



# The Cross & Flame



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

**MARCH 2024**

Dear Church Friends,

As we enter the season of Lent, we embark on a sacred journey, into the wilderness of our hearts and spirits. Lent is a time of reflection, repentance, and renewal. It is a season that invites us to draw closer to God, seeking a deeper connection with the divine.

This year, our Lenten theme is centered around entering the wilderness and relying on the spirit. As we willingly step into the unknown, we may feel unsettled, as the usual comforts of our lives are intentionally stripped away. Yet, it is this very wilderness that we have the opportunity to encounter God in new and transformative ways.

The wilderness is a place of testing and refinement, where we confront our vulnerabilities and limitations. Giving up something, or taking something on, it is a space that invites us to rely on the Spirit. Our trust is that God's guidance will lead us through the challenges and uncertainties. In the midst of our discomfort, we find solace in the knowledge that we are not alone, that Jesus walks with us every step of the way.

As a community, we will confront this wilderness together, supporting and uplifting one another. Our shared journey becomes a source of strength, reminding us that we are not only individuals on a spiritual search, but the body Christ seeking God's presence.

Let us use this Lenten season to deepen our sense of community and solidarity. Through prayer, fasting, a morning retreat, acts of kindness, and studying, we can create a sacred space where hope flourishes. Together, we will find hope in the midst of the wilderness, discovering the joy that comes from drawing nearer to God and to one another.

May this season of Lent be transformative as we emerge from the wilderness with renewed spirits, and new life, strengthened by the bonds of faith and the assurance of God's love.

Blessings on our journey together,

*Pastor Barbara*



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

# MARCH

## March Events

*Tues 3/5 7pm:* Prayers for Hope & Understanding  
First & Wesley UMCB

*Wed 3/6 7pm:* Trustees

*Mon 3/11 6pm:* Men's Pizza Night

*Mon 3/11 7pm:* Cooperative Parish Meeting

*Wed 3/13 1pm:* Prayers for Hope & Understanding  
UMC, Branford

*Thurs 3/14 6:30pm:* Learn & Play Advisory Council

*Sun 3/17 11:15am:* Staff Parish Relations  
Committee

*Mon 3/18 12:30pm:* Ladies Luncheon

*Wed 3/20 7pm:* Faithful Stewards

*Mon 3/25 4pm:* Bishop's Day

*Wed 3/27 1pm:* Prayers for Hope & Understanding  
Hamden Plains UMC

*Wed 3/27 7pm:* Finance Committee

*Sat 3/30 10am:* Easter Egg Hunt

## March Birthdays

2 Hannah Jackson, Kaylee Roberts  
Jean Sunny

3 Gabriel Maggay

8 Helen Werns

9 Judy Loukides

13 Sean Deveau

14 Erin Marszalek

21 June Ann Greeley, Sterwin Maggay  
David Simon

25 Madison Ballard

26 Bob Nerkowski

28 Kylie James

30 Ginny Busca, Aubrey Simon

## March Anniversaries

26 John & Connie Nickou

29 John & Sue Beatty

## RECURRING WEEKLY EVENTS

### SUNDAYS

9:30am **Worship Service** (in-person and  
livestreamed)

### MONDAYS

11AM **Monday Zoom Prayer Meeting**  
1PM **Sewing for God** (except 3/18)

### TUESDAYS

7:30pm **AA meeting**

### WEDNESDAYS

10:30am **Prayer Shawl Ministry**  
11am **Lenten Devotional Study**

### THURSDAYS

7:30pm **Al-Anon meeting**

### SATURDAYS

7pm **AA meeting**

**OFFICE HOURS** Monday through  
Thursday  
9am to 1pm

*Missed a Sunday? Unable to attend worship?*

Watch past services at [www.umcbranford.org](http://www.umcbranford.org)

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

[www.facebook.com/umcbranford](http://www.facebook.com/umcbranford)

<https://twitter.com/UMCBranford>

### Also check out:

[www.facebook.com/unitedmethodistchurch](http://www.facebook.com/unitedmethodistchurch)

[www.facebook.com/umcgeneralconference](http://www.facebook.com/umcgeneralconference)

[www.facebook.com/NYACUMC](http://www.facebook.com/NYACUMC)

[https://www.facebook.com/profile.  
php?id=100082683255594](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100082683255594)

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### ***~An Invitation for You~***

Please prayerfully consider joining us on Monday mornings at 11 am on Zoom as we pray together, seeking God's guidance and help, in accordance with His holy word:

1 Thessalonians 5:16,17,18

Romans 12:12.

Nothing can be established or affirmed without God's blessing on it, and the kingdom of God is advancing in our midst...we need His leadership and protection —

Please join us in prayer via Zoom:

<https://bit.ly/3Te4BQT>

Meeting ID: 853 4550 1703

Passcode: Prayer



### **ONGOING MINISTRIES**

#### **CAN TABS**

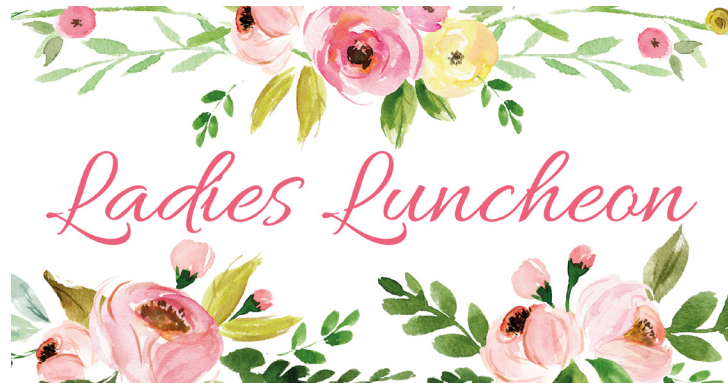
To benefit Ronald McDonald House Charities

Next delivery: end of April

#### **FOOD PANTRY**

Non-perishable items: tuna fish, cereal, powdered milk, rice, peanut butter, jelly, soup, macaroni, sauce and canned meals.

Personal care items: bar soap, toothpaste and tooth brushes.



### **Ladies Luncheon**

St. Patty's Day Luncheon

Monday, March 18 · 12:30

La Luna in Branford

Monday, April 15 · 12:30

Long Horn in North Haven

Sign up sheet in Connector Hall or

call Rosemary 203-589-1620



It's not too late! If you would like a Secret Pal assignment, please see Rosemary. If you already signed up, please look for your assignment in Connector Hall

*May your days be many and your troubles be few.*

*May all God's blessings descend upon you.*

*May peace be within you, may your heart be strong.*

*May you find what you're seeking wherever you roam.*

*May the strength of God pilot us, may the wisdom of God instruct us.*

*May the hand of God protect us, may the word of God direct us.*

*May thy Salvation, O Lord, be always ours this day and for evermore.*

*Amen.*

Written by St. Patrick



Pastor Barbara's Lenten devotional study continues on Wednesdays at 11:00AM. We will explore Kate Bowler's Have a Beautiful, Terrible Lent!. Consider new ways to bring the light of Epiphany into your everyday Lenten practices. Purchase the devotion book or just join us in conversation as we find courage in our everyday journey.

"Bowler understands how every day can be an obstacle course. She encourages us to develop our capacity to feel the breadth of our experiences. The better we are at identifying our highs and lows, the more resilient we become. "It has bite-size reflections and action-oriented steps to help you get through the day, be it good, bad, or totally mediocre. This is a devotional for the rest of us—which is to say, the people who don't have magical lives that always work out for the best. As she composed these meditations during a season of chronic pain, Bowler understands how every day can be an obstacle course. She encourages us to develop our capacity to feel the breadth of our experiences. The better we are at identifying our highs and lows, the more resilient we become."

If you want to build your daily habit of spiritual attentiveness, this book is here to say: May all your days be lovely. But for those that aren't, "Have a beautiful, terrible day!"



## SEWING FOR GOD

Every Monday 10:00 am to 2:00 pm  
(except March 18)

Winter has not stopped us from meeting every week to work on our quilt tops and two special projects. We'll be starting tops for the North Branford Police Dept (for children in need), a Veterans Group to be determined, and the 2025 Quilt Show.

Our first special project was a request for some "Quilts for Valor" to recognize our men and women who have or are serving for our Military.

The second special project is to make 100 dresses and 100 shorts for "Operation Christmas Child" by November. We work on this the last Monday of each month.

Don't know how to sew? We will teach you! We have the machines, fabrics, patterns and great fellowship. Can you iron? Pin? Join us.

Donations of backing fabrics (4-5 yard lengths) and elastic will be needed for both projects. *Gift cards to Hobby Lobby or Joann Fabrics would be welcomed!*







# **UMC, Branford & Learn & Play's Easter Egg Hunt**

**Saturday March 30**

**811 E. Main Street, Branford, CT 06405**

**<https://umcbranford.org>**

**Come join us for an Easter Egg Hunt!**

**This event is open to all children  
8 years of age and younger!**



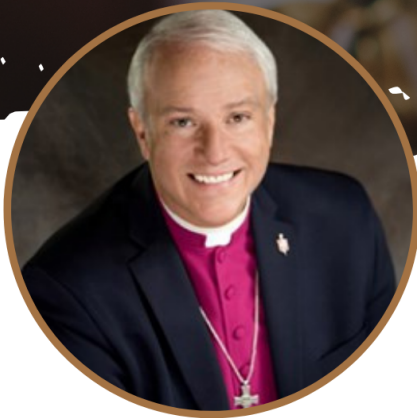


# BISHOP'S DAY

## Connecticut District



REV. DR. ALPHER SYLVESTER  
Connecticut District  
Superintendent



BISHOP THOMAS J. BICKERTON

Resident Bishop, New York Area



REV. DORIS  
DALTON

Director of Connectional  
Ministries



LONNIE  
CHAFFIN

Treasurer and Director  
Administrative Services

**Monday March 25th, 2024**

### Location

**First United Methodist Church Meriden**

159 East Main Street Meriden, CT 06450

The New Room Cooperative Parish - Rev. Richard L. Hanse, Parish Coordinator

ALL ARE INVITED AND **STRONGLY ENCOURAGED** TO ATTEND.

REGISTRATION WILL BE OPEN SOON!

### Agenda

4:00-5:00 PM COOPERATIVE PARISH LEADERSHIP

5:00-6:00 PM CLERGY CONVERSATION WITH BISHOP BICKERTON

6:00-7:20 PM DINNER

7:30-9:00 PM WELCOME AND OPENING WORDS BY BISHOP BICKERTON

REV. DORIS K. DALTON, DCM  
MR. LONNIE CHAFFIN, TREASURER

CLOSING WORSHIP WITH COMMUNION