

# UNITED COMMUNITY CURRENT



*FEBRUARY 2023*

Email: [Unitedcommunitychurchucc@gmail.com](mailto:Unitedcommunitychurchucc@gmail.com)

Website: [UCCSTJ.com](http://UCCSTJ.com)



## **Pastor's Ponderings**

One of the things that drew me to pastor our church is at the heart of all we do. It's even in our name. It's our love for and our commitment to our community. We live up to our United Community Church name everyday through our generous meal site, our Chapel and Sanctuary being open for prayer, through the sharing of our building with many community groups, and a myriad of other ways.

A great joy as I have been settling in is the wonderful response I have received in the community as I have sought opportunities to get to know St. Johnsbury. I want to share my gratitude and excitement for the numerous ways we are a part of the community in new ways.

Here are some of the ways I am involved in our St. Johnsbury community as a representative of our congregation:



### **NEKCA Board of Directors President**

In November I began my service on the Board of Directors for Northeast Kingdom Community Action. In January I was elected President of the Board by the other members. I am thankful for this opportunity to collaborate with this incredible community partner. I am further thankful as a newbie in town to have this opportunity to support so many people doing incredible work and to learn more about our town and our region.

### **Drug Use Prevention Coalition**

I have been invited to serve as the religious representative on this collaborative committee that includes the health department, our hospital, drug recovery programs, and other community partners. We all know this is a challenge in our area that affects many of our neighbors and those they love. I am thankful to be able to offer spiritual support and insights to those offering important services.

### **Young Adult Group**

In January we launched our new Young Adult group designed for people 40 ish and younger who are hoping to make social and professional connections. Emilie Begin who works at the St. Johnsbury Academy has been a wonderful partner in helping me get this group going. We will continue to meet every third Wednesday of the month from 4:30pm-6:30pm at Three Ponds in Danville, who is our gracious host.

### **Town of St. Johnsbury Inclusivity Ordinance**

In November the Select Board passed an inclusivity ordinance to offer protections for vulnerable persons and groups. I am currently convening a small working group working to help implement the ordinance and engage the community in the process.

In addition to these ways of being involved in the community I continue to be in conversations with the leaders of The Hub, Umbrella, Northern Vermont University, Discover St. Johnsbury, and the St. Johnsbury Academy about how I as our Pastor and we as the congregation can be supportive and involved.

We are blessed with an incredible and talented community filled with people who are passionate about social justice and are led by compassion for others. I look forward to how God will continue to guide us to be a special part of St. Johnsbury and the Northeast Kingdom. Blessings,

*Rev. Andrew Ponder-Williams*

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**Dessert and Dancing with Swing North Big Band**  
**Tuesday, February 14 7-9 pm United Community Church**

## Stewardship of Time and Talent

MODERATOR



Whenever we discuss stewardship within the church we almost always – as I did last month – go directly to talking about money and the financial support of the church’s mission and ministries. Obviously, monetary giving is an important part of our stewardship formula. Equally important to the life and mission of the church are the many gifts of time, talent and energy that help support our ministries.

We give thanks for the gifts of lay readers, musicians, child-care volunteers, fellowship hosts, meal site volunteers, decorators, outreach volunteers, activities coordinators, and so many others. Each of you are the heart and soul, the arms and legs of this Body of Christ that we call United Community Church. Our “body” also needs a “head”. In addition to “doers”, we need dreamers, planners, managers, and coordinators. These are the people who direct our ministries of Stewardship, Worship and Care, Spiritual Nurture, and Outreach, or serve on the Church Council. These are the people who nurture ideas, develop plans, propose budgets, and provide leadership for our entire congregation in our mission to build Christ’s kin-dom.



At our February Church Council meeting we will designate a Nominating Committee to identify, recruit and present a slate of officers and ministry members to be elected at our Annual Meeting in May. Nominating Committee members will be striving to match members’ gifts and talents to the needs of each ministry and office. When you are asked by a member of the Nominating Committee to consider serving on a ministry or in an office, it is because the committee has recognized skills and talents that you possess that will help move our church forward into a more effective ministry with our congregation and to our community.

As we move into the 2nd half of our fiscal year, I encourage each of you to prayerfully consider an invitation to serve and generously evaluate how your time and talents can best contribute to the life and ministry of United Community Church.

Blessings for our ministry together,  
Phil Brown, moderator

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## Swing North Big Band Celebrated a Swinging Epiphany.

If you missed it or want to hear it again, here are two links:

Phil Brown’s video of Swinging Epiphany on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/0fEXEv5Yzxx>

KATV video of Swinging Epiphany on Kingdom Access: <https://www.katv.org/vod/concerts/2023/sewinter2023>



### Church Council Members

Phil Brown, Moderator  
[stjmusic@sover.net](mailto:stjmusic@sover.net)  
Alice Kitchel, Assistant Moderator  
[alicekitchel@gmail.com](mailto:alicekitchel@gmail.com)  
Elisa Rowell, Treasurer  
[elisamay1978@gmail.com](mailto:elisamay1978@gmail.com)  
Helene Millas, Assistant Treasurer  
[frenchcutie289@yahoo.com](mailto:frenchcutie289@yahoo.com)  
Karen Sayles, Clerk  
[kmsayles@yahoo.com](mailto:kmsayles@yahoo.com)  
Pam Dearborn, past Moderator,  
[pamelad@nchcvt.org](mailto:pamelad@nchcvt.org)

Pam Dearborn, Member at Large  
[pamelad@nchcvt.org](mailto:pamelad@nchcvt.org)  
Gail Warnaar, Member at Large  
[gailw@theoldhomestead.com](mailto:gailw@theoldhomestead.com)  
Karen Sayles, Worship & Care  
[kmsayles@yahoo.com](mailto:kmsayles@yahoo.com)  
Kris Norris, Stewardship  
[KristanNorris312@gmail.com](mailto:KristanNorris312@gmail.com)  
Kathleen Haines, Spiritual Formation & Nurture  
[klehaines@gmail.com](mailto:klehaines@gmail.com)  
Alice Kitchel, Outreach  
[alicekitchel@gmail.com](mailto:alicekitchel@gmail.com)

## Ministry Reports

### Worship & Care

Although we were a small group we celebrated the new year January 1, 2023, with worship and communion at our regular 10 am time. On January 6, Epiphany, the sanctuary was swinging with the Swing North Big Band as they retold the story of Jesus' birth and the visit of the Magi using jazz standards. It was great to see the sanctuary full and feel the enjoyment of not only the musicians but the audience, too. We have a chance to enjoy the Swing North Big Band again on February 14 from 7—9 pm here at United Community Church. Dessert and Dancing will be held in the fellowship hall. Bring your favorite person and enjoy!



Coming up in February will be Ash Wednesday on February 22. We will be having a short meditative worship service in the sanctuary to begin the season of Lent. Instead of giving up something for Lent, why not add a good habit, help a neighbor, make our world a better place.

Thank you to all who volunteer to make our worship meaningful and a shared experience!

### Outreach

Outreach is coordinating the Dessert and Dancing event to be held at the church on Valentine's day, Tuesday, February 14. Swing North Big Band will be providing the music and we will be splitting the proceeds with them. Our half will be used for local missions. We are in need of finger food desserts. Not only the "rich" goodies but also sugar free and gluten free one so all can enjoy this special time. Outreach's next meeting is February 7th at 7 pm.



### Spiritual Formation & Nurture



Confirmation classes will begin March 5. We are excited to be partnering with the Littleton UCC. For more information email Pastor Rev. Andrew Ponder William at UCCSTJpastor@gmail.com

Workshop around preparing for the future, (signing up for Medicare, Advance directives, pre planning funerals and the 5 wishes), are being planned. Watch for more information about these important topics.

The secret angel program is restarting in February. Mentors will be paired with a person earlier in their faith journey. The pairs will exchange correspondence all through Lent and around Easter we will have a reveal celebration. If you have any interest in being part of this please contact Erika.

### Stewardship

Stewardship has been continuing to work through the 20 year maintenance forecast of our buildings and grounds. This forecast is being done in conjunction with the a reassessment of our insurance needs. These forecasts will help us to understand where we stand financially and how best to use our endowments.



We are continually improving our audio visual presentation and listening aides for the services. Sanctuary and "Zoom" viewers have provided us feedback that the split screen decreases clarity in visualizing the reader or speaker. With the new technology we are able to provide ASL interpretation through phone applications along with the listening aide technology. The app for the new listening aide is called "Listen Everywhere" and can be downloaded to your phones. For help with either of these programs please ask the ushers or call the church office.

### Reach Out



Our new gas card policy is working well. We have set up an arrangement with NECKA that when people come in saying that NECKA sent them, we can verify. Erika and Pastor Andrew will also be attending the St. Johnsbury Community Partners meeting.

With the cold weather, we have had more use of Frannie's and Ted's cupboard on days when the food shelf is not open. Donations are always welcome.

In January we assisted with 3 gas cards, 3 packs of diapers, 3 bags of food from Ted & Frannie's cupboard and 8 Covid test kits.

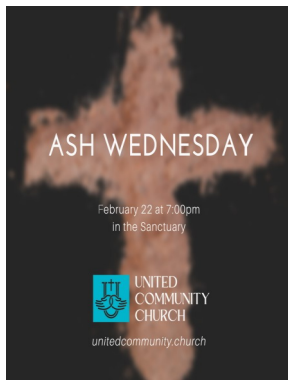
### Apartments

The vacant apartment is complete and a new tenant is moving in on February 1st. Erika and Paul have been working with Stewardship on the 20 year maintenance plan for the buildings.



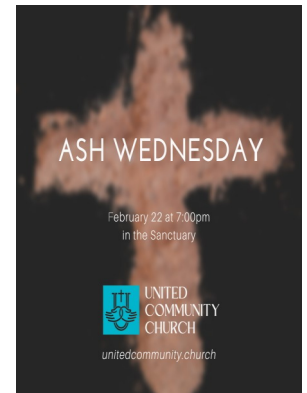
Have you visited our Facebook page? [UnitedCommunityChurchUCC](#)  
When was the last time you checked out the website? [UCCSTJ.com](#)





## Lent begins with Ash Wednesday Service

Ash Wednesday is Wednesday, February 22. There will be a short meditative worship service in the sanctuary as we begin the season of Lent. Congregants can receive ashes if they wish. Come join us as we begin this season of “restoration.” “We remember that demolition often proceeds building and strong structures need sure foundations.” (ucc.org)



## One Great Hour of Sharing

For over 70 years, the One Great Hour of Sharing offering (OGHS) has been helping American and Canadian Christians bring God’s hope and healing to hurting people both in the US and around the world. Since the closing years of WWII, OGHS has raised funds to support domestic and international development, fight poverty and its consequences, and bring aid and relief to communities torn by war or ravaged by natural disaster. Each year, the offering is gathering by several denominations under a sing theme. This year the theme is “It’s time to Share...” Through grants OGHS helps organizations confront food insecurity and hunger. They also partner with other groups to provide immediate aid to those affected by disasters, overtly or fleeing conflict—providing food, water, shelter, and companionship during times of distress. Financial gifts also enable the building and rebuilding of structures and processes that make a difference for the future, providing education and helping hands for long-term improvements. OGHS gifts allow families to plant crops, produce fertilizers and receive the physical seeds needed for planting. Education on the practices of irrigation and sustainable farming techniques are taught as well as food and nutrition, hygiene, waste management and environmental protection.

Use the BINGO card to make your contribution. Decide on an amount for each square; every time you do the activity in the square, “X” it out and put that amount in a coin bank. When you have finished “blacking out” all the squares, bring your coin bank or the equivalent to church labelled OGHS. Have fun playing.

S	H	A	R	E
<b>1</b>  Helped a friend	<b>6</b> Played with a lonely person on the playground	<b>11</b>  Gave away some of your toys	<b>16</b>  Prayed for a person who was sick	<b>21</b> Offered a compliment to another
<b>2</b> Encouraged someone when they were down	<b>7</b>  Completed your chores	<b>12</b> Let someone go ahead of you in line	<b>17</b> Held open the door for a stranger	<b>22</b>  Fed or watered birds
<b>3</b>  Planted something like a tree or flower	<b>8</b> Cleaned your room without being asked	<b>13</b> Wrote a note to thank someone for how they helped you	<b>18</b>  Helped an animal which was not yours	<b>23</b> Told your principal how great your teacher is
<b>4</b>  Turned off the water while brushing your teeth	<b>9</b> Visited a nursing home or a relative who could not leave their home	<b>14</b>  Baked something and delivered it to your neighbor	<b>19</b> Volunteered in your community with your family	<b>24</b>  Donated money to a charity or a good cause
<b>5</b>  Picked up trash in a park or at school	<b>10</b> Offered to do a sibling's chores in their stead	<b>15</b> Offered a compliment to someone who isn't always kind	<b>20</b>  Called or wrote to a relative whom you haven't seen recently	<b>25</b> Carried a fellow student's lunch tray in the cafeteria

## Confirmation Class to Begin

United Community Church is joining with First Congregational Church in Littleton, NH to hold a confirmation class for our youth. The first meeting will be on March 5 at 3 pm here at United Community Church. Invited are confirmands and their families. Classes will be held on the first Sunday of the month. April 2nd class will be at First Congregational Church, Littleton. May 7 will be a chance to hike Falling Waters Trail in Franconia Notch. June 4, class will meet again at United Community Church. Skipping the first Sunday in July due to Independence Day weekend, confirmation class will reconvene in August. On the 6th of August, St. Johnsbury youth and Rev. Andrew will lead worship in Littleton, NH and Littleton youth and Rev. Peter Ilgenfritz will lead worship in St. Johnsbury. Activities for the fall are still being formulated. More information can be obtained by contacting Pastor Andrew at [ucstjpastor@gmail.com](mailto:ucstjpastor@gmail.com)



## Lenten Study Group

Beginning on February 28, the Lenten Bible Study will convene. They will be meeting on Tuesday mornings at 10

am in the Tower chapel. This Bible study will be concentrating on the Lenten lectionary (see last page of newsletter for the February 26 scriptures). March and April scriptures will be on the final page of the newsletters of the appropriate month. Discussions will be lead by Rev. Andrew Ponder Williams. All are welcome to attend. You needn't commit to the complete series (February 28—April 4). Come when you can.

## Sign up for Summer camp now

Students going into grade 3 and up  
Scholarships available see Erika  
Listing of camps are available at:

<https://hortoncenter.org/summer-camp-sessions/>



## Offerings

	Jan	July-Jan (YTD)
Offering	2,295.00	34,651.00
In Kind offerings	0.00	1,158.70
Loose Offerings	544.11	1,873.05
VANCO Offerings	732.75	2,752.75
<b>Total Offerings</b>	<b>3,571.86</b>	<b>40,435.50</b>
Directed Donations	41.50	44,398.32
Wider Mission	75.00	1211.00
Local Mission	50.00	1453.85
<b>Total Mission</b>	<b>125.00</b>	<b>2664.85</b>
	<b>Mission</b>	<b>Offering</b>
<b>2023</b>	\$4,780.00	\$70,000.00
<b>% of budgeted amt</b>	55.8%	57.8%

## Projects from staff:

- Lollipop Wednesday
- Assisted Worship and Care with coverage and planning services.
- Erika meets weekly with stewardship.
- Welcome bags
- Helped people with questions about building use and scheduling
- Staff development
- Interview with Caledonian Record for Bridal guide
- Fire extinguisher inspections
- Advertising
- Power point for worship service
- website/ facebook
- Contacting contractors for bids on various projects.
- Supporting and advertising community lunch
- Marketing
- Gas cards
- Maintaining and opening of chapel.
- newsletter

\*\*Please ministry chairs check your office mailbox\*\*

## Mission Statement

**As one body in communion with God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, we, the members of United Community Church covenant with one another to care for and love each other as Jesus Christ loves us, and to maintain, support, and foster a compassionate ministry in our community and throughout all God's creation**



# *Dessert and Dancing*

**Swing North  
Big Band**



**7-9  
pm**

**Admission -  
by donation -**

**Proceeds to help  
fund local missions**

**United Community Church  
1325 Main St.  
St. Johnsbury, VT**

**Valentine's Day, Tuesday, February 14**



UNITED COMMUNITY CHURCH

# CHURCH APPAREL ORDER FORM



Hoodie (\$35)

Small

Medium

Large

XL

XXL

Hat (\$20)



**Add up your total:**



Cathedral T-Shirt (\$25)

Women's

Men's

Small

Medium

Large

XL

XXL

St. J Scale T-Shirt (\$25)

Women's

Men's

Small

Medium

Large

XL

XXL

Please make out a check to United Community Church and put "apparel" in memo line. If paying in cash please put in an envelope and label it "apparel order" and provide your name. Please submit this form and payment to Church Office.

Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

Mark your calendars: February 6—Church Council; February 7—Outreach; February 21—Worship and Care; February 22—Ash Wednesday;

February 26—Boundary Training for the Congregation; February 28—Bible Study; March 6—Church Council; March 7—Bible Study;

March 14—Bible Study; March 21—Bible Study; March 28—Bible Study; April 2—Palm Sunday; April 6—Maundy Thursday;

April 7—Good Friday; April 9—EASTER!





**FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS**

- 2/4 Ron Steen  
Fiona Turo
- 2/6 Kate Roosa
- 2/9 Ashley Scherer
- 2/11 Brahm Schweigert
- 2/12 Steve Slayton
- 2/13 Susanne Roberts
- 2/15 Sanne Brown  
Rodney Sayles
- 2/21 Chris Ummer
- 2/23 Walter Brenier  
David Brown
- 2/26 Jonah Raser  
Owen Soltysiak
- 2/27 Jennifer Goodhue
- 2/28 Carol Stock



**FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES**

- 2/14 Sally & Elliott Crocker  
Dale & Arlene Morse
- 2/24 Joelle & Scott Beck

*Dessert and Dancing*

Swing North  
Big Band



7:00  
9  
pm

7:00  
9  
pm

Admission  
by donation -

Proceeds to help  
fund local missions

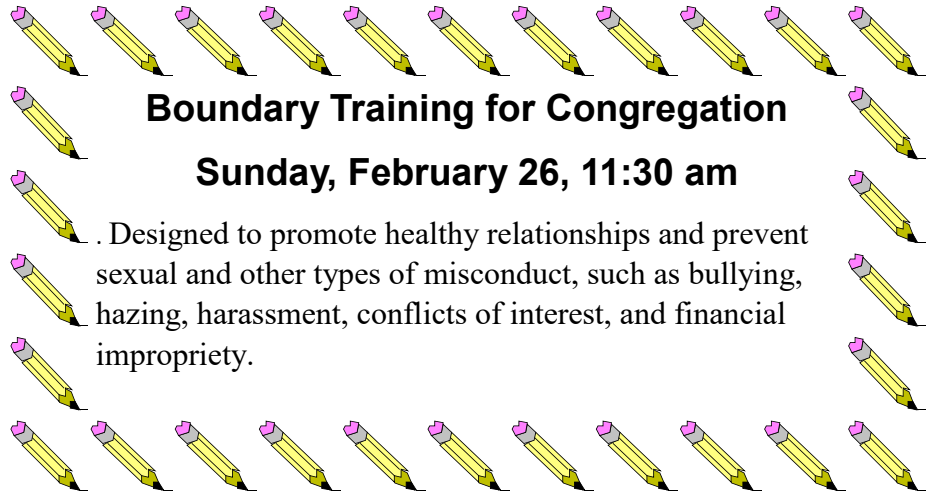
United Community Church  
1325 Main St.  
St. Johnsbury, VT

**Valentine's Day, Tuesday, February 14**



**Anne Celeste Jenks**

March 31, 1932 - January 8, 2023  
Widow of Charles Jenks



**Boundary Training for Congregation**

**Sunday, February 26, 11:30 am**

Designed to promote healthy relationships and prevent sexual and other types of misconduct, such as bullying, hazing, harassment, conflicts of interest, and financial impropriety.



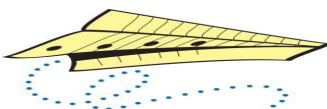
**Choir Rehearsal  
February 5 & 19**

**In our Thoughts and Prayers**

- Julie Brisson
  - Bob Chapman
  - Clifford family
  - Mary Feron
  - Jenks family
  - Joan Knutsen
  - Ed Magnus



  - Maynard family
  - Kim O'Connor
  - Raser family
  - Lorraine Scherer
  - Pam Smart
  - Gail Warnaar and family



If we have missed your birthday or anniversary **please** let either Barbara or Erika know at 802-748-2603 or [UnitedCommunityChurchUCC@gmail.com](mailto:UnitedCommunityChurchUCC@gmail.com)

# United Community Church

United Church of Christ  
1325 Main Street  
St. Johnsbury, VT 05819



## Just a reminder:

Although we don't require mask wearing we ask you respect one another's choices to stay safe



# February



## February Lectionary



### February 5

Isaiah 58:1-12  
Psalm 112:1-10  
1 Corinthians 2:1-16  
Matthew 5:13-20



### February 12

Deuteronomy 30:15-20  
Psalm 119:1-8  
1 Corinthians 3:1-9  
Matthew 5:21-37



### February 19

Exodus 24:12-18  
Psalm 2  
2 Peter 1:16-21  
Matthew 17:1-9



### February 26

Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7  
Psalm 32  
Romans 5:12-19  
Matthew 4:1-11



## SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES 10am

In-person and  
Facebook Live /Zoom

Zoom etiquette:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?ref=saved&v=209599687060439>

## STAFF

<i>Pastor</i>	Rev. Andrew Ponder-Williams
<i>Music Director /Organist</i>	Barbara Connelly
<i>Handbell Director</i>	Phil Brown
<i>Virtual Worship Director</i>	Phil Brown
<i>Virtual Technicians</i>	Sean Cavanaugh, Betty Keller
<i>Secretaries</i>	Barbara Connelly, Erika Thompson
<i>Building Manager</i>	Paul Bergeron

## CONTACT INFORMATION

United Community Phone number 748-2603  
Email UnitedCommunityChurchUCC@gmail.com