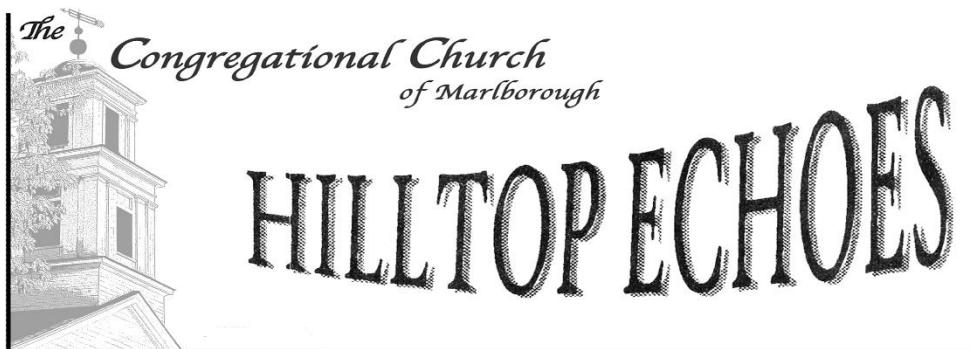


**32v Congregational Church of Marlborough
United Church of Christ
An Open and Affirming Faith Community
35 South Main Street – PO Box 57
Marlborough, CT 06447**

mcc.marlcongchurch.org
office - 860.295.9050
Office email ~ office@marlcongchurch.org
Pastor's private line - 860.295.0432
email ~ PastorVal@marlcongchurch.org

Reverend Valerie Seaver.....Pastor
Gwen Lawson.....Worship Assistant
David Mulligan.....Music Director
Elizabeth Kukich.....Christian Education/Youth Director
Alice Rowley.....Church Administrator/"Echoes" Editor
Scott Reid.....Facility Manager
Cheryl Benedetto & Linda Stachelek.....Co- Moderators
Janet Bishop & Denise Young.....Co-Vice-Moderators
Keith Davis.....Past Moderator
Pam Mosdale/Marion Spaulding.....Co-Treasurers
Finance (finance@marlcongchurch.org)

**Worship in person at the church
and live streamed at 10 a.m.
mcc.marlcongchurch.org**



No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

Enter as a Stranger ~ Leave as a Friend

Volume 69

January 2026

Number 1



January



Sunday Worship & Sunday School at 10 a.m.

The Worship service is

LIVE STREAMED

mcc.marlcongchurch.org

~ Watch live or later ~

Nursery care provided

**Every Sunday after worship
Refreshments
in the Thienes Lounge.**



January 4

Holy Communion

Pastor Val preaching.

Cathy Ferry reader Marge Bartlett, greeter

January 11

Beth Alves preaching.

Jenny Mahoney, reader

Bonnie & Dave Johnson, greeters

Serve the Lord meal
at Florence Lord Housing, noon

January 18

Bluegrass Sunday

New Church Members Received

Pastor Val preaching.

Alana Armfield, reader

Marg Rauza and Mel Jump, greeters

January 25

Pastor Val preaching.

John Grasso, reader Debbie Cook, greeter

Annual Meeting, 11:15 am

Drive Thru Café, 1-1:30 pm



**279th annual financial
meeting of the
Congregational Church of
Marlborough**

**Sunday, January 25, 2026
following Sunday worship**

Approval of 2026 Budget

2025 Statistics

2025 Report of the Treasurer

**Vote for Reverend Bob Faulhaber Jr.
to Pastor Emeritus of our church**

2026



Community Sings!

Hosted by Carolyn Brodginski

Friday, January 2, 2026

Saturday, February 7

7 pm

upstairs in the lounge

(Enter through front sanctuary door.)

All who enjoy singing and musicians are invited.



All are welcome!

Thursday morning group

meets from **11 am to noon**

Thursday evening group

meets from **6 to 7 pm**

A Keurig is available for coffee, and hot water for tea in the water dispenser.

Wednesday, January 21

6:30 to 7:30 pm

Led by Pastor Val

upstairs in the Thienes Lounge



All women are welcome to this casual and light-hearted group get together.



SEAT OF OUR PANTS

All are invited to this special performance

Saturday, January 24, 2026

7 pm

in the meetinghouse (sanctuary)

Free-will donation.

Pastoral Ponderings

January 2026

Get Your 2026 Star Word!

Star Words are a meaningful prayer practice tied to Epiphany and the new year, inspired by the Magi following the star to Jesus.

Draw your Star Word during worship on Sunday, January 11th. If you miss Sunday the 11th please find me, I will have star words ready for your choosing when you next come around.

Your Star Word will serve as a focus for reflection throughout the year, helping you notice how God moves in and around your life. It invites you into a rhythm of trust and reflection, reminding us that God often speaks in unexpected ways when we let go of control.

I would love to hear how your word led you last year.

Where will your Star Word guide you this year?

Happy New Year!

Pastor Val

OUR CHURCH FAMILY



December 7, 2025

Riley Grace Mikulak

born September 6, 2020

daughter of Danielle and Dan Mikulak

December 14, 2025

Jenn Armstrong

WITH DEEPEST *sympathy*

Our heartfelt prayers go out to the following families over the passing of a loved one who entered into the more

immediate presence of their Lord and Savior

† Peter and Jessica Trusz and their family over the passing of Peter's brother, Andy from West Columbia, South Carolina, (formerly of Colchester) on December 1.

† Michele and Paul Gliha over the passing of his uncle, Wallace "Wally" Mercer of Moodus, on December 20. A service in his memory, officiated by Reverend Valerie Seaver, was held December 30 in Manchester.



to our members and friends!

1/1 – Lexi Gosselin 1/5 – Lisa Peeling

1/8 – Gail Smithwick, Michele Sinkez

1/10 – Robert Bates, Peter Trusz

1/12 – Renee Gaudette

1/13 – Julia Benedetto 1/14 – Cindy Cantin

1/21 – Ruth Jones

1/22 – Denise Peterson, Neil Rowley

1/23 – Charlie Dente, Amanda Jacobson

1/24 – Stephanie Bunting

1/25 – Bonnie Anderson, Morgan Glynn

1/27 – Jen Autry, Joshua Trusz

1/29 – Ashley Gosselin, Rev. MaryAnn Purtill

1/31 – Alana Armfield

Count the memories, not the years.



THANK YOU

THANK YOU to the Trustees and others who volunteer countless hours every month with needed projects and in keeping our church building and grounds in excellent condition

CARE MINISTRY



Reflections on the Quote....

A monthly column from church member Ruth Jones. Ruth is a retired elementary school teacher.

*If it is possible as far as it depends on you,
live at peace with everyone.*

Romans 12:8

It seems that we are living in a period of time when differences of opinion can't be expressed without triggering emotional negatives.

Not long ago, a friend we valued expressed hateful views of someone we thought we both respected. The conversation got quite heated, but I felt we parted on good terms...so much for my positive thinking...

Just because people can't agree on a subject doesn't mean that either is evil. Speech that's harsh or unaccepting of another's views shouldn't overcome common decency and compassion.

Romans 12 is a guide for living in harmony with other people. Pride and anger and in direct contrast to the love God wants us to show others. If we faithfully look for Jesus in others, we will find it easier to exchange views with those we disagree with without contention and separation.

The tongue is often a sharp instrument that can wound deeply. It can also be an instrument of peace that can keep or restore the peace.

As we are charged with the responsibility of being God's peace, to live at peace with everyone, it would be good for our minds to control our temptations to judge. If you can't say anything nice, keep quiet.

We are all entitled to our views and should respect another's difference of opinion but not condemn them for it.

Loving God, please help me to show Your love through what I say and do and whenever possible, to live in peace with others. Amen.



**Do you or someone you know need...
a visit, a meal, transportation,
a note or a card?**

If so, please contact

Pastor Val (860.295.0432)
PastorVal@marlcongchurch.org

OR

Coordinator, Edi Dole (860.267-8543)
edidole2@aol.com

FOR WOMEN



Dorcas Women's Fellowship

Friday, January 9

noon to 2 pm

Flower Arranging

with Trish Manfredi

All women are invited!

Please bring your lunch.

Dessert, coffee/tea is provided.



Sunday, January 11

**Floral Arrangements for Sale
in the lounge after worship**

For more information,
please email **Rebecca** at
rebecca-weller@sbcglobal.net



Senior Stretch & Strengthen
Fridays, 9:45 to 10:45 am

in the Thienes Lounge.

\$25 per session (drop in as you wish)
Led by certified instructor Barbara LaBlanc.
Practical strength and balance exercises.

ABOUT THE SCHOOL and GROUP



a note from Elizabeth Kukich
Christian Education/ Youth Director
ekukich@marlcongchurch.org

December is such an important month and while very busy, we only had a few Sundays together to pack everything in.

We kicked off this season of celebration with our **Annual Tree Lighting and Nativity Festival**. Such a beautiful night spent together just embracing the peacefulness of this time of year.

We started Sunday school with taking a whole class day to learn about the **Advent Season**. The kids read and shared ideas on what they thought the significance of each candle and colors stand for. And just like the colors and candles, the wreath also has a meaning. It is a circle of evergreens, which signifies eternity, and like God's love, it is never ending. The kids made various crafts to take home of their own wreaths and Advent spinning wheel to remember the meanings for each candle.

The following lesson we read from Luke, chapter 2 versus 1-20, Jesus is born. Reading and discussing the importance of His birth and where it took place, got us all ready for our Christmas Pageant.

The **Christmas Pageant** this year was a huge success and did not just involve all the kids from Sunday school, but many adults from our congregation joined in as well. I think it was a great way to get everyone in the spirit of preparation for the birth of Jesus, with celebration, gratitude and time spent together.

Now that we have had time to celebrate and reflect on Jesus' birth, we move on to learning about His ministry and all the many wonderful things He did. **In the coming**

SUNDAY YOUTH

weeks, we will be reading chapters from Matthew. Discussing the importance of Jesus' disciples and bringing hope and light to the world. We will break down the chapters one at a time to better understand that it's not just about hearing the word of God but also the importance of obeying His words. When we put our trust in God and not worldly possessions and power, we see that God will provide for the meek and merciful.

There is no better way to start off a new year than spending our time together, learning and sharing how we are truly blessed to be forever loved by God.

Many blessings,
Elizabeth

Greetings from the Youth Group



All students grades 5 to 12 are welcome!

December was a time of reflection. Our Youth Group gathered for their meeting and while we had many laughs and time to craft, the kids took some time to think of all they have in their lives and how blessed we are for that. Not everyone is fortunate enough to have some of the simple, material things that bring us joy. We wanted to find a way to pay it forward and bring a little joy to others. The kids talked of various children's charities and gave us some great inspiration for future meetings, but at this meeting, they all agreed on making crafts to sell and use the proceeds to donate to Make a Wish Foundation.

Thank you to everyone who stopped by our Youth Sale during the Cookie Walk to purchase some holiday crafts. Not only did the kids enjoy

making the hot chocolate crafts, but they were also very surprised and thankful for the funds earned. They will be **donating \$300 to Make a Wish Foundation**, in hopes of bringing some joy to children who could use something uplifting to look forward to.

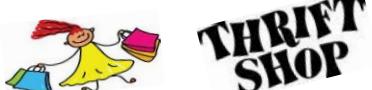
Youth Group, continued

We are working on ideas for the spring.
With all the different children's charities we talked about, we knew we wanted to find more ways to give back.

If anyone wants to get involved with our Youth Group, please reach out to me via email ekukich@marlcongchurch.org or find me at Coffee Hour. We would love to have you join us!

Sincerely,
Elizabeth

SECOND BLESSINGS



We are closed for a January winter break but are busy refreshing the shop.

New volunteers are always welcome!
Our eBay shop is always open

<https://bit.ly/MCCebay>

Follow us on our Facebook page:

Second Blessings Thrift Shop, Marlborough, CT

Re-opening for shopping and donations

Friday, Feb. 6 ~ noon to 3

Saturday, Feb. 7 ~ 10-1

Feb. 1 (first Sunday every month) ~ 11:15-noon



A NEW CHURCH COOKBOOK!

**6 (ish) Ingredients
Quick & Easy Recipes
\$10**

Copies are available in the Thienes Lounge and in Second Blessings Thrift Shop or one can be sent to you (please add \$3.00 for shipping)

I SEE THERE'S MORE

January 1 - **HAPPY NEW YEAR!**



Jan. 2 - Community Sings, 7 pm (lounge)

Sun., Jan. 4 - Worship & Sunday School, 10 am

Jan. 5 - Care Team, 6 pm (Zoom)

CT Valley Field Music, 6:30 pm (CFH)

Jan. 6 - Boy Scouts, 7 pm (CFH)

ACA, 7-8:30 pm (Youth Room)

Jan. 7 - CE, 6 pm (Zoom)

AA, noon-1 pm (Youth Room)

AA, 7:30-8:30 (Comm. Fell. Hall)

Jan. 8 - Bible Study, 11-noon & 6-7 pm (lounge)

Bluegrass, 6, Bells, 6, Chancel Choir, 7 pm

AA, 5:30-7 pm (Youth Room)

Jan. 9 - Stretch & Strengthen, 9:45 (lounge)

Dorcas WF, 12-2 (lounge)

Boy Scouts "lock-in", 5 pm to 8 am Sat., Jan. 10

Jan. 10 - lounge use, 12 to 8 pm

Sun., Jan. 11 - Worship & Sunday School, 10 am

Serve the Lord, noon (Florence Lord Sr. Housing)

Jan. 12 - Missions, 6 pm (Zoom)

CT Valley Field Music, 6:30 pm (CFH)

Jan. 13 - Boy Scouts, 7 pm (CFH)

ACA, 7-8:30 pm (Youth Room)

Jan. 14 - AA, noon-1 pm (Youth Room)

AA, 7:30-8:30 (Comm. Fell. Hall)

Jan. 15 - Bible Study, 11-noon & 6-7 pm (lounge)

Jan. 16 - Stretch & Strengthen, 9:45 (lounge)

Sun., Jan. 18 - **Bluegrass & New Member Sunday**

Worship & Sunday School, 10 am

Trustees, 11:15 am (Pastor's office)

Jan. 19 - Deacons, 6:30 pm (Zoom)

CT Valley Field Music, 6:30 pm (CFH)

Jan. 20 - Boy Scouts, 7 pm (CFH)

ACA, 7-8:30 pm (Youth Room)

Jan. 21 - **Women's Circle**, 6:30 pm (lounge)

AA, noon-1 pm (Youth Room)

AA, 7:30-8:30 (Comm. Fell. Hall)

Jan. 22 - Bible Study, 11-noon & 6-7 pm (lounge)

Bells, 6 pm Chancel Choir, 7 pm

MCNS meeting, 6 pm (CFH)

Jan. 23 - Stretch & Strengthen, 9:45 (lounge)

Jan. 24 - Boy Scouts Court of Honor (CFH)

Seat of Our Pants, 7 pm (meetinghouse)

Sun., Jan. 25 - Worship & Sunday School, 10 am

Annual Financial Meeting (and more), 11:15 am

Drive Thru Café, 1-1:30 pm

Jan. 26 - Council, 6:30 pm (Zoom)

CT Valley Field Music, 6:30 pm (CFH)

Jan. 27 - Boy Scouts, 7 pm (CFH)

ACA, 7-8:30 pm (Youth Room)
Jan. 28 - AA, noon-1 pm (Youth Room)
AA, 7:30-8:30 (Comm. Fell. Hall)
Jan. 29 - Bible Study, 11-noon & 6-7 pm (lounge)
Jan. 30 - Stretch & Strengthen, 9:45 (lounge)
Jan. 31 - Marlboro Jr. Drum & Fife, 10-12 (CFH)
