The Cross & Flame

The United Methodist Church, Branford • 811 East Main Street, Branford, CT 06405
(203) 488-0549 • umcbranford1966@gmail.com • www.umcbranford.org • Facebook: umcbranford

MAY 2022

Pastor's Ponderings

Pastor Kent Jackson • umcbpastor@gmail.com • 203-488-0549 (phone) • 845-522-1233 (text)

SERMONS BY REQUEST

"Lord, teach us to pray."

Luke 11:1

The Disciples realized that Jesus was committed to prayer. They also knew that John the Baptist had taught his followers to pray. Therefore, in a move to be more like Jesus—and maybe to keep up with John's disciples—they asked Jesus to teach them how to pray. Jesus' teaching resulted in what we now call **The Lord's Prayer**.

I am inspired by this passage to inquire what questions you, the members and friends of UMC, Branford, might have. For six weeks in May and June, I would like to preach "Sermons by Request." To help me prepare for this preaching series, I'd like to know what questions you have for me.

- Is there a Scripture passage which inspires you, and that you would like to learn more about?
- Is there a Christian belief or practice you would like to learn more about?
- Do you wonder what the Bible has to say about a concern in our community or world?
- Do you have a question about faith, the way we "do church," or anything in the realm of ministry?

Please email your questions to me, and I will include them in my "Sermons by Request" series.

I look forward to hearing from you soon!!

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Our secretary, Sharon Grasso, is available in the church office on Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 8:00am to 12:00pm. You can reach her at 203-488-0549.

Pastor Kent is typically in the office Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 9:00am to 2:00 pm. He is also available on Saturdays and Sundays, but does not keep regular office hours those days.

Please call first if you plan to stop in to see Sharon or Pastor Kent, as their schedules sometimes change unexpectedly.

Pastor Kent can be reached anytime by email UMCBPastor@gmail.com or on his cell phone 845-522-1233 (call or text). Preferable contact hours are between 7:00am-9:00pm.

Please be aware that Fridays are Pastor Kent's Day off, and—on a trial basis—he will be taking a Sabbath Day on Mondays. For Pastoral Emergencies, you may contact Pastor Kent anytime. He will continue to be available for occasional Monday evening meetings and Friday evening Community Dinners.

Pastor Kent also coaches Middle School Cross Country and High School Track and Field in Branford. His usual coaching schedule is 3 to 4:30pm in the Fall and 2:30 to 4:30pm in the Winter/Spring. Coaching is an extension of Pastor Kent's ministry, as he has the opportunity to connect with about 100 Branford families and their children.

If you have any questions about the Pastor's schedule, please feel free to be in touch with Pastor Kent directly or with David Wells, chair of the Staff Parish Relations Committee, at gdavid3@yahoo.com.

ROMANS 12:12 MINISTRY

Our current Prayer Initiative at UMC, Branford continues! Romans 12:12 reminds us to "be constant in prayer." With that in mind, the members and friends of UMC, Branford are encouraged to participate in the following ways:

- Sign up for the Prayer Connection using the online form at the bottom of the front page of our church website: umcbranford.org. When a notice of a prayer concern is received, an email message is sent to all participants. Those without computers should contact Pastor Kent, who will arrange for them to receive a phone call with the pertinent information.

continued

- A weekly Prayer Calendar with local, regional, and global prayer concerns will be distributed at Sunday worship service, included in the weekly email, and posted on our website. You can also request to receive it by email or USPS.
- A monthly Prayer Meeting is being held on the 12th day of the month at 12 noon (Romans 12:12). Zoom Meeting ID: 891 5606 4509 or call 929-205-6099, then enter meeting ID.

I look forward to many times of fervent prayer as we gather together as the Body of Christ.

Trustees Fundraiser: PICK A PROJECT

Would you like to help fund a Trustee maintenance project? Every year or two, our UMCB Trustees Committeee members walk through the building and around the property to assess repairs and any other needed work.

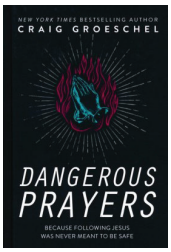
For 2022, the Trustees have identified new projects and are in the process of scheduling and getting cost estimates.

- Resealing the Church parking lot and restriping parking spaces (estimate: $4,400)
- Resealing the Parsonage driveway (estimate: $400)
- Cleaning the carpets in the Sanctuary, Connector Hall, and Herr Hall (estimate: pending)
- Tree removal: several trees around the Church and back yard of the Parsonage (estimate: $3,000)

If you would like to help fund one of these projects, please send a check to the church or make a donation online. In the memo line, please write PICK A PROJECT and include the name of the project. All donations qualify as tax-deductible contributions.

SMALL STUDY GROUPS

NEW Study beginning May 2!



Do you ever wonder, "Why doesn't God answer my prayers?" Do you wish you could see the evidence that prayer changes lives? Are you tired of playing it safe with your faith? In Dangerous Prayers, New York Times bestselling author Craig Groeschel helps you unlock your greatest potential and tackle your greatest fears by praying stronger, more passionate prayers that lead you into a deeper faith.

Prayer moves the heart of God—but some prayers move Him more than others. He wants more for us than a tepid faith and half-hearted routines at the dinner table. He's called you to a life of courage, not comfort.

This book will show you how to pray the prayers that search your soul, break your habits, and send you to pursue the calling God has for you. But be warned: if you're fine with settling for what's easy, or you're OK with staying on the sidelines, this book isn't for you. You'll be challenged. You'll be tested. You'll be moved to take a long, hard look at your heart.

But you'll be inspired, too.

You'll be inspired to pray boldly. To pray powerfully. To pray with fire. You'll see how you can trade ineffective prayers and lukewarm faith for raw, daring prayers that will push you to new levels of passion and fulfillment. You'll discover the secret to overcoming fears of loss, rejection, failure, and the unknown and welcome the blessings God has for you on the other side.

You'll gain the courage it takes to pray dangerous prayers.

Please note: The Thursday morning group continues to meet at 10:10am via conference call. Please call 425-436-6385 and use access code 841200#.

However, the Evening group will have a varied schedule, listed below. Please email Pastor Kent for the Zoom link or telephone number.

I would love to add new people to either group or start another group. ***Please let me know if another day/time would be preferable for you.***

Reading Schedule:

Session 1: Intro. & Part 1 pg. 23-38
Mon. May 2 (7pm), Thu. May 5 (10:10 AM)
Session 2: Part 1 pg. 39-59
Tue. May 10 (7pm), Thu. May 12 (10:10 AM)
Session 3: Part 2 pg. 62-86
Mon. May 16 (7pm), Thu. May 19 (10:10 AM)
Session 4: Part 2 pg. 87-103
Thu. May 26 (7pm), Thu. May 26 (10:10 AM)
Session 5: Part 3 pg. 106-132
Tue. May 31 (7pm), Thu. June 2 (10:10 AM)
Session 6: Part 3 pg. 133-161
Tue. June 7 (7pm), Thu. June 9 (10:10 AM)

continued

DIGITAL MINISTRY TEAM

In order to be proactive with our efforts to reach beyond the walls of our church building with the message of the Gospel, I am looking for volunteers to be a part of our new *Digital Ministry* initiative.

Our livestreamed Sunday Service is just the first step. Please let me know if you would like to help plan for the future by enhancing our physical church ministry via social media and other digital platforms.

MINISTRIES OF CARE

As we continue to navigate through the changes in ministry in light of the pandemic, I am constantly looking for new ways that we can *be the church*. It is essential during this time that we engage in new ways of keeping in touch with one another.

If you would be willing to make phone calls as part of a **Care Ministry**, please contact me by phone or email. Each volunteer will be assigned 3-4 families to keep in touch with on a monthly basis. Volunteers will also share with Pastor Kent any joys or concerns they become aware of.

You are always welcome to contact Pastor Kent directly if you have any needs or information you would like to share.

MINISTRY DURING THE PANDEMIC

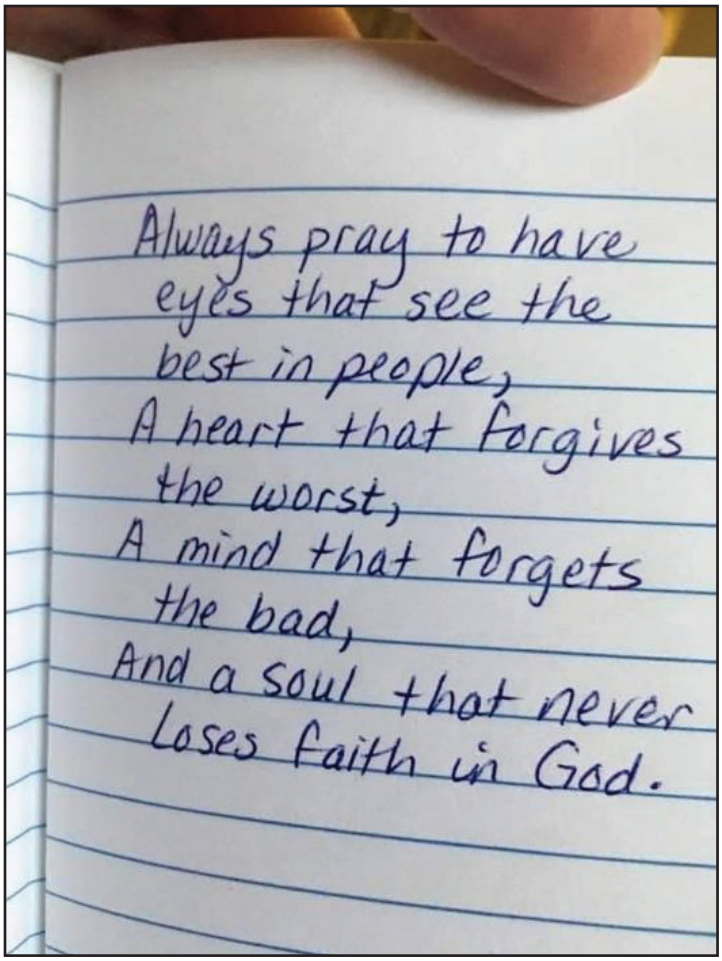
PASTORAL CARE: Pastor Kent is available to meet with you for any of your Pastoral Care needs—in person, by Zoom, or by phone.

MEETINGS: Committee meetings are being held using a HYBRID format—in-person and via Zoom. Committee members will automatically be sent an invitation to their meetings. If you would like to receive an invitation to join a meeting, please contact Pastor Kent ahead of time so you can receive the log-in information.

FINANCES: Your weekly offerings may be placed in the Offering Box at the entrance to the sanctuary or mailed to the church office if you are not attending in-person worship. **Please consider giving online by clicking the "Give Now" button on the church website at www.UMCBranford.org**

Blessings,

Pastor Kent



BLESSING OF THE BIKES

Point your wheels towards UMC, Branford on Sunday, June 5 at 2pm for a blessing, music, and refreshments. Motorcycles, mopeds, and bicycles are welcome! As we get outside for the spring and summer, ride with God as your co-pilot!

May Events

Sun 5/1, 3:30pm: District Conference
Wed 5/4, 7pm: Trustees
Sat 5/7, 8am-1pm: Mulch Day
Wed 5/11, 6:30pm: Learn & Play Advisory Council
Thurs 5/12, 12:12pm: Romans 12:12 Prayer
Sat 5/14, 8am-1pm: Rain Date - Mulch Day
Mon 5/16, 12pm: Women's Luncheon
Wed 5/18, 7pm: Faithful Stewards
Sat 5/21, 9am: Men's Breakfast (location TBD)
Wed 5/25, 7pm: Finance Committee
Thurs 5/26, 7pm: Parish Council
Fri 5/27, 6pm: Community Dinner
Sat 5/28, 9am-3pm: Plant Sale

WEEKLY CALENDAR

SUNDAYS **Worship Service**
9:30am (live and streamed)

TUESDAYS **Pastor's Bible Study Group**
7-8:30pm Contact Pastor Kent for Zoom link or dial-in number
7:30pm **AA meeting**

THURSDAYS **Pastor's Bible Study Group**
10am Call (425) 436-6385
Access code 841200#.
7:30pm **Al-Anon meeting**

SATURDAYS **AA meeting**
7pm

May Birthdays

1 Roger Gagné, Richard Robinson, Jr.
2 Allan Lang, M.E. Solomon
6 Savannah James
8 John Nickou
10 Beth James
12 Andrew Wolek
16 Christopher Blossom, Hayley Gregoire
20 Heidi Busch
23 Andrew Rezman
25 Ben James, Tony Luzzi
28 Louise Lind
31 Morgan McMahon, Susan McMahon

May Anniversaries

5 Robin & Andrew Wolek
15 Alice & George Klein
23 Judy & Michael Loukides

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The 20th of every month - please send articles to Lori Cartwright at loriahlcart@gmail.com

Missed a Sunday? Unable to attend worship?
You can catch the weekly sermon video at www.umcbranford.org

KEEP UP-TO-DATE WITH WHAT'S HAPPENING AT UMCB:

www.facebook.com/umcbranford
https://twitter.com/UMCBranford

Also check out:

www.facebook.com/unitedmethodistchurch
www.facebook.com/umcgeneralconference
www.facebook.com/NYACUMC

"Where the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Power of the Holy Spirit converge to change hearts and lives."

Learn & Play

Christian Early Learning Center WWW.LEARNANDPLAYCHRISTIAN.ORG

Follow Learn & Play on Facebook - it's a great way to see what our young students are up to!
Find them on Facebook (or just search their name):
https://www.facebook.com/Learn-Play-Christian-Early-Learning-Center-864205240297632

Learn & Play Christian Early Learning Center
Published by Venera Manuli · April 8 at 5:49 PM

"Life Cycle" Week 1: Tadpoles to Frogs! 🐸

Learn & Play Christian Early Learning Center
Published by Venera Manuli · April 20 at 11:14 AM

Spring has arrived at Learn & Play! Our little gardeners were busy planting this morning as we enjoyed the beautiful weather!

Learn & Play Christian Early Learning Center is feeling creative.
Published by Venera Manuli · April 18 at 11:00 AM

Here are some highlights from our Second Annual L&P Art Show! Thank you to all of the families & community members who came to support our little artists!

Learn & Play Christian Early Learning Center
Published by Venera Manuli · Yesterday at 11:46 AM

Happy Earth Day!

"Life Cycle" Week 3: Seeds to Flowers! 🌷

Huge Perennial Plant & Tree Sale

Saturday, May 28 · 9 am-3 pm

United Methodist Church

811 East Main St, Branford, CT 06405

(Exactly one mile east of the Chowder Pot on Route 1)

Great Selection! Our Perennials are native to the area and are very hearty. ($6 - $35)

Bee Balm
Bleeding Heart
Cat Mint
Clematis
Chives
Dianthus
English Astrantia
Hosta - many varieties
Lavender
Peonies
Pure Silver Veronica
Tall Shasta Daisies

Sedums
White Re-blooming Irises
Ribbon Grass

Landscaping Plants:

Dwarf Forsythia
Dwarf Lilac
Creeping Geranium
Wild Geranium
Groundcover
Meadow Plantings

And many more!

Trees ($50)

Crab Apple
Pink Tatarian Honeysuckle
Snowball Japonica

SEWING FOR GOD

Update: There will be no meetings in May, as the conference room is still unavailble. In June, we'll meet every Monday *except June 20* from 4:30pm to 6:30pm (-ish!).

It will feel so good to get back in the swing of things! I will be restocking our sewing supplies during the month of May, plus a storage cabinet of our own.

Our friends at Artis and Life Haven understand that once we are up and running we'll make up for lost time.

We still welcome donations of fabrics in juvenile patterns; also in colors that can be used for our veteran quilts. Please be sure all fabric is 100% cotton.

I'm look forward to seeing everyone again and sewing away!

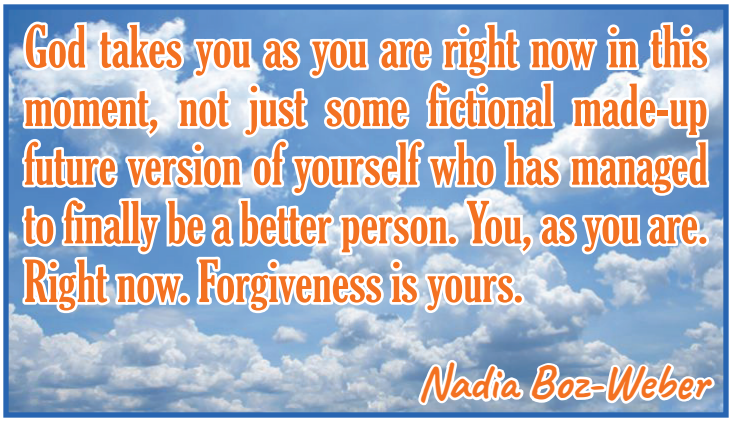
Rosemary

KEEP SAVING YOUR SODA CAN TABS!

A delivery was made the first week of May. Please continue to collect your tabs and place them in the green bin outside of church. The funds raised support the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Connecticut and Western Massachusetts.

Every tab makes a difference, just like you do!

Rosemary & Tony



SPRING WOMEN'S LUNCHEON

Monday, May 16 • 12:00-2:30pm

Branford Chowder Pot
560 E. Main Street, Branford
Please RSVP by Sunday 5/15

Questions? Call Rosemary 203-589-1620

SAVE THESE DATES FOR SUMMER:

Monday, June 20 • 12:00-2:30pm
Sam's Dockside, Branford

Monday, July 18 • 12:00-2:30pm
Eli's on the Hill, Branford

Monday, August 15 • 12:00-2:30pm
Lenny & Joe's Fish Tale, Westbrook

Friday, May 27, 6pm

The Community Dinner will be held as a drive-thru event while Herr Hall is under reconstruction. Pick up dinner-to-go in the church parking lot.

OCTOBER FESTIVAL

United Methodist Church of Branford
811 East Main Street
Branford, CT 06504
(203) 488-0549

Saturday, October 15, 2022
9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

We are trying something new! Instead of our Holiday Fair in November – we are going to have an

October Festival, which will be held outside!

We are planning on having:

- All kinds of activates for the kids to do
- Selling tag sale spots for church people and outside vendors
- Our church bake table
- Smores – cotton candy – candied apples – apple crisp
- Jewelry table
- Craft tables – including the popular "Pet Table"
- Scarecrow contest – to be judged, decorate the lawn, and can be purchased (details to follow)
- Pie judging contest – we have some of the best bakers in town (details to follow)
- Other things we haven't thought up yet!

Get excited about something new – volunteer to help!