, merciful, and faithful God!

❖ **OPENING HYMN**

Come, Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove

No. 248

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Rev. Nada B. Sellers

Holy God,

we love to live our lives by the rules.

We love clear answers.

We love right and wrong.

We love swift justice.

We love to pick up stones,

but you show us another way.

You welcome shades of gray and nuanced conversation.

You prioritize mercy over legality.

You prioritize people over tradition.

You prioritize love over everything.

**Forgive us for losing sight of what truly matters.
Forgive us for clinging tighter to laws than to each other or to you.
Forgive us. Soften our hearts.**

Silent prayers...

Root us in mercy, justice, and love.
With hope for a better tomorrow, we pray.
Amen.

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

Rev. Nada B. Sellers

Siblings in Christ,
Hear and believe the good news of the gospel:
Our God is a God of mercy.
Our God is a God of compassion.
Our God is a God of grace.
We are forgiven, loved, and invited to choose another way.
Thanks be to God for yet another second chance.
Amen.

❖ GLORIA

to the tune of No. 35

**Glory to the Creator, and to the Christ,
And to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
World without end, Amen. Amen.**

SERVICE OF CONFIRMATION

Rev. Nada Sellers & Amanda Spagnolia

Introductions

Affirmation from Confirmands, Mentors & Children

Amanda Spagnolia

Minister: Do you desire to join together in membership with this Christian community known as the Holmdel Community United Church of Christ?

Confirmands: I do.

Minister: Mentors, do you bear witness to the preparations of these confirmands as they enter into membership? Have they been faithful in exploring faith and seeking to grow in personal devotion to God and the church?

Mentors: We confirm their preparations and their growth in faith.

TO the Children of the Church:

Minister: Alright kids, do you think we're ready?

Younger Children: Yes!!!

Minister: We receive these affirmations and continue with the litany of faith.

Litany of Faith for Confirmation (UCC, adapted) Rev. Nada B. Sellers

*A litany for affirming faith in the UCC tradition,
using formative statements from our history
and practice of biblical truths.*

Pastor: The commitments of the United Church of Christ have developed into several significant phrases, which have grown from the Christian traditions of our formative denominational roots. Let us affirm these commitments with the following litany. We are a uniting church as well as a united church, following the motto of the United Church of Christ found in Scripture at John 17:21.

Confirmands: *That they may all be one.*

We are a church of mutual understanding, that our common Christian life and shared commitment to one another's well-being, upholds diversity in unity, supported by love.

In essentials unity, in nonessentials diversity in all things charity.

We express our faith in many ways. Rather than establishing doctrines which test our faith, we share faith through a variety of written testimonies, which speak from particular times in our history.*

We affirm testimonies of faith rather than tests of faith.

Pastor John Robinson's 1620 farewell address to Pilgrim Separatists as they set sail for the New World, emphasized the primacy of the Bible as the wellspring for our understanding of the good news. The following statement remains true today:

"There is yet more light and truth to break forth from God's Holy Word." New insights and help for faithful living are still ours to receive. In Gracie Allen's contemporary words, "we never place a period where God has placed a comma."

We are a church where all are called to minister, each believer is connected to the Holy One through prayer, devotion and fellowship. While some among us are called and trained to serve as ministers in the church, we are each responsible to share in the work of the church.

The priesthood of all believers** means you and I are the ones called into spiritual community to "do church" together, in faithfulness to the Spirit's guidance. We all have gifts to share.

Finally, we are a church of siblings in Christ, with freedom to believe and act in accordance with our understanding of God's will for our lives. This doesn't mean we are a church of one person!

We are called to mutual care and community engagement as we live in loving covenant with one another.

Confirmands with Pastor

With gratitude we embrace the responsible freedoms of church, denomination and global partnership. It is our calling to live in the world as Christians as well as communities of the United Church of Christ. This is our opportunity as well as our challenge. Thanks be to God!

**Revised UCC Statement of Faith, 1981, see back of bulletin.*

*** See 1 Peter 2:9*

Communal Response

Pastor:

People of God, members and friends of Holmdel Community United Church of Christ, you have witnessed the statements made by these confirmands and their mentors. Let us welcome them into the full life and membership of this faith community!

Congregation:

We receive you with joy into the life and ministry of this church. We pledge our on-going support to uphold and encourage you in faith and to keep you in our prayers. Welcome!

Prayer of Gratitude

Rev. Nada Sellers

Greeting New Members!

Come forward to offer welcome!

SPECIAL MUSIC

A Commission of Faith

Joseph M. Martin

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Matthew 23:13-15, 23-24

John 8:2-11

Confirmands

RESPONDING WITH FOOD DONATIONS

Rev. Nada Sellers

When Jesus met with his friends in the upper room, he shared common meal items -- bread, water, wine -- and he made them holy. Food is a holy and humbling mystery, a shared sacrament that unites us all. God's love is present in the food we receive. God's love is present in the food we give.

God, inspire us to lovingly, joyfully, share with our neighbors and friends.

Please bring your food donations forward.

Together, once seated...

Bless this food so that all who receive it may be nourished in both body and spirit.

Bless the receivers.

Bless those who have grown, harvested, packaged, and distributed it.

Bless the workers in the fields and factories.

Bless those who have given this food and all who will distribute it.

Bless the givers.

We dedicate this food in the name of our Creator, our Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

Blessed be the God who is our daily bread. God be with us all. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer concluding with The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

❖ **CLOSING HYMN** *All the Way My Savior Leads Me* **No. 559**

❖ **BENEDICTION WITH MUSICAL VIDEO POSTLUDE**

Music Video “Improbable”

Music & Lyrics by Britt Kusserow

From “Tell Me Something Good” worship series by A Sanctified Art team

***After the Postlude, you are invited to join us next door.
This is a wonderful opportunity for us
to connect with one another; coffee and refreshments served!***

Liturgical Resources Front Cover art *There is Good* by Hannah Garrity of Sanctified Art series, *Tell Me Something Good* and portions of liturgy adapted from prayers by Rev. Sarah A. Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org. L.A. Unger setting of Rumi lyric, permission granted for worship use. Scripture Response from *The Courage To Say No* Songbook collection, Iona Community, Wild Goose Worship Group, 1996. Confirmation Liturgy by Rev. N. Sellers, as adapted from “*Who We Are, What We Believe*,” Pilgrim Press brochure.

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Land Acknowledgement: Our buildings stand on the ancestral land of the Munsee Lenape, Lenape Haki-nk (Lenni-Lenape). We acknowledge these Indigenous Peoples and decry the unjust taking of their land, the unfulfilled promises of U.S. treaties granting land access, and the still unresolved traumas of forced migration, genocide, and theft. We acknowledge and affirm Native American values and Indigenous cultures while holding space for atonement and healing.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thank you for visiting with us today! It is a pleasure to have you here. Feel free to get information about our church from the table by the church entrance. Please sign our guest book by the door, so that we can send you our monthly newsletter and other information (make sure to include an email address!).

Thanks to today's **Worship Leaders:**

Rev. Nada B. Sellers, Minister;

Confirmants: John Hunter DeFelice, Ella Grace DeMeo, Lila Elise DeMeo
Jonathan Declan Gilpatrick, and Madyn Noelle Mortenson, Liturgists;

Don Pope, Generosity Message Speaker & Musician;

Susan F. Davies, Minister of Music;

Amanda Spagnolia, Children's Minister; Michelle Ucciferri, Slide Changer;

Matt Snodgrass, Sound Board Operator;

Susan Shaw, Greeter/Usher and Beth Newton, Generosity Written Message

Pastor.....Rev. Nada B. Sellers
Ministers.....Members of the Church
Minister of Music.....Susan F. Davies
Children’s Minister.....Amanda Spagnolia
Office Manager.....Lynn C. Hudzik

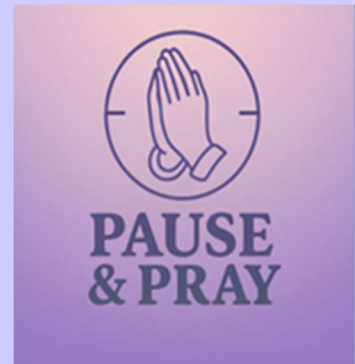
Church Office Hours: Tuesday – Friday, 9:30am – 2:30pm
Pastor’s Office Hours: **Tuesday**, 10am – 3pm and **Thursday**, 10am – 1pm
and as arranged

Phone (732) 946-8821; Email: administrator@holmdelucc.org
www.holmdelucc.org

Pause & Pray
A Weekly Vesper Service for Lent

Be still and know that I am God... Ps 46:10

Join us on Wednesdays, during Lent, for Pause and Pray in the Sanctuary. Join Pastor Nada for devotional moments of calm during your busy week! Peace be with you...



The Calico Cat Food Pantry helps support local families in need by supplementing their pantry shelves at home. Holmdel Community UCC is part of a cooperative of churches that support the Food Pantry. During the month of March, the Sunday School is collecting **pasta and/or sauce in plastic containers or cans**. Donations for Calico Cat will be offered up **TODAY!!** on Food Dedication Sunday.

Madyn Noelle Mortenson

Jonathan Declan Gilpatrick

Lila Elise DeMeo

Ella Grace DeMeo

John Hunter DeFelice



Bayshore Lunch Program

Monday, March 23rd, 10am

Community Church of Keyport

42 Elizabeth Street, Keyport

Contact Judy at judybacon52@gmail.com

Check with Liz for
carpooling information –
lizmueller11@gmail.com



the good news is..

rooted in justice, mercy,
& faithfulness

MARCH						
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
10am Service with Food Dedication & Confirmation Pledge Sunday	10am Bayshore Lunch Program	10am-12pm I-RISE Women's Health Fair 7:15pm Scouts	7pm Pause & Pray 8pm Lifeline Group of AA	7:30pm Choir		10am Meditation with Grace
MARCH			APRIL			
20	30	31	1	2	3	4
10am Service Easter Egg Hunt	6pm Men's Bible Study & Fellowship	7:15pm Scouts	2pm Care Team 7pm Pause & Pray 8pm Lifeline Group of AA	6pm Maundy Thursday Service Maundy Thursday	1:30pm Good Friday Pilgrimage to Delaney Hall 7:30pm Good Friday Service Good Friday	10am Meditation with Grace

Good Friday Pilgrimage to Delaney Hall

Friday April 3

Join us on an ecumenical Good Friday journey from Montclair to Delaney Hall, the ICE Detention Center in Newark. Together we will pray with our feet, show solidarity with our immigrant neighbors, and bear witness to the cruelty towards and crucifixion of immigrants today.



Join us starting at 8am for the full 10 mile walk, or you may join in the first or last section, or the culminating prayer service at 3pm at Delaney Hall. Return rides will be provided.

8am Gather at First Congregational Church, Montclair (40 S. Fullerton)

- Option: Join us for the first mile from FCC, Montclair to Christ Episcopal Church in Bloomfield/Glen Ridge

1:30pm Gather at St. Stephan's Grace Community – ELCA, Ironbound (7 Wilson Avenue Newark NJ)

- Option: Join us for the 2 mile final leg of the journey from St. Stephan's to Delaney Hall

3pm Prayer Service at Delaney Hall , 451 Doremus Avenue, Newark

Carpool? Meet in the HCUCC parking lot at 12:15pm to join for the last

RSVP and
Accessibility
info here:

SCAN ME



bit.ly/DelaneyHallPilgrimage

2 miles of the pilgrimage. Contact Liz at lizmueller11@gmail.com.





Eco-Palms

The palm you receive next week will be an eco-palm grown in Mexico and Guatemala. The palms are sustainably grown and are harvested with care so that the

forest is not destroyed. The trees are left to provide shade which the palms need for growth. The money raised by the sale of the palms goes directly to the local villages where the men harvest the palms and the women sort the palms.



Maundy Thursday

Fellowship Hall

6pm

A simple meal followed by washing of feet & hands (optional participation)



Good Friday

Ecumenical Pilgrimage

1:30pm

HCUCC Parking Lot
12:15pm
(back by 6pm)



Good Friday

Sanctuary

7:30pm

Tenebrae Service with Choir & Readers



Easter Sunday

2 services

7am Sunrise

Service, by the Bell followed by delights in Fellowship Hall;

10am Service, Sanctuary



Holmdel Community Church, a church so nice I joined it three times. My parents, siblings and I moved to Holmdel in 1963. In 1964, I joined the church as part of the last group taken in by Reverend Burkhardt before he retired. I joined the Reformed portion of the Community Church and joined in the Reformed Church. I was a member of the youth group and the rifle club. (yes, we had a rifle range in the basement of the Baptist Church fellowship hall before the Sunday School classrooms were built there). I also taught Sunday school assisting in Lois Zarra's class for 3 year olds in the Reformed Church fellowship hall which was later demolished to create a parking lot when the Reformed Church property was sold. There were, I think, about 15 Sunday School classes spread between the two fellowship halls. Holmdel Village was residential then with old Victorian houses along Main Street and Holmdel Road. Many people could walk to church and the children walked between Sunday School and whichever church was being used that year. My family lived on McCampbell Road, had a lot created out of the Liebenow farm.

The last Sunday we were in Holmdel before moving to Illinois was the Sunday when John Waldron was called to be the new pastor. At the encouragement of the national Reformed Church, it was decided to call a pastor who was neither reformed nor Baptist and there was controversy. As we walked out of fellowship hall, I remember my dad saying, "These people don't know what they're getting themselves into".

In 1971 when I was in College in Michigan, my parents and siblings moved to Colts Neck. At some point they rejoined the Holmdel Church, now UCC, and included me in absentia. I started coming again when I came back to go to grad school at Rutgers. None of the kids I'd been in church with before were still there and neither were any of their families. The transition to UCC

had not been smooth and half of the congregation had left. My parents moved on to Massachusetts but I got a job with the city of Long Branch and continued to come until I moved to Clifton for a job in Passaic County.

In 1984 my dad was once again assigned to Holmdel and Bell Labs moved my parents one last time from Somerset County to Long Branch where they had decided they would retire. Although there were closer churches, they wanted to come back to Holmdel Church and I started a regular Sunday morning trek from Clifton to join them. They rejoined while I was on vacation in England and so once again I joined in absentia. After 20 years they moved to a continuing care community in Whiting so now the Holmdel Church was halfway between us and we still kept coming. While they were in Whiting they were involved in a serious accident and their car was totaled. My mom developed PTSD around driving. Every time my dad would mention going to church she would start crying and shaking. The church prayed for her and I would bring many greetings when I went down on Sundays. When she finally felt well enough to come back, she was welcomed warmly and the PTS melted away.

My parents moved 12 times during their marriage so they didn't have roots but the Holmdel Church was a foundation. Literally in my dad's case. At one point he was under the building and realized the structure was only being held up by some old tree stumps, some big flat rocks and a lot of faith. He, my brother Bob and John Zweig, Jr. built the concrete foundation we are now resting on. We said goodbye to my parents and brother Rick in this sanctuary. Some people thought I would stop coming when my parents died and I got offers, and still get offers, from other churches. But this is my home so I'm still coming, unless the weather is bad.

Beth Newton

UCC STATEMENT OF FAITH
(Adopted in 1959) Revised in 1981:

We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit, God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God, and to your deeds we testify:

You call the worlds into being, create persons in your own image, and set before each one the ways of life and death.

You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

You judge people and nations by your righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior, you have come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to yourself.

You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant, faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.

You call us into your church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be your servants in the service of others, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.

You promise to all who trust you forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, your presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in your realm which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you.

Amen.

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the excellence of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

1 Peter 2:9