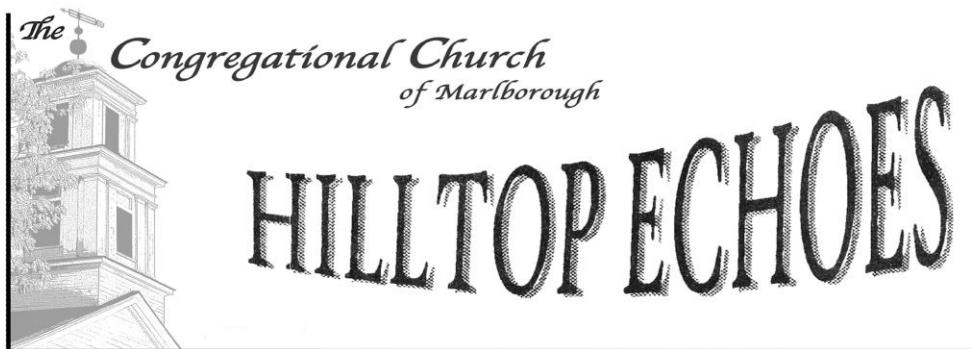


**Congregational Church of Marlborough
United Church of Christ
An Open and Affirming Faith Community
35 South Main Street – PO Box 57
Marlborough, CT 06447**

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**



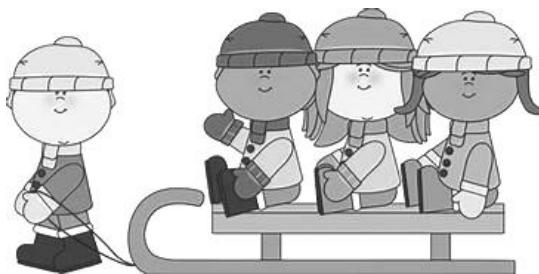
No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

Enter as a Stranger ~ Leave as a Friend

Volume 69

February 2026

Number 2





February

2026

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.

February 1

Holy Communion

Pastor Val preaching.

Beth Alves, reader Judi McBrair, greeter

February 8

Pastor Val preaching

Sheryl Scheidel, reader Betty Merritt, greeter

Annual Meeting, 11:15 am

February 15

Bluegrass Sunday

Steve Pozzato preaching.

Karen Gallmon, reader Cheryl Brodell, greeter
Serving the Lord, noon (Florence Lord housing)

February 22

Pastor Val preaching.

Janet Bishop, reader Seals family, greeters
Drive Thru Café, 1-1:30 pm



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

following Sunday worship

Sunday, February 8, 2026

(storm date February 15, 2026)

- ✓ Approval of 2026 Budget
- ✓ 2025 Statistics
- ✓ 2025 Report of the Treasurer
- ✓ Vote on Reverend Bob Faulhaber Jr. to Pastor Emeritus of our church



Community Sings!

Hosted by Carolyn Brodginski

Saturdays, Feb. 7, March 7

7 pm

upstairs in the lounge

(Enter through front sanctuary door.)

All who enjoy singing and musicians are invited.



Holy Communion

Receive Ashes

February 18, 2026

7 pm



Join us at one or all family-friendly

Wednesday Lenten soup suppers

6 to 7:30 pm

upstairs in the lounge.

starting February 25

Child care is available during the program

Soup sponsor and Speaker

February 25 – Deacons

Charles Denler & Joan Franzino Denler, speakers



February 5 and 12.

No Bible Study during Lent.

Resumes April 9

Thursday morning group, 11 am-noon

Thursday evening group, 6-7 pm

Pastoral Ponderings

February 2026

*Beloved, let us love one another,
because love is from God:
everyone who loves
is born of God and knows God*

1 John 4:7

I do not know if anyone else noticed this, but it seemed like right after Christmas stores began to display decorations for Valentine's Day. I know this happens every year, but this year it just seemed so quick.

February gets wrapped in flowers, cards, sweet words, and chocolate! A very welcome reprieve from the dead of winter, especially this winter. These outward gifts and gestures of love are important and fun! It is important to remind people in our lives that they are loved by acknowledging them on this special day. It is predicted Americans will spend over \$25 billion dollars on Valentine's Day this year, that is up from the figure of \$14 billion in 2025. People want to give joy, and that is super encouraging!

As people of faith, we are called to look deeper than a "Valentine's Day" kind of love. We are called to look beyond romance, to a love that grounds us in this life. As people of faith, we know love is not simply a feeling but a way of being. If love begins with God we will carry that love into our homes, our neighborhoods, our church. A love that begins in God means our love will also radiate to those who may be difficult to love.

Jesus taught us the greatest commandment is love, this love shows itself when we are compassionate, patient, forgiving, and courageous. This kind of love is present even when there are disagreements and pain. This kind of love chooses kindness.

We may not get this kind of love perfect every day, but we can strive for it, we can ask God to help us be a loving presence.

This year as we enter into our season of Lent, instead of giving something up, let us take something on; more love!

♪ ♪ What the world needs now is love sweet love... ♪ ♪

Many blessings to you all,

Pastor Val

CARE MINISTRY



Reflections on the Quote....

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

These trials are only to test your faith, to see whether or not it is strong and pure. It is being tested as fire tests gold and purifies it ...and your faith is far more precious to God than mere gold.

I Peter 1:7

I've always struggled with the concept of God being the instigator of our trials. It seems unkind, almost cruel, to come from a loving God. Then a devotional explained the ocean's process of transforming trash into treasure.

Discarded bottles and glassware are broken into many pieces by the pounding waves. Years of the tossing and turning smooth the sharp edges and the aging process colors them brown, green, white, and even red and orange, and sometimes, though rarely, turquoise. Craftspeople turn these bits from the sea into lovely sea glass jewelry.

Age is not just a number was probably coined by someone not close to knowing anything about life in the senior years. Age is much more than a number if you are fortunate enough to be blessed with a walk with God, a positive attitude and a sense of humor and the ability to count your blessings—actually to recognize your blessings.

Like sea glass, we've tumbled in many directions, faced trials and tribulations. Unlike sea glass I personally haven't become more beautiful—no modeling jobs have been offered.

As long as we have breath, we have God's love to share. I'm sure that a number of you remember Shirley MacLachlan, whom I called a dear friend. She was always available to listen and offer wisdom, even in her last days. The memory of her loving care and steady support lives on.

Age is much more than just a number and Marlborough Congregational Church makes that a true statement.

On June 1, 2025, I attended church with our daughter for the first time in 2-1/2 years. The warmth of the loving welcome I received will always hold me. Sheryl told her Dad she felt like she's been out with a celebrity! She told me nothing like my experience in Marlborough would ever happen at the church she attends.

So, I'll be true to the quote from C.T. Studd, a British missionary who lived one hundred years ago: *Only one life, twill soon be past. Only what is done for Christ will last...*

I'll keep on knitting for the Care Team and writing "Reflections on the Quote" as long as I can see and hold a pen.

Thank you all for your love and support!

Lord, help us realize
that you have important work for us to do,
no matter our age or mobility.

Lisa Lively
Guideposts



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

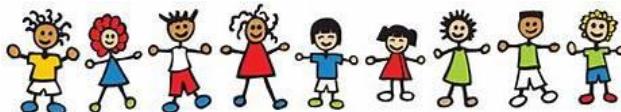
If so, please contact
 Pastor Val (860.295.0432)
PastorVal@marlcongchurch.org
OR
 Coordinator, Edi Dole (860.267-8543)
edidole2@aol.com

Care Ministry "Helps"

The Care Ministry Library bookshelf in the back left-hand corner of the Thienes Lounge We have a collection of books to be used as a resource for both those giving *and* receiving care. You'll also find simple recipes for meal preparation. Also, there are greeting cards for you to use and other information... take a look!



► The lounge kitchen freezer has prepared soups ready to deliver.



ABOUT THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

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

Hello from Sunday School,

This past month we have started to read from the Gospel of Matthew. Each Sunday we take different chapter to read and break it down with a discussion to help the kids better understand its meaning. Some fun crafts help us make the lesson sink in a little more. We started out with Matthew 4:17-25, Jesus' Ministry Begins. Here we learned the importance of Jesus gathering his disciples to help spread his words to others. They began preaching repentance and the coming Kingdom of Heaven and demonstrating His power by healing many people across Galilee. The kids made a large poster where they each listed the ways Jesus shows he cares for each and every one of us. Because Jesus cares for us, He helps in time of need with our family and friends, helps guide us in our schoolwork, during times of sickness and helps us shine during good times.

We then read Matthew 5:1-16, Sermon on the Mount. Jesus traveled through the countryside and began his teachings up on a mountain. Large crowds began to follow him and his disciples. He told the crowds that blessings would come to those who the world viewed as weak and unimportant and those who chose to follow God rather than pursue personal gain. This is where he said, "You are the salt of the earth" and "You are the light of the world". In class some of the kids

talked about ways they can be peacemakers and how they can apply that to everyday life. The older kids played a game where they were blindfolded and had to taste a treat not knowing if it was salty or sweet. If they had a salty treat, they needed to give an example of how they are the salt of the earth, by being a positive influence on others around them with integrity and humility. If they had a sweet treat, they needed to give an example of being the light of the world. They could do this with good deeds and during dark times, they can shine the path to God through their faith.

We took a Sunday to celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. I was very impressed with how much the kids all knew about him and why his preachings are still so important today. That particular day, the kids really lead the conversation with sharing facts about him and ways we can follow in his footsteps. We used a famous quote from MLK with a craft to help us remember him. "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that." The kids wrote this quote on a Ziplock bag, then placed a piece of black paper in the bag. Once they colored and cut out a paper flashlight, they slid the light in the bag to light up these important words.

In the weeks to come, we will continue to read more chapters from the gospel of Matthew. We will continue to learn about Jesus' teachings and ways we can follow his words and apply them to our lives today.

Many blessings,
Elizabeth

OUR CHURCH FAMILY



Joined on January 18

Elaine Adams

Elaine and her spouse Rob live in Marlborough. She is retired and enjoys live theater, art and Science museums, walking, swimming and kayaking.

Jenn Armstrong

Jenn lives in Canterbury and works as a Patient Services Coordinator. Her interests include music, theater, art graphic design, website design and volunteering.

Ed Dalenta and Nancy Titchen

Ed and Nancy live in Hebron. Ed retired as a Chief Probation Officer and as a Construction manager. He enjoys spending time with his children and grandchildren, golf, pickleball, biking, and boating. Nancy is already involved in various groups at our church and is interested in history and nature.

They both come to us from northeastern Connecticut Congregational churches.

David Pelletier

David lives in Manchester and for 33 years has worked as a music teacher at a Connecticut high school. He is also the director of all musicals and plays at the school. He is a singer (already joined our Chancel Choir) and pianist and sings and acts in musical productions around the state including singing in a country band. His favorite vacation destination in Martha's Vineyard.

Jean Sundstrum

We welcome back Jean who had moved and has now returned back to East Hampton.



CHURCH COOKBOOK!

6 (ish) Ingredients

\$10

Copies are available in the Thienes Lounge and in Second Blessings Thrift Shop. One can be sent to you for an additional \$3.



Count the memories, not the years.

to our members and friends.

If a birthday is missing or wrong, please let us know at office@marlcongchurch.org

2/2 – Denise Evans

2/4 – Pastor Bob Faulhaber

2/5 – Fiona Bain

2/6 – Luke Autry, Andrea Gustafson

2/8 – Peter Evans

2/9 – Phyllis Langlois

2/10 – Ali Mosdale

2/11 – Audra DeFelice

2/12 – Larry Jones

2/13 – Calin Tennis

2/15 – Rev. Ann Ameling

2/17 – Dave Goodwin

2/20 – Brian Henry

2/20 – Penny Turner, Shari vonLiebler

2/23 – Tyler Seifert, Ciara Tennis

2/25 – Pam Kundhal

2/27 – Marc Wilcoxen

FOR WOMEN



Dorcas Women's Fellowship

Friday, February 13

noon to 2 pm

All women are invited!

Please bring your lunch.

Dessert, coffee/tea is provided.

Guest Speaker

Jackie Killelea

Romantic fiction
and poetry author.

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

MISSIONS



Church World Service Blankets

Valentine Church World Service Blanket Appeal
Sunday, February 1 and 8

- >Your \$5 donation gives a blanket to those in need both within the USA and globally.
- Cards will be available with each purchase.
- Visit www.cwsglobal.org/blankets for more information.

→ Please mail your check address [note "blanket"] to the church at PO Box 57, Marlborough, CT 06447,
OR see a Mission Team member in the lounge on February 1st and 8th

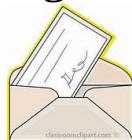


Serving the Lord Monthly meal for Florence Lord Housing residents

February 15 at noon

For more information
please contact Scott or Terri Reid
at manatee85@yahoo.com

Marlborough Food Bank



January, February, March Mission Giving

Please make your check payable to MCC
memo line: *1st quarter missions*
and drop in an offering box or
mail a check to the church at
PO Box 57, Marlborough, CT 06447



We collect food and other non-perishable items year-round for the Marlborough Food Bank. There's a collection box under the shelf in the narthex where you can drop off your donations. We'll take them over to the food bank.



Drive Thru Café

February 22, 2026
for Marlborough Food Bank patrons and their families with vouchers from the food bank.

SECOND BLESSINGS



Our first 2026 Outreach Mission giving was \$500 to Center Church in Hartford for their Emergency Warming Center that offers emergency overnight shelter during the winter months, housing around 40 individuals each night.

→ If you have suggestions for local or Connecticut non-profits, please let us know.

Second Blessings Thrift Shop is OPEN

Fridays from noon to 3 pm

Saturdays from 10 am to 1 pm

First Sunday of every month 11:15 to noon

Donations accepted during shop hours.

Our eBay shop (thank you, Stephanie Bunting) is open **year round**



Follow the link below to go directly to our store front to see what's for sale. New items are listed weekly.

<https://bit.ly/MCCebay>

♥Thank You Volunteers♥

- Feb. 6 –Bob Wargo, Sheryl Scheidel
- Feb. 7 – Debbie Cook, Betty Merritt, Julie Naseef
- Feb. 13 – Bob Wargo, Kathy Burrill
- Feb. 14 – Beth Alves, Ava Moore, Rebecca Weller
- Feb. 20 – Bob Wargo, Daphine Vail
- Feb. 21 – Carolyn Brodginski, Betty Merritt, Margie Rauza
- Feb. 27 – Bob Wargo, Nancy Titchen
- Feb. 28 – Linda Garrett, Kathi Karp, Judi McBrair

I SEE THERE'S MORE



Sun., Feb. 1 - Worship & Sunday School, 10 am
Second Blessings Thrift Shop, 11:15-12
GS Troop #65096, 2:30-5 pm (CFH)

Feb 2 - Care Team, 6 pm (Zoom)
GS, 4:45-6:15 (CFH)
CT Valley Field Music, 6:30 pm (CFH)

Feb. 3 - By-Law Committee, 7 pm (lounge)
Boy Scouts, 7 pm (CFH)
ACA, 7-8:30 pm (Youth Room)

Feb. 4 - Christian Education, 6 pm (Zoom)
AA, noon-1 pm (Youth Room)
AA, 7:30-8:30 pm (Comm. Fell. Hall)

Feb. 5 - Bible Study, 11 am-noon (lounge)
Bible Study, 6-7 pm (lounge)
Bell Choir, 6 pm (sanctuary)
Chancel Choir, 7 pm (sanctuary)

AA, 5:30-6:30 pm (Youth Room)
Boy Scouts, 6 pm (CFH)

Feb. 6 - Stretch & Strengthen, 9:45 (lounge)
Second Blessings Thrift Shop, 12-3 pm

Feb. 7 - **Community Sings**, 7 pm (lounge)
Second Blessings Thrift Shop, 10 am-1 pm

Sun., Feb. 8 - Worship & Sunday School, 10 am
Annual Meeting after worship (sanctuary)
GS Troop #61097, 2:30-5 pm (CFH)

Feb. 9 - Missions, 6 pm (Zoom)
CT Valley Field Music, 6:30 pm (CFH)

Feb. 10 - By-Law Committee, 6 pm (lounge)
ACA, 7-8:30 pm (Youth Room)
Boy Scouts, 7 pm (CFH)

Feb. 11 - AA, noon-1 pm (Youth Room)
AA, 7:30-8:30 pm (Comm. Fell. Hall)

Feb. 12 - Bible Study, 11 am-noon (lounge)
Bible Study, 6-7 pm (lounge)
Bluegrass, 6 pm (sanctuary)
Chancel Choir, 7 pm (sanctuary)

AA, 5:30 pm (Youth Room)

Feb. 13 - **Dorcas WF**, 12-2 pm (lounge)
Second Blessings Thrift Shop, 12-3 pm

Feb. 14 - Second Blessings Thrift Shop, 10 am-1 pm

Sun., Feb. 15 - *Bluegrass Sunday*

Worship & Sunday School, 10 am
(Annual Meeting storm date, if needed.)
Trustees, 11:15 am (Pastor's office)
Serve the Lord, noon (Florence Lord Sr. Housing)

Feb. 16 - Deacons, 6:30 pm (Zoom)
CT Valley Field Music, 6:30 pm (CFH)

Feb. 17 - Boy Scouts, 7 pm (CFH)
ACA, 7-8:30 pm (Youth Room)

Feb. 18 - **Ash Wednesday service 7 pm**
AA, noon-1 pm (Youth Room)
AA, 7:30-8:30 (Comm. Fell. Hall)

Feb. 19 - AA, 5:30-7 pm (Youth Room)

Feb. 20 - **Stretch & Strengthen**, 9:45 (lounge)
Second Blessings Thrift Shop, 12-3 pm

Feb. 21 - Second Blessings Thrift Shop, 10 am-1 pm
Girl Scouts, 10:30-4:30 (CFH)

Sun., Feb. 22 - Worship & Sunday School, 10 am

Drive Thru Café, 1-1:30 pm
(2/22 sponsored by St. John Fisher Church)
GS Troop #61097, 2:30-5 pm (CFH)

Feb. 23 - Council, 6:30 pm (Zoom)
CT Valley Field Music, 6:30 pm (CFH)

Feb. 24 - Boy Scouts, 7 pm (CFH)
ACA, 7-8:30 pm (Youth Room)

Feb. 25 - **Lenten Soup Supper**, 6 pm (lounge)
AA, noon-1 pm (Youth Room)
AA, 7:30-8:30 (Comm. Fell. Hall)

Feb. 26 - Bell Choir, 6 pm (lounge)
Chancel Choir, 7 pm (sanctuary)

Feb. 27 - **Stretch & Strengthen**, 9:45 (lounge)
Second Blessings Thrift Shop, 12-3 pm

Feb. 28 - Second Blessings Thrift Shop, 10 am-1 pm



Senior Stretch & Strengthen

Fridays, 9:45 to 10:45 am

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