

Our Light

Your word is a lamp to my feet,
and a light to my path.
Psalm 119:105

www.middleburyumc.org

The United Methodist Parish Newsletter
Middlebury ♦ East Middlebury ♦ Ripton

February 2011

Whether you are a member of the Middlebury, East Middlebury, or Ripton congregation, a local resident, or a visitor to our area, you are invited and welcome to attend and participate in all activities and events mentioned in this newsletter.

What's Next? Top Ten in 2011 Continues

Lent begins very late this year. Because of this late start, there are ten Sundays in what is called the season of Epiphany. So, as I announced on Christmas Eve, on the first ten Sundays in 2011, I have been and will be preaching about the top ten controversial concerns of people of the Christian faith in our part of the world today. I have ideas about what these concerns are; you may have ideas that are different from mine. I would like to hear from you in the coming weeks so that you can help shape the discussion for the first ten weeks of the year.

Some questions I will use to address each concern include:

- ♦ What does the Bible say about this and why does this matter? How do we know what the Bible says about this? What did the authors of Jesus' story believe about this and how did they convey it? Through these authors' stories, what did Jesus say or do about these concerns?
- ♦ What does the United Methodist Church say about this and why? What do other Christian traditions/religions say about this?
- ♦ Why is this important to us today? How does it challenge and inform our faith? How can we talk about it with others? What is our experience?

In other words, we will use what has been called the Wesleyan quadrilateral—scripture, tradition, reason, and experience—to tackle these concerns together. We will not discover all of the answers to our questions, but we, like Rilke, will 'live the questions' together.

Let me hear from you about your concerns as a person of faith. And may God add blessings to the epiphanies that are before us.

Rev. Jill C. Robinson

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Celebrate Scouting Ministry Sunday on February 13

If you or someone you know is involved in either Boy or Girl Scouts, Camp Fire and 4-H, come to church in uniform and/or with photos of your service if possible on February 13. If you were once a scout and still have badges, etc., feel free to bring them to worship as part of the celebration. The following is an article from the United Methodist News Service about this annual Sunday celebration.

Celebrate Scouting Ministry Sunday

by Larry Coppock

More than 600,000 youth meet in more than 8,000 United Methodist churches each year as members of scouting and other youth organizations. Surveys show that 300,000 come from unchurched families, creating an evangelistic opportunity.

The United Methodist Church designates the second Sunday in February for Boy Scouts and the second Sunday in March for Girl Scouts. Many congregations use any one Sunday of their choice to celebrate all ministry offered in collaboration with youth agencies (Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Camp Fire and 4-H).

Scout Sunday can be a memorable day for youth and for parents, whether they are members of the church or searching for a faith community.

- ◇ Invite Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and other youth to lead parts of the service.
- ◇ Ask scouts to be greeters and ushers.
- ◇ Set time aside to present awards.

Scout Sunday is an appropriate time to present **God and Country Awards** for various ages, grades 1 through 12. For information, contact P.R.A.Y. at (800) 933-7729 or pray@praypub.org.

The youth director, scout leader or another adult may want to nominate young people who are not scouts for **Good Samaritan Awards**.

The church may honor adults who lead scouting programs with either the **Cross and Flame** or the **Torch Award**.

The General Commission on United Methodist Men wants Scouting Ministry Sunday stories. Send a brief article and action photo for potential publication in Scouting News to General Commission on United Methodist Men, P. O. Box 340006, Nashville, TN 37203-0006.

Larry Coppock, National Director of Scouting and Civic Youth Ministries,
General Commission on United Methodist Men



Confirmation Class Begins



There will be a confirmation class led by Rev. Jill for all young people in 7th through 12th grades beginning on **Sunday, January 30**. This class has no prerequisite expectations except a desire to learn more about faith and the church. It will include such topics as Biblical and church literacy, some church history, United Methodist beliefs as compared with that of other Christian traditions, etc.

Participants will be expected to do some writing and reflecting on what they believe. We will gather after church from 12:30 p.m. to 2 p.m. the first three Sundays of February, taking the fourth Sunday off because of school break. In order to be in compliance with our Safe Sanctuaries Policy, parents, grandparents, and mentors will be asked to take turns attending the class so that there is more than one adult in the room with the young people. For more details, contact Rev. Jill at 388-2510.

Upcoming Youth Mission Trip

There is going to be a youth mission trip this summer organized by Rev. Kim Hornung-Marcy from North Ferrisburgh UMC. There are still several partial scholarships available as well. To learn more about the UM Army, google it or go to www.umarmy.org.



WHO? 7th-12 graders gathering with about 100 other 7th-12th graders and accompanying adults

WHAT? UM Army mission trip

WHEN? July 17-23

WHERE? Hartford, Connecticut

WHY? To provide Christ centered quality work camps that serve people in need and promote spiritual growth and leadership in youth.

HOW? Registration costs \$300. There will be smaller costs for gas, meals en route, and spending money. Bring your own tools. \$100 scholarships available for first time attendees.

Please let Rev. Jill (388-2510) know if you are interested, and please help spread the word.

Lent is Late



You may be looking at the February calendar and wondering when Lent begins. This year, Lent does not begin until March 9. Why is Lent so late? As many of you know, in the western church Easter falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the spring equinox. This year, the moon is full on April 18, four weeks after the spring equinox. This puts Easter Sunday on April 24. Lent begins forty days, not counting Sundays (little Easters), before Easter.

(Just for comparison, Easter was celebrated on March 23 three years ago, the earliest for anyone born between 1913 and 2160!)

Watch the March and April calendars for details regarding Lent and Holy Week.

Adult Study on Islam

Several people in the congregation have asked Jill to preach about the similarities between Islam and Christianity, on Christ in the Koran, etc. as part of the current 10-week sermon series on concerns people of faith have in our part of the world. The adult Sunday class is covering just this and more. It is a twelve-week course on Great World Religions: Islam from The Great Courses by The Teaching Company. Each week interested teens and adults are invited to watch a half-hour DVD lecture beginning PROMPTLY at 10 a.m. in the church study (to the right of the organ off of the sanctuary.) Then there will be a few minutes for discussion before the worship service begins around 10:45 a.m. It is not too late to join the class.

Here is one on-line review in which Pastor Steve Hay of Tabernacle United Methodist Church names the course's strengths and a few limitations from his perspective:

Islam: the word and the religion inspires fear and causes confusion in many Christians. Islam—what is it? Is the Taliban and Al Qaeda all you know of Islam?

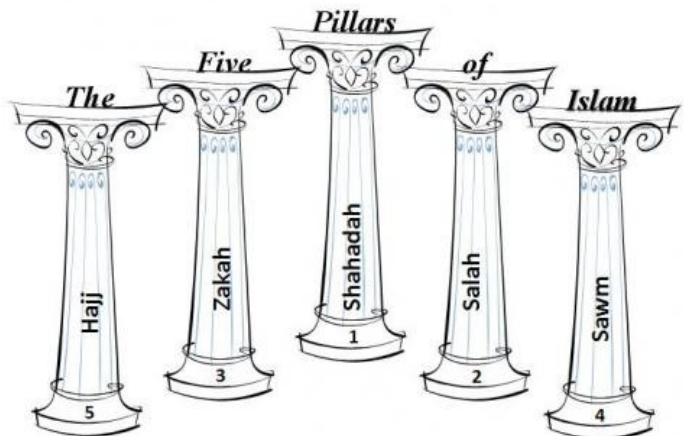
What if the Crusades and American soldiers in your town was all a young Middle Eastern child knew about Christianity? Muslims are our neighbors in the US. Muslims are our neighbors in the world. Islam is the second largest religion in the world. But who are they? What do they believe to be true and of ultimate value?

Christians need to know. We need to know more than news headlines and what angry people tell us.

Therefore we are adding ... The Teaching Company's course, "Great World Religions: Islam" to the Tabernacle Church library. It is a 12 lecture course with each lecture taking 30 minutes. The instructor is Professor John Esposito, a distinguished instructor at Georgetown University. He himself is a Christian, but is respectful of his topic and has written over 25 books and is editor-in-chief of The Oxford History of Islam. In other words, he's no slacker.

Lecture topics include: The Five Pillars of Islam, the life of Muhammad—the founder of the faith, the Quran (Muslim scriptures), community in Islam, different spiritualities within Islam, women in Islam, and Islam in the West, among others.

Because the need to understand Islam is so crucial in our day I recommend this set of CDs for Christians.



Financial News Update

The Middlebury Church Finance Committee wants to keep everyone up-to-date on our current financial status.

Due to several factors, we have ended the 2010 year with a \$5,000 deficit. Much of this is due to our fuel costs. The troubled economy has also played a part in this shortfall. Due to this fact, several of our good and faithful givers have found themselves in unfortunate and different circumstances than when they made their good-faith pledges for the 2010 year. We know that some of our church family has been touched by our economic environment, and want to hold all those in our prayers.

We feel we have been blessed by the graciousness of Bill Heffernan of Champlain Valley Plumbing and Heating, who is our fuel supplier. He has waited for fuel oil payments without charging us late fees, and worked with us when we struggle to pay our fuel bills which, of course, are substantial. We currently owe the December fuel bill. We are very grateful for his caring response to our need for help.

In order to pay our end-of-year obligations we had to make the difficult decision to dip into the Arnold Fund for the first time in 3 years. As many of you are aware, the Arnold Fund was established by the family of Don and Peggy Arnold, after their tragic deaths in November of 1994. The intention of this fund is to help sustain the Middlebury UMC's finances in a way that would provide income to offset the loss of the regular pledged giving of Don and Peg.

The Middlebury church has been faithful and careful stewards of this generous gift, and does not use it unless absolutely necessary. We certainly hope that we can raise more income through more pledges and any special gifts that folks can afford to give.

Any gifts designated as a special offering for the fuel fund would be **WARMLY** appreciated.

Our current receipts for the first four weeks of January total \$6,236.95. Although this sounds like a lot of money, it does not match our expenses.

As your finance committee, we feel that people can't rise to the "occasion" if they don't know there is an "occasion". Our plan, therefore, is to keep everyone knowledgeable about our finances and circumstances on a monthly basis in the newsletter.

Blessings to all as we move together into 2011.

Margaret Klohck
Finance Committee





We include the following in our prayers:



Betty Austin
 Marian Barnett
 Betty Hampel
 Madeline Cone
 Doris Senecal
 Cora Dragon
 Della Fenn
 Walt Peck
 Mona Austin
 Chal Schley

Barbara Wheelock
 Mary Jo Richards
 Sue Flanagan
 Cliff Piper
 Cary Marshall
 Jim Holden
 Bob Warner
 Terry DeYoung's son, Trevor
 Klinck's friend, Gale
 Willie Glen's sister, Betty

Josie Glen's mother
 Jill's friend, Marilyn
 Adkins' cousin, Tim
 Edson's friend, Kyle
 Julie Coons' mother, Joan
 Len Rowell's sister, Andrea
 Burt Kimball
 Pauline O'Brien's brother-in-law, Bob
 Marg Wesley's sister, Frances
 Michael Fallon
 Marjorie Freeman



Bible Readings *for the Month*

Feb. 6 Psalm 112:1-10; Isaiah 58:1-9a; 1 Corinthians 2:1-12; Matthew 5:13-20
 Feb. 13 Psalm 119:1-8; Deuteronomy 30:15-20; 1 Corinthians 3:1-9; Matthew 5:21-37
 Feb. 20 Psalm 119:33-40; Leviticus 19:1-2, 9-18; 1 Corinthians 3:10-11, 16-23; Matthew 5:38-48
 Feb. 27 Psalm 131 or Psalm 62:5-12; Isaiah 49:8-16a; 1 Corinthians 4:1-5; Matthew 6:24-34

Monthly Ripton Prayer and Worship Service

Rev. Jill will be leading a monthly prayer and worship service at the Ripton Community Church on the second Sunday beginning at 4 p.m. The first service will take place on **Sunday, February 13.** This will be an opportunity to gather for Christian prayer and celebration. Thank you to Lisa Durante who has offered to play music for these services.

News from East Middlebury

- ◇ Seven women from the East Middlebury congregation met for lunch at Rosie's last week for their annual outing.
- ◇ Sixteen people joined in the fun for game night, complete with soup and homemade bread. Special thanks to Ron Bisette for keeping the fires stoked in anticipation of the event—a good time was had by all!

!! CELEBRATIONS !!

We celebrate Jeremias Franca's birthday on February 4. Jeremias is our covenant relationship missionary who administrates Chicunque Rural Hospital in Mozamabique.

Congratulations to Linda Connor whose sons, Matt and Mark, have both returned safely from military duty in Afghanistan. Congratulations to Sandy Hayes who had a surprise visit from her granddaughter, Ashley, who also returned home from overseas military duty.

Congratulations to Mary Wimett who became a grandmother again. Kayden Andrew Goodrich was born on December 17, 2010 to Mary's son Jason and his partner, Jody.

Tape Players Needed

Many people have requested tapes of the worship services, but most do not own their own tape players. If you can donate one or more to the church for this purpose, contact Jill at 388-2510 at your earliest convenience. Also, are the hearing assistance ear pieces working well in Middlebury? Do we have what you need? If not, again please contact Jill at 388-2510.



Women's Spirituality Group

The Women's Spirituality Group will begin a study of women of the Bible on **Tuesday, February 1 at 1:00 p.m.** All women are invited to attend these weekly gatherings of study and prayer at the home of Mimi Hardy. Need directions or more information? Contact Mimi at 388-6016.

Mystery Theater Dinner Postponed

The Mystery Theater Dinner that had been planned for February 11 has been postponed to a future date. Please consider acting, cooking, baking, etc. when the event is rescheduled. The event is fun, the food is delicious, and the money supports the church's annual expenses.

February Calendar

Thursdays.....	Middlebury Adult Choir Rehearsal	7:00 p.m.	Middlebury UMC
Sundays..	East Middlebury Adult Choir Rehearsal	8:30 a.m.	E.Middlebury UMC
	Family Worship	9:00 a.m.	E.Middlebury UMC
	Pre-K & Elementary Sunday School	9:00 a.m.	E.Middlebury UMC
	Adult Christian Education	10:00 a.m.	Middlebury UMC
	Family Worship	10:45 a.m.	Middlebury UMC

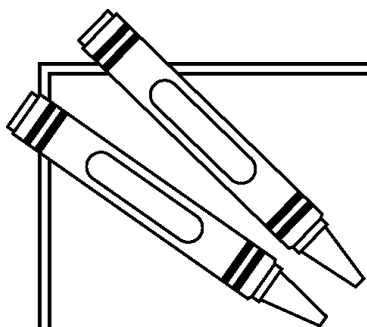


Wed.....1	Ripton Choir Rehearsal	7:00 p.m.	Ripton Community Church
Tues.1	Women's Spirituality Group	1:00 p.m.	Mimi Hardy's Home
	District Superintendent with Friends	6:30 p.m.	Ripton Community Church
	District Superintendent with SPRC	7:30 p.m.	Ripton Community Church
Wed.....2	E. Middlebury Women's Group	7:00 p.m.	Jean Peck's Home
Fri.....4	Jeremias Franca's Birthday in Chicupe, Mozambique		
Sun.....6	Communion Sunday	9:00/10:45 a.m.	E.Midd/Middlebury UMC
	Confirmation Class	12:30-2:00 p.m.	Middlebury UMC
Mon.....7	Friends of Ripton Community Church	7:00 p.m.	Sarah Wesson's Home
Tues.8	Helen Porter Ministry	11:00 a.m.	Activities Room
	Project Independence Ministry	1:00 p.m.	Elderly Services
	Middlebury Ministry Teams		Locations TBD
	- Middlebury Mission Team.....	4:30 p.m.	
	- Light Supper	5:30 p.m.	
	- Middlebury Finance	6:00 p.m.	
	- Middlebury Trustees	6:30 p.m.	
	- Middlebury Administrative Council... 7:30 p.m.		
Sun.....13	Scouting Sunday	9:00/10:45 a.m.	E.Midd/Middlebury UMC
	Confirmation Class	12:30 p.m.	Middlebury UMC
	Ripton Prayer and Worship Service	4:00 p.m.	Ripton Community Church
Tues. ...15	Serving Community Lunch		Charter House
	Women's Spirituality Group	1:00 p.m.	Mimi Hardy's Home
Wed....16	Serving Community Lunch		Charter House
Thurs. .17	Serving Community Lunch		Charter House
Sun.....20	Confirmation Class	12:30 p.m.	Middlebury UMC
Mon....21	Middlebury United Methodist Women	2:00 p.m.	Mimi Hardy's Home
Tues. ...22	Women's Spirituality Group	1:00 p.m.	Mimi Hardy's Home
Wed....23	East Middlebury Trustees	7:00 p.m.	Brown's Home
Sun.....27	Guest Preacher		
	No Confirmation Class		
	All-You-Can-Eat Pancake Supper	5:30-7:00 p.m.	Middlebury UMC

The following will be announced in the Chronicle as needed:
 Staff-Parish Relations Team, East Middlebury Administrative Council

Pastor's Office Hours

Jill will hold open office hours every Monday from 4:00 to 6:30 p.m. in the parsonage front office at 47 North Pleasant Street. If possible, call ahead to ensure that she will be available to meet with you.



Just for KIDS

How to Treat Others

How does God want us to get along with other people?
Ephesians 4:32 tells us. To find out what it says, use the
code to fill in the blanks.

CODE:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14												

“
 1,2 3 6 5 7,8 2,3 1 7,8 2,3
 2 8 7 8,9 1 10 10 5 8 7,8 1 10,11 3
 10,11 8 8 7,8 3 1 7,8 8 10,11 4,5 3 9,10’
 3,4 8 9,10 4 5 11,12 5 7,8 4 3 1 2 4,5
 8 10,11 4,5 3 9,10’ 5,6 11 10 10,11 1 10
 5 7,8 2 4,5 9,10 5 10 10,11 4 8 2,3
 3,4 8 9,10 4 1 11,12 3 13 8 11”

Answer: “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just
as in Christ God forgave you.”

The United Methodist Church
Middlebury ♦ East Middlebury ♦ Ripton
47 North Pleasant Street
Middlebury, VT 05753

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Our Light,

the parish newsletter of the
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