



# The Cross & Flame



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**MAY 2024**

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Dear Church Family,

As we embrace the blossoming beauty of May, we are reminded of the steadfast love of God that surrounds us. Just as flowers bloom and grow under the nurturing care of the sun, we too flourish in community in the warmth of God's love and grace.

This month, let us reflect on the journey we are all taking together as a community of faith. Our path is not always straight or without obstacles, but it is one guided by the unwavering love of our God. In every step we take, in every decision we make, let us move forward with assurance, knowing that God's love guides us. In the midst of uncertainty and challenges, let us share innovative ideas in conversations that we can draw strength from, as we seek God's will moving forward. Remembering, as we journey the words from Psalm 23:6, "Surely your goodness and love will follow "us" all the days of "our" lives, and we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

May we share that love and compassion to those around us. Let us be the ones God calls to encourage those in need in our community, and also to reach out to those in our Learn and Play families, so that we might grow together. Through "blessing bags," and a new outdoor playground, may we keep finding ways to be God's fruit through our love and actions. Let us continue to deepen our faith, strengthen our bonds of fellowship, and spread the Good News of God's love to all who cross our paths.

With Grace & Blessings,  
*Pastor Barbara*

## **Women's High Tea Fund Raiser**

We need your help to make this a fun and connecting community event! Please make a reservation for yourself or purchase a table for you and your friends. This is a great way to invite a friend to come see our church!

Please pass the word around, take a flyer, post it where it can be seen, invite a friend, post the flyer on your social network.

We are in need of:

Card tables • Tea pots - small or medium, fancy or not • Floral or lace tablecloths to fit round or card tables

Volunteers to make small fancy sandwiches and desserts

Can't bake or make? You can always buy fancy and donate - that would be great too!

Helpers to set up on Friday afternoon (May 17) and take down on Saturday afternoon

If you have any of the above, please let Diane or Rosemary know. It takes many hands to make light work!

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



## May Events

- Wed 5/1 7pm: Trustees  
Tues 5/7 7pm: Prayers for Hope & Understanding  
First & Wesley UMCB  
Wed 5/8 1pm: Prayers for Hope & Understanding  
UMC, Branford  
Thurs 5/9 6:30pm: Learn & Play Advisory Council  
Mon 5/13 6pm: Men's Pizza Night·Marco's Pizza  
Mon 5/13 7pm: Cooperative Parish Meeting  
Wed 5/15 7pm: Faithful Stewards  
Sat 5/18 11am: Women's High Tea Fundraiser  
Sun 5/19 11:15am: Staff Parish Relations  
Committee  
Mon 5/20 12:30pm: Ladies Luncheon  
Wed 5/22 1pm: Prayers for Hope & Understanding  
Hamden Plains UMC  
Sat 5/25 9am: Ruby's Plant Sale  
Wed 5/29 7pm: Finance Committee

## 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**

## May Birthdays

- 1 Roger Gagné  
2 M.E. Solomon  
12 Andrew Wolek  
28 Louise Lind

## May Anniversaries

- 5 Robin & Andrew Wolek  
23 Judy & Michael Loukides

**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>

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

# WELCOME ABOARD!

## MEET MICHELLE!

We're excited to share that we have a new *Church Secretary* joining our UMCB team. Please welcome **Michelle Underwood** to the UMC Branford family. She has recently retired as a Bookkeeper from a private, non-profit property management company. Her prior roles include Office Assistant and a Legal Assistant. She has a varied background and great skill set for helping us organize and run our Church Office, which is effectively the communication hub for the entire church.

Best of all, Michelle has a sweet and caring attitude and is excited to meet all of us! She has attended church with us on Palm Sunday and several times since then and hopefully met many of you. Her favorite verse is Psalm 23:1 *The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.*



She has already started working and partnered with Rosemary Conforte before her retirement to learn the process and systems. As you call (or walk into) the church office, please introduce yourself and welcome Michelle. I'm sure she'll have questions for each of us as she becomes part of our team!

## MEET ERIKA!

Hello everyone! My name is Erika Malloy. I reside in North Haven with my husband Jimmie and our three beautiful children, ages 26, 17, and 10. Besides my bachelor degree in child studies, I received most of my early childhood experience at the Phyllis Bodel Childcare Center at Yale Medical School. I worked there as an infant/ toddler teacher for 12 years before being promoted to Assistant Program Coordinator. Upon leaving Phyllis Bodel, I moved on to be the Director at a childcare center in New

Haven for 3 years and then became the Director for a childcare center in Hamden, where I was for the last 3 years.

One of my favorite things about my career in early childhood is that I get to meet your children and spend time getting to know them! I love getting messy – painting, outdoor time, exploring the world as your child learns and shares their experiences. I've spent time in each of the classrooms since I



started at Learn & Play a month ago and am amazed by the sweetness, the talent, the intelligence, and the wonder of your children. It's a pleasure to come here each day—and I love talking to each of you (parents and grandparents) as

well!

One the main reasons I chose to come to Learn & Play is that it is a Christian childhood center, based on the principles of Christ, sharing His love while we explore His world together. My favorite verse is 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me' (Philippians 4:13).

I am also excited that we are on-site at UMC Branford so that we have chapel each week with Pastor Barbara Marks and have the support of the church members in improving our space, helping our staff, and working together for events. There is much to do and much to learn each day, but the important thing to me is that we are learning together from each other and from Jesus. I look forward to getting to know each of you better as we continue forward – and as always, please reach out to me on anything, anytime!



**~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**

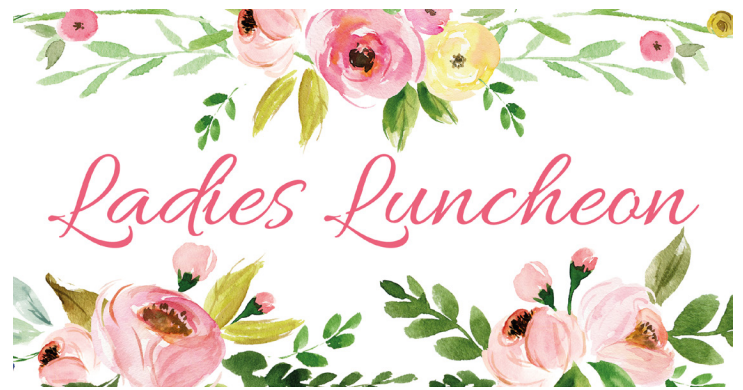
**CAN TABS**

To benefit Ronald McDonald House Charities  
Next delivery: end of August

**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*

**Ladies Luncheon**

Monday, May 20 · 12:30pm  
Thimble Island Brewery  
16 Business Park Drive, Branford

1st Summer Luncheon  
Monday, June 17 at 12:30  
Dockside Restaurant  
145 Block Island Road, Branford

Sign up sheet in Connector Hall or  
call Rosemary 203-589-1620

**SEWING FOR GOD**

Every Monday 10:00 am to  
2:00 pm  
(except May 20)



Dresses for Operation Christmas Child are almost completed. Watch for the sample dresses as we ask your help in getting ‘panties’ to go with each dress. Starting in June we’ll be working on the boys shorts.

Our next community project will provide the Branford and North Branford Police departments with 12 quilts each, so that a child can be wrapped in comfort when they are out on a call.

It is never too soon to start talking about Quilt Show 2025. Tops are already in the making.

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!*

# First Annual Women's High Tea Fund Raiser

**Saturday, May 18th — 11:00am to 2:00pm**

**United Methodist Church, Branford**

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

*Ladies, dress up and come join us for a time of  
Food, Desserts and, of course TEA!*

**There will be games, "Pick a Bag" &  
a prize for "Best Hat or Fascinator"**

**Please call 203-488-0549 to register as seating is limited!**

**Tickets for this event are \$25 per person**

All proceeds go to support the community  
missions and ministries of UMC, Branford





**Give Yourself a Gift  
This Year!**

**Women's Retreat**

May 31 – June 2

**Men's Retreat**

June 7 - 9

"A Footsteps Weekend is a gift to yourself; it's joy-filled and highly motivating in your Christian walk!" - Wendy

*Footsteps in the Sand* is a community of Christians from churches in the area that seek to bring people closer to Jesus Christ.

The mission is to foster spiritual renewal, develop leaders for the local church, and encourage Christian action. This is done by conducting three-day Christian Renewal Weekends.

As a result of these weekends, people feel their walk with Christ started or renewed and are inspired to get more involved with their church's ministry or to find a church to join if they are currently without one.

If you want to learn more about Footsteps, please contact Roger G. at [rjgagne@gmail.com](mailto:rjgagne@gmail.com) with any questions you have or for help registering for either weekend.



This fundraiser supports UMC, Branford's missions and ministries. There are 141 envelopes with dollar amounts from \$1 to \$141. Return the envelope with a donation matching the amount printed on it and either place it in the offering plate during the worship service on Sundays or in the box at the back of the Sanctuary.

Please reach out to John B. or Rosemary L. with any questions.



This indoor event will feature:

- Silent Auction offering a wide variety of gift certificates and products from local businesses
- Plant Sale offering a large assortment of annuals in hanging baskets, vegetables, herbs and flowers just in time for Mother's Day and for planting in your garden!
- Assortment of crafts created by church members
- Tag sale
- Bake Table with a cookie walk and farmer's market
- Lunch Items
- Homemade Chicken Pot Pie that is ready to go from our freezer to your oven!

For more information to reserve a space at our event, contact Vicki LiPuma, event coordinator, at 203-781-6248 or [vicklip@aol.com](mailto:vicklip@aol.com)



*Mom*

*Has ears that truly listen,  
Arms that always hold,  
A love that's never ending,  
And a heart that's made of gold.*

**Secret Pals:** Mother's Day is around the corner. What a special time to honor those we love.

HAPPY MOTHERS DAY TO ALL!

# Huge Perennial Plant & Tree Sale

Saturday, May 25, 2024 · 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. (\$7 - \$45)



**Astelbies Bleeding**

**heart**

**Clematis**

**Dianthus**

**Lavender**

**Hostas**

**Foam flower**

**Grass**

**Chives**

**Rose Champion**

**Sedums**

**Shrubs**

**Roses on their own roots White Reblooming Iris**

**Oak leaf hydrangea**