



**Middleton Community UCC**  
**The Communicator**  
**January 2023**

An excerpt from Jan Richardson's blessing "For Those Who Have Far to Travel:

***If you could see  
the journey whole,  
you might never  
undertake it,  
might never dare  
the first step  
that propels you  
from the place  
you have known  
toward the place  
you know not.***

MCC Beloved,

New pastor, new traditions, right? I'm so excited to share a practice with you on January 8th that has been a sacred part of my journey for several years now.

I was first introduced to "Star Words" through a colleague and fellow member of Young Clergy Women International, a network of over 1600 young ordained clergywomen living and serving all over the world. The practice of Star Words has become a shared one among many of us - something we've taken to our congregations as a practice of intentional prayer and reflection. That said, in more recent years I've noticed several male colleagues have learned of and embraced Star Words as well - I'll admit, I just love the idea of a tradition born out of women's creativity shaping the sacred traditions of this generation's Christianity.

Star Words are a prayer practice whereby single words are written on small pieces of paper (often the shape of stars) and placed face down on a table or in a basket. During worship on Epiphany (this year we'll be celebrating on January 8th), you will be invited

to choose a card to take home with you. I like to tape the word to my refrigerator where I will see it daily. The word then serves as a guide and a touchpoint for reflection and prayer throughout the year.

Epiphany is the Christian holiday when we remember Wise Ones from the East being led by a star to find Jesus in Bethlehem. As the star guided them, we invite the words drawn in January to guide us in the year ahead.

Ironically enough, my Star Word in 2022 was "Journey", but I lost the physical star when we sold our house and moved not once but twice! Throughout the last year I've thought about the journey that brought me and my family from Platteville to Madison and our ministry together at Middleton Community Church. I never could have imagined from the start where we'd be now and I'm grateful for every faithful step.

When you receive your Star Word on January 8th I encourage you to spend some time with it. It might not be familiar at first - there's a chance it might not even be English. So begin by looking up a basic definition. Use it in a sentence or two. If it is familiar, attempt to reorient yourself to it. Look it up and see if anything surprises you. Then, find a place to hang it in your home or workplace where you will see it often. When you do, ask yourself these questions:

***What does this word have to do with what is happening in my life and the world around me right now? And what might our Still-Speaking God be telling me through that connection?***

*I hope your words are a gift to you this year.*

*Yours, Pastor Zayna*

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## Pastor's Public Office Hours - Barriques on Old Sauk Rd Thursday, January 5, 12, and 19

Come share a cup of coffee, a quick treat, or just a conversation. Pastor Zayna will be working from Barriques and invites you to stop by for any (or no!) reason at all.

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### Upcoming Special Services...

#### **Creative Christmastide Worship - January 1st, 9:30am**

*The season of Christmas lasts for 12 days after December 25th. During these two weeks we celebrate the God who chooses to be born and live among us. Worship on Sunday, January 1st will include a message from the drama team, congregational reflections, and interactive prayers all celebrating Emmanuel, "God With Us." There will not be communion. A recording of the Lessons & Carols service from Christmas Day will be posted on YouTube at 9:30 am on January 1*

#### **Epiphany Worship w/ Communion - January 8th, 9:30am**

*Epiphany will be celebrated on January 8th with Star Words (see Pastor Zayna's article above), Holy Communion, and special music videos. If you are worshiping from home and would like a Star Word mailed to you, please email [mccpastor@middletonucc.org](mailto:mccpastor@middletonucc.org).*

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### Save the Dates:

#### **2023 Annual Meeting**

*Sunday, January 22, 2022 – 10:30am*

#### **2023 Leadership Advance**

*Saturday, January 28, 2022 – 9am-1pm*

*2023 Board Members: please mark your calendars for the  
2023 Leadership Advance.*

*Church leadership and staff will be brainstorming and strategizing together to make 2023 a wonderful and successful year. More information will be forthcoming in the next few weeks.*

## Just Bakery Returns – January 8

Just Bakery will be back at MCC on January 8, 2023 with their delicious baked goods available after service (cash or check payment only – no credit cards). At this time, Just Bakery is scheduled to visit MCC on the second Sunday

of every other month – therefore upcoming 2023 dates currently include March 12, and May 14 (Mother's Day). For more information on Just Bakery and what your purchases support, visit <https://justdane.org/just-bakery/>.

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## Valentine Craft Activity – January 15

Come help the Board of Membership and Fellowship with an opportunity to serve our friends at Attic Angels. Following service on

January 15, we will be preparing Valentine craft kits. Look for us in Fellowship Hall. We will cutting cereal boxes and tissue paper.

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## MCC Group Trip to APT Winter Words – Monday, March 27

Kristin Friel is organizing a group to attend the reading of Gavin Lawrence's "The Barber and The Unknown Prince," on Monday, March 27. Tickets are \$20 each and go on sale in early January.

If you're interested, please get your money to Kristin before January 11 (contact her at [kristinf7@yahoo.com](mailto:kristinf7@yahoo.com) or 608-347-8733 for details).

More information about the Winter Words program can be found on the APT website:

<https://americanplayers.org/events/winter-words>



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## Surprising Gift Recipients

The Board of Mission & Stewardship is delighted to announce the second set of 2022 Surprising Gifts recipients. Each will receive \$200 from MCC:

- University of Dubuque Theological Seminary: BIPOC Scholarships for Madison-based seminary program
- Gio's Garden
- Pauls Party
- Uplift
- Backyard Mosaic Women's Project

We're also donating two extra Surprising Gifts using funds designated for Youth Food Support:

- Little John's Restaurant
- Waunakee Food for Kidz

Thanks to all of you who nominated worthy organizations for Surprising Gifts. Those who weren't chosen this time will be reconsidered in the spring.



Follow us: <https://www.youtube.com/MiddletonUCC>

## Pie Auction for Youth Mission Events - Sunday, February 12, 2023

Join us after worship service on Sunday, February 12, when our in-house auctioneer, Patrick Coughlin, will be auctioning off pies to the highest bidder. All funds will be used for future Youth Mission Events.

If you are willing to donate one (or more?) pies, please sign up at the Board of Mission and Stewardship table located right outside the Sanctuary in Fellowship Hall, or you can sign up online at: <http://bit.ly/3WyBdV0>.



Donated pies can be sweet or savory, homemade or purchased from your favorite store or restaurant. Please plan to bring a label for each pie, noting any dietary sensitivities (e.g. contains dairy, eggs, nuts, etc.).

If you're interested in volunteering to help with the pie auction the weekend of and/or during the event (set-up and facilitation), please contact Kristin Friel at [boms\\_chair@middletonucc.org](mailto:boms_chair@middletonucc.org).

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## Blanket and Coat Drive – Sunday, January 29

This winter weather has already gotten off to a brutal start, and it's at this time of year the warmth and safety of those most vulnerable weigh heavy on our hearts. This January we will be collecting new or gently used blankets and bedding for [St. Vincent de Paul's 31st Annual Recycle the Warmth](#) campaign, as well as Men's and Unisex new or gently used winter coats (sizes L, XL, XXL, 3X, 4X) to support currently incarcerated people on behalf of the [Madison Jail](#)



[Ministry](#). There will be a bin in Fellowship Hall to collect these items on Sunday, January 29.

Please be sure to wash or dry clean any used items you wish to donate. If you choose to buy new items online for either of these ministries, you can have them delivered to the church directly before January 29 at: Middleton Community

Church, attn: Warm January, 645 Schewe Rd., Middleton, WI 53562. Thank you for supporting these important ministries!

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## Healing House Volunteer Opportunities – Sunday, January 15

The Healing House provides a safe place and home health services for homeless families while a family member recuperates after hospitalization. Our next chance to provide food will be Sunday, January 15, 2023 when we will provide dinner meals for January 15 & 16. A sign-up sheet will be up in Fellowship Hall on the Mission and Stewardship table beginning in early December.

Each MCC volunteer may choose to provide one or more portions of a meal. All food will be delivered to Ross Michaels at the January 15 church service, or you may make other arrangements with Ross. New volunteers are welcome. Please contact Ross at [rossmichaels53@gmail.com](mailto:rossmichaels53@gmail.com) to sign up or for more information. Thank you!

# Adult Faith and Fellowship Opportunities

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**Adult Sunday School** will regather starting January 8 to learn about “Confronting Christian Nationalism” utilizing resources from Vote the Common Good. Join us in the Gathering Room after worship on January 8, 15, 29 and after the annual meeting on January 22.

If you'd like to be put on our mailing list, contact Lara Romine, [lararomine@gmail.com](mailto:lararomine@gmail.com).

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## Mind/Body/Spirit

This mindfulness group meets in the sanctuary every **1st and 3rd Thursday at 6:30 pm**. We're reading Tara Brach's book called *Radical Acceptance*. For January 5, we'll read the section “Facing the Anguish of Trance” and then stop just before the section titled “On the Path of the Buddha.” Everyone is welcome! Please join us! [Contact Brian at BrianWKoenig1@gmail.com](mailto:BrianWKoenig1@gmail.com) for more information.

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## Choir

Join the MCC Choir! We are a welcoming group of individuals who enjoy singing and learning about music. Rehearsals are **Wednesday evenings at 6:30 pm** and we sing in worship about twice per month. Come once to try it out if you're not sure. It's also a great way to connect with fellow MCC members!

*The choir will not be meeting on January 11.*

Instrumentalists are needed for worship too! We can support and organize solos and ensembles. Contact Deb Neuman for more information: [mccmusic@mccucc.org](mailto:mccmusic@mccucc.org)

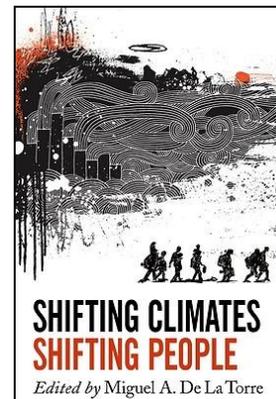
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**Tuesday Night Fellowship** will return January 3 with a new book: *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion* by Jonathan Haidt. Buy your own copy and join us next month **Tuesdays at 6 pm** in the Gathering Room for soup, bread, and dessert. Discussion starts at about 6:30, and we try to end by 7:30. Questions? Contact Dave Werner with questions at [davewerner86@gmail.com](mailto:davewerner86@gmail.com).

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## Coffee and Conversation

This group meets in a Hybrid format on the **first and third Wednesdays**. Church doors are open by 7:45 am, the discussion starts at 8:00. Coffee is brewed hot and fresh, hot tea and hot chocolate are also available!



Currently, we are discussing the book *Shifting Climates, Shifting People*.

**January 4:** Chapters 10-12

**January 18:** Chapters 13-15

Everyone is welcome at these discussions.

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**The Knitting Group** will meet twice in January. On **Thursday, January 12 we will meet at 11:00am** in the Heritage Room. On **Thursday, January 19 we will meet at 6:30pm** in the Heritage Room. If you enjoy any needlecraft and would like some fellowship while doing so, please email Beth Michaels at [bethmichaels57@gmail.com](mailto:bethmichaels57@gmail.com) or simply show up at one of our meetings.



Like” our public page: [facebook.com/MiddletonCommunityChurch](https://facebook.com/MiddletonCommunityChurch)

Join our Members & Friends group: [facebook.com/groups/mccmembersandfriends](https://facebook.com/groups/mccmembersandfriends)

# Children and Youth Faith and Fellowship Opportunities

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## Connect in Sunday School!

There will be NO Sunday School classes on New Year's Day or January 8 (Communion Sunday). We will resume classes on January 15.

The Prayer Ground will be available with quiet activities for children.

Our friends who are in 4th-12th grade are encouraged to reach out to [Rich Pleva](#) and sign up to do liturgy if they are interested. This involves leading the call to worship and reading scripture during worship.

We are happy to offer Sunday School for all ages at MCC!

On non-communion Sundays, we offer classes after Moment with Children for **Preschool** (3 years-preK), **Elementary** (K-4 grade), **5/6 grades**, and **7/8 grades**.

**High School Youth** meet for Faith Formation on the second Sunday of each month from 6:30-8:00 pm. We serve a snack, and spend time learning, but also allow time for fellowship.

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Please register your children to help keep our records, and permissions, up to date. Thank you!

[Children: Birth-4th Grade \(2022/23\)](#)

[Youth: 5th-12th grade \(2022/23\)](#)

## Family Movie Event

Sunday, February 5

2-4 pm in the sanctuary.

*Cinderella* from Amazon Prime



This fun musical is a modern, live-action movie with a bold new take on the classic fairy tale. Ella has big dreams, and with the help of her Fab Godmother her dreams will come true! This is a fun musical that challenges gender stereotypes.

The all-star cast includes: Idina Menzel, Minnie Driver, James Corden, Nicholas Galitzine, Billy Porter and Pierce Brosnan.

Popcorn and snacks will be served.

**Cinderella is rated PG.**

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***Masks are optional for church activities***

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# MCC Youth

## Middleton Community Church

### Middle School Youth Group: January 15 – 6:30-8:00pm

Join the fun of assembling bird houses for our feathered kin. This spring they'll be placed on the land around the church. Friends are welcome, they will need to register as well.

**Registration is required by Wednesday, January 11th** so we can plan accordingly.

[January Middle School Youth Group Sign-up](#)

Note: there is no **High School Youth Group** in January due to the **Balsams Winter Retreat**.



### Youth Winter Retreats at Camp Balsams

High School | January 20-22

[High School Registration](#)

Middle School | February 24-26

[Middle School Registration](#)



**Cost:** \$75 for the first child, \$125 for two, \$150 max per family. (family discount applies across both retreats)

**Hiking - Games - Fellowship - Learning - Outdoor Play**

Our Winter Youth Retreats are a wonderful opportunity for our Youth to learn, play and bond up in the beautiful Northwoods! This year's topic is Racial Justice. The High School Youth will look at Racial Justice in regard to our Indigenous friends. The Middle School group will take a more general look at Racial Justice as a whole.

Our **High School retreat** is for youth in 9th-12th grades. We will meet at the church at 12:30pm, and be on the road no later than 1:00 pm on Friday afternoon. We will plan to arrive back on Sunday between 3:00 & 5:00 pm.

*\*\*\*We have learned this is finals week for some of our students.*

*Thus our departure time will be adjusted once we learn schedules.*

The **Middle School retreat** is for youth in 5th-8th grades. We will meet at the church at 2:30 pm, and be on the road no later than 3:00 pm on Friday afternoon. We will plan to arrive back on Sunday between 3:00 & 5:00 pm.

**Space is limited! So sign-up early.**

## Camp Balsams Committee Annual Meeting – January 11

The Camp Balsams Committee will hold a hybrid annual meeting on Wednesday, January 11 at 6:30pm. Join in Fellowship Hall or online via Google Meet: <https://meet.google.com/njw-zqss-pqf>

Ross Michaels will be sending an email with more information to the committee members. If you'd like to join the committee, contact the [office](#), and you can be added to the list.



# ANNUAL MEETING

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## Winter Retreats at Camp Balsams

Camp Balsams, on Bass Lake near Eagle River, is a great base camp for your retreat in the north woods this winter, with snowshoeing, cross country skiing and ice fishing available

nearby. Charlie's Cabin is open year-round and is a warm and inviting place for relaxing, reading and sharing good fellowship.

Please contact Anne in the church office ([mccucc@middletonucc.org](mailto:mccucc@middletonucc.org)) about winter openings.



**Office Hours:**

**Monday-Thursday 8am to noon**

**Stay in touch:** Contact the staff via phone and e-mail. If we don't answer the phone, please leave a message; our voicemail messages are automatically forwarded to staff email.

**Office:**  
**(608)831-4694**

**Pastor Zayna Thomley**  
[mccpastor@middletonucc.org](mailto:mccpastor@middletonucc.org)

**Anne Tennes, Office Manager**  
[mccucc@middletonucc.org](mailto:mccucc@middletonucc.org)

**Darci Warner, Faith Formation Director**  
[mccfaithformation@middletonucc.org](mailto:mccfaithformation@middletonucc.org)

**Carol Bennington,**  
**Youth and Children Coordinator**  
[mccyouth@middletonucc.org](mailto:mccyouth@middletonucc.org)

**Deb Neuman, Music Director**  
[mccmusic@middletonucc.org](mailto:mccmusic@middletonucc.org)

**Barbara Brown, Pianist**  
[mccpianist@middletonucc.org](mailto:mccpianist@middletonucc.org)

**Gary Eckstein, Building & Grounds  
Manager**  
[mccbuildingmanager@middletonucc.org](mailto:mccbuildingmanager@middletonucc.org)

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**Website:**

[www.middletonucc.org](http://www.middletonucc.org)

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## Ways You Can Support Our Mission Partners

### **Middleton Outreach Ministry**

For current pantry hours and procedures, [Click HERE](#).  
[Current Top 10 most requested items](#)  
To donate, visit [momhelps.org](http://momhelps.org) and click "Donate."

### **The Road Home Dane County**

Support vulnerable families (including Healing House, a joint ministry with Just Dane).  
Visit [trhome.org/](http://trhome.org/) and click "Donate."

### **MCPASD School Feeding Programs**

[Click HERE](#) for more information or to donate.

### **Madison Schools Feeding Programs**

free meals to all children 18 and under  
Visit <https://food.madison.k12.wi.us> for times and locations for food distribution.

### **Middleton Youth Center**

[Click HERE](#), and then click "donate to the Youth Center here."

### **Orion Family Services**

Orion Family Services can now accept online donations at [www.orionfamilyservices.org](http://www.orionfamilyservices.org). If you're interested in getting updates about their work, you can sign up to receive their newsletter.

### **Horizon High School**

Visit [horizonhs.org](http://horizonhs.org) and click "Donate."

### **Wisconsin Conference UCC**

Emergency Response Fund to support churches facing significant financial challenges  
Give online at [wcucc.org](http://wcucc.org) by clicking the red "Donate" button at the top of the page.

### **Dane County COVID-19 Emergency and Recovery Fund**

Funds will be split into two approaches: Short-term emergency and Long-term response and recovery.  
[Click HERE](#), then click "Donate Here."

### **Red Cross**

There is currently a severe blood shortage. To make an appointment, visit [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org)  
Financial donations are also appreciated. [Click HERE](#) for all the ways you can donate.

### **Voces de la Frontera Direct Relief Fund: COVID-19 Relief for Undocumented Workers**

Voces de la Frontera, is raising critical funds to ensure the most vulnerable members of our communities will be able to meet their basic needs. Donate at <https://bit.ly/VocesReliefFund>

## MCC Care Ministry

If you would like a telephone check-in, please contact Jim Neuman at [jneuman253@gmail.com](mailto:jneuman253@gmail.com) or 829-0698. We can also help you problem-solve to get your needs met. The card team sends cards to members, friends, and immediate family who are at home or on our church prayer list.

If you would like to be a part of our Care Ministry, receive services or make a referral, contact Jim Neuman at 829-0698.



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## Post-COVID Transition Team Update

MCC's COVID response is tied to the current COVID-19 Community Level in Dane County. When the level is LOW, masking is completely optional. When it rises to MEDIUM, masks are required while singing. [Find the current level here.](#)

The Post-COVID Transition team will continue to monitor COVID conditions and may reinstate stricter policies if COVID transmission worsens again.

**Our church strives to provide as many opportunities to connect as possible, and for that reason, we are continuing the live-streamed service as well as hybrid activities. We will also continue streaming the service to Fellowship Hall, where worshipers are welcome to sit and watch the service.**

If you have any questions, please contact Steve Weber at [moderator@middletonucc.org](mailto:moderator@middletonucc.org)

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## *Birthdays & Anniversaries*

### Happy January Birthday!

Chelsea Bergman	June Meier
Mindy Bergman	Beckett Paulsen
Owen Brabender	Sue Perry
Nick Breitbach	Alex Prine
Barbara Brown	John Rahman
Lynn Burke	Judy Rahman
Randall Crow	Thomas Rahman
Geri Cupery	Daniel Roach
Mike Falk	Grace Romine
Kristin Friel	Hunter St. Clair
Sherrill Giessler	Chris Tarrant
Larry Landgraf	Dan Uminski
Fred Lauper	Sofia VanDeWalle
Brent Lockwood	Gillian Wiens
Craig Lorfeld	Jack Wilson

*If we missed yours, please contact the office.*

### Happy January Anniversary!

Jim & Mary Bachhuber  
Irvin Dennis &  
Mary Dennis-Classen  
Andrew & Carol Phelps  
Darcy & Scott Sage  
Kevin & Michele Statz  
Karil & Mark Walther

*Did we miss yours?  
Contact the church office  
and let us know.*

# January 2023

Click the links to join the online meetings. Visit our [Google Calendar](#) for dial-in instructions.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 <b>9:30am</b> Worship	2 <b>Office Closed</b> New Year's Day observed	3 <b>10am</b> Staff Meeting <b>1pm</b> Mad City Quilt Guild <b>6pm</b> Tues Night Fellow. <b>7pm</b> <a href="#">Board of Worship</a>	4 <b>8am</b> Coffee & Conversation <b>H</b>  <b>6:30pm</b> Choir Rehearsal <b>8:00pm</b> A/V Tech Check	5 <b>11-1 pm</b> Pastor's Public Office Hours  <b>6:30pm</b> Mindfulness	6	7     <b>5:30pm</b> BOCE Potluck at Pop-Vicas's
8 <b>9:30am</b> Communion Worship ( <a href="#">YouTube</a> ) <b>9:45am</b> Sunday School <b>10:30am</b> Just Bakery Fellowship Adult Sun. School <b>6:30-8pm</b> HS Sunday School	9 <b>10am</b> Staff Meeting   <b>6:30pm</b> <a href="#">Board of Finance</a> <a href="#">Bd of Membership</a> <a href="#">and Fellowship</a> <a href="#">Board of Mission</a> <a href="#">and Stewardship</a>	10     <b>6pm</b> Tuesday Night Fellowship	11     <b>6:30pm</b> <a href="#">Camp Balsams</a> <a href="#">Committee</a> <a href="#">Annual Mtg</a> <b>H</b> <b>8:00pm</b> A/V Tech Check	12   <b>11-1 pm</b> Pastor's Public Office Hours <b>11am</b> Knitting Group   <b>5:30pm</b> SWA Mtg	13	14     Mad City Quilt Guild Workshop
15 <b>9:30am</b> Worship ( <a href="#">YouTube</a> ) <b>10:30am</b> Fellowship Attic Angels Craft Adult Sun. School <b>6:30-8pm</b> MS Youth Group	16 <b>10am</b> Staff Meeting   <b>6:45pm</b> Council Mtg <b>H</b>	17     <b>6pm</b> Tuesday Night Fellowship	18 <b>8am</b> Coffee & Conversation <b>H</b> <b>6:30pm</b> Choir Rehearsal <b>8:00pm</b> A/V Tech Check	19   <b>11-1 pm</b> Pastor's Public Office Hours <b>6:30pm</b> Mindfulness Knitting Group	20   High School	21     Balsams Retreat
22 <b>9:30am</b> Worship ( <a href="#">YouTube</a> ) <b>9:45am</b> Sunday School <b>10:30am</b> Annual Meeting Fellowship <b>After Annual Mtg</b> Adult Sun. School	23 <b>10am</b> Staff Meeting   <b>7pm</b> Mad City Quilt Guild	24     <b>6pm</b> Tuesday Night Fellowship	25     <b>6:30pm</b> Choir Rehearsal <b>8:00pm</b> A/V Tech Check	26	27	28     <b>9am-1pm</b> Leadership Advance
29 <b>Blanket/Coat Drive</b> <b>9:30am</b> Worship ( <a href="#">YouTube</a> ) <b>9:45am</b> Sunday School <b>10:30am</b> Fellowship Adult Sun. School	30	31     <b>6pm</b> Tuesday Night Fellowship	<i>"May your coming year be filled with magic and dreams and good madness. I hope you read some fine books and kiss someone who thinks you're wonderful." – Neil Gaiman</i>			

**Sunday worship: 9:30am – In-Person and LiveStream at [youtube.com/MiddletonUCC](https://youtube.com/MiddletonUCC)**

[BLUE](#) indicates online meetings/events

**H** indicates hybrid (in person or online)