

**PLANTSVILLE
CONGREGATIONAL UCC**

March 2026

Steeple Notes

*“O come, let us sing
to the LORD; let us
make a joyful noise
to the rock of our
salvation!”*

~Psalm 95:1



**Plantsville Congregational Church
United Church of Christ**

109 Church Street,
Plantsville, CT 06479

www.plantsvilleucc.org

(860) 628-5595

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Rev. Jane Willan, Minister
Marilyn Cannata, Music Director
Jill Battaglia, Programming and Operations



**Church Office Hours:
Office Hours
Mon-Fri 9am to 1pm**



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
February		3 6:15PM CA	4 1:00PM Knitting 6:30PM Knitwits	5	6 7:00PM Play Rehearsal	7 10:15AM Play Rehearsal 6:00PM Fellowship Hall Rental	
1 10:00AM Worship Service Holy Communion Souper Bowl of Caring Collection	2 8:30AM Monday Movers Walking Group	7:00PM Deacons					
8 10:00AM Worship Service	9 8:30AM Monday Movers Walking Group	10 7:00PM Trustees	11 1:00PM Knitting 6:30PM Knitwits	12 10:00AM Al-Anon 6:00PM Coloring 6:30PM Bell Choir 7:30PM Vocal Choir	13 9:00AM Quilts of Valor 7:00PM Play Rehearsal	14 10:15AM Play Rehearsal	
15 10:00AM Worship Service 11:30AM Lenten Dinner Deadline for Easter Flowers & OGHS collection	16 8:30AM Monday Movers Walking Group	17	18 1:00PM Knitting 6:30PM Knitwits 7:00pm Council	19 10:00AM Al-Anon 6:00PM Coloring 6:30PM Bell Choir 7:30PM Vocal Choir	20 7:00PM Play Rehearsal	21 10:15AM Play Rehearsal 6:00PM Fellowship Hall Rental	
22 10:00AM Worship Service	23 8:30AM Monday Movers Walking Group	24	25 1:00PM Knitting 6:30PM Knitwits	26 10:00AM Al-Anon 6:00PM Coloring 6:30PM Bell Choir 7:30PM Vocal Choir	27 7:00PM Play Rehearsal	28 10:00AM Easter Egg Hunt 10:15AM Play Rehearsal 6:00PM Lenten Dinner	
29 10:00AM Worship Service Mystery Dinner Tickets Go on Sale	30 8:30AM Monday Movers Walking Group	31 Scholarship Application Deadline	Fellowship Hall Rental for Taichi classes Mon-Thurs 5pm-9:00pm & Saturday Mornings 9am-11am.				

Forty Days in the Wilderness of a Connecticut Winter

It's March. You've been cold since November. The snow that was charming in December—all those fat flakes drifting past the church windows like a Hallmark movie—is now a personal insult from God. Your driveway is a skating rink. Even hot chocolate tastes like defeat. And somehow, somehow, Easter is still five weeks away.

Welcome to Lent in New England, where the suffering is real and the heating bills are biblical.

Jesus spent forty days in the wilderness without food, water, or a decent parka. We're spending forty days without sunlight, warmth, and rapidly diminishing emotional reserves. The devil tempted Jesus to turn stones into bread. We're tempted to turn our alarm clocks into kindling and stay in bed until April.

This is not a coincidence. The church calendar is designed to break us down right when we're already broken. Lent doesn't begin in spring because that would be too easy, too hopeful. We're asked to practice endurance when we have nothing left—not because the vengeful Old Testament God has taken over, but because that's where real faith lives. Not in the Instagram-worthy moments of inspiration, but in the middle of March when you've scraped ice off your windshield for the seventy-third time and you still showed up to church anyway.

The wilderness doesn't build character. It reveals what you're actually made of when everything comfortable is stripped away.

Here's what I know: Spring will come. Easter will arrive. The tomb will be empty and the crocuses will break through the frozen ground and we will remember, once again, that death never gets the last word.

But first, we endure. Together. Five more weeks.

Jesus survived forty days in the desert. We'll survive March in Connecticut.

Frozen But Faithful, Rev. Jane



Moderator Moment

Hey y'all! I am so excited to be the youngest Black/African American Woman Moderator for this church, as no Black/African American Moderator has served before. (I know, I know - what a shocker!) I have been attending Plantsville since I was about 3 years old. I attended Nursery School downstairs and Vacation Bible School (and did my finger exercises). When my mom and I looked for a new church while I was in elementary school, we settled on this one. My experience: I have previously served on the Board of Deacons multiple times, I was on Christian Education for a little while, I have been a Delegate to General Synod (Kansas City and Minneapolis), I have served on the Board of Directors (years before we became the SNEUCC conference), I have been a Sunday School teacher, Bell Choir member, Youth Orchestra member, and now a current member of the Mystery Play. I am a single mom to Andre, who keeps me going - I know he's unleashed that smile on you, too. I have made many friends here, and I've lost many church family members as well. The support and community we have is like none other. I have my own business as a Reiki Master; I lead guided meditations. I am also a Scentsy consultant. I have previously been involved in local politics, and I am very vocal about social justice issues.

Over the next couple of years, I will be leading the Church Council, and I look forward to the task. The people are wonderful, and we all have different personalities. We come together for the betterment of this church and community. We have our own ideas, thoughts, and opinions, but in the end, we discuss what we feel is the right choice for our church as a group to move it forward. I am honored to be the next moderator.

I encourage communication, so if you have any questions, concerns, problems, or comments, please feel free to email me or call me. My email is TDMcCawD@gmail.com. My cell is 860.212.0998. I do work, so I will respond when I am able. Now, I'd love to introduce our Church Council members, with whom I am lucky enough to work. If you'd love to join, we are looking for a Clerk and Council At Large Members so let me know!

Click [HERE](#) to Meet Your Church Council



Easter Flowers

Easter Memorial flowers are available for ordering. The flowers will be used to decorate the altar during Easter Sunday and can be brought home after the service. The order form is available in the weekly bulletin. You may also order online using the QR or link below. Payment can be sent to the church office, submitted on Sundays to the offering plate, or you may pay by credit card after worship service by seeing Hallie Hodgins or Lori Gensler. The deadline to order is **Sunday, March 15th.**

Click [HERE](#) to Order.



4th Annual Easter Egg Hunt

Donations Needed!

This year's community Easter Egg Hunt hosted by Christian Ed will be **Saturday March 28th with a rain date of Saturday April 4th at 10:00am.** We are asking for donations of individually wrapped candy to fill the Easter eggs, donations can be placed on the fruit table in Fellowship Hall. In previous years we have put out about 2,000 eggs for the kids to hunt! Thank you in advance for any donations!



Help us advertise the Egg Hunt!

Share our Facebook Event! Click the link [HERE](#).

LENTEN DINNERS

2026

Sunday March 15th after
worship 11:15 am

Pulled pork w/slider rolls, cole slaw, baked
beans, corn bread, assorted desserts

Saturday March 28th
6 pm

Penne Pasta w/meatballs, garden salad,
sauteed vegetable medley, dinner rolls,
assorted desserts

Click [HERE](#) to RSVP for any dinner by the Sunday prior to the dinner!

Sign up also available in Fellowship Hall

Keep Collecting Those Recyclables!

Did you know?

The Deacons recycling efforts help support many of the programming efforts of the church. The Deacons often subsidize the cost of buses for outings to keep ticket cost low, fund food for functions like the Back to Church picnic, Lenten Dinners, and bingo nights, and help fund necessary updates like the new banner on the front of the church. Collecting those cans and bottles count!



Souper Bowl of Caring

Sunday March 1st will be "Souper" Bowl Sunday. The children and youth will be collecting donations of cans of soup and monetary donations after worship to support Bread for Life.



One Great Hour of Sharing

One Great Hour of Sharing is a special offering that supports disaster relief, refugee and immigration ministries, and long-term development projects around the world. When natural disasters strike, when families are displaced, or when communities need clean water, food security, or tools to rebuild their lives, this offering makes that work possible.

Every dollar given to One Great Hour of Sharing goes directly to these ministries. Your gift helps provide emergency shelter, legal assistance, medical care, and sustainable solutions that allow people not just to survive, but to recover and rebuild with dignity.

Please donate by March 15th, online using the QR or clicking the link [HERE](#).

You may also use the dedicated envelop during Sunday Service. Thank you.



Comfort Food Sale: Thank You!

The Comfort Food Sale was very successful! Donations totaled \$400. The money received will be donated to The Friends Room.



Mystery Dinner Theater

Save the dates for this year's Mystery Dinner Theater: **"The Case of the Blue Suede Shoes."**

Show Dates will be:
Friday May 1st at 6pm
Saturday, May 2nd at 6pm
Sunday May 3rd at 3pm.

Tickets will go on sale Sunday, March 29th. Tickets will be \$36 and include dinner and a show! Don't miss what is bound to be a Rockin' and Rollin' good time!

Fruit Shelf

Our fruit shelf at Southington Community Services continues to be emptied almost daily. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this and keep those fruit cans rolling on in!!

Our church's donations supply the fruit shelf for Southington Community Services. Please remember your items to support this ongoing mission. Items like *applesauce and fruit cups* are greatly appreciated.



Prom Shop

The Prom Shop run by Southington Community Services in our lower level has had an amazing turnout. This past week the shop was open for the days off from school and then opened during the school week for groups that came by bus from both SHS and the Karen Smith Academy. During that time, 90 students visited the shop and took 64 long dresses, 27 short dresses and 25 suits. We are happy to be a part of this wonderful ministry.



Pancakes, Music, Fun!

The Music Committee hosted this year's Fat Ash Tuesday Night which included a yummy pancake and sausage meal followed by music by Dr Ya Ya's Mardi Gras Party Band! A good time was had by all to kick off this year's Lenten Season.



Greeters Needed!

Be a Friendly Face on Sunday Morning! ☐

We're looking for a few warm smiles to serve as **Greeters** on Sunday mornings!

Greeters welcome folks as they arrive, hand out bulletins, and assist with the offering. It's a simple but meaningful way to help set the tone for worship and make everyone feel at home.

The best part? It's not a weekly commitment — you'll be scheduled about once a month.

If you'd like to help create that welcoming first impression, please see **Lori Gensler or Cindy Cayer**. We'd love to have you on the team!



Memorial Garden Brick Sale

Beginning on Sunday March 1st-Sunday May 31st, the Memorial Garden Committee will be holding their Memorial Brick Fundraiser for members of the church to honor the memory of your loved one(s). Wendy Fortin (or a Memorial Garden Committee Representative) will be available every Sunday after church in Fellowship Hall to provide you with a brochure to fill out. The cost for purchasing each engraved brick is \$50.00. The details for filling out the information for your brick is included in the brochure, there are 15 characters per line and 3 lines available per brick. We accept personal checks or cash for this fundraiser. For your convenience, there will also be extra blank order form brochures in the Memorial Garden Committee mailbox in the Church office. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Wendy Fortin at (860)-621-6038.

SNEUCC Conference News

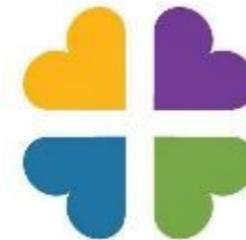
The SNEUCC is currently developing a strategic plan to clarify its future purpose and direction.

As part of this process, all SNEUCC churches, members, and friends are invited to participate in a survey.

Please take a few minutes to take the survey:

Click [HERE](#) for the survey.

For more information on the strategic planning process visit the Conference website by clicking [HERE](#).



Monday Movers!

It's always a great time to join the MONDAY MOVERS! We meet on Mondays at 8:30 in the parking lot and take a walk on the trail. It's a great way to start the week. Grab your sneakers and join us!



Trustees Update

It has been difficult to keep the grounds clear of ice and snow due to the prolonged cold. Our thanks go out to Dave Cayer, Jill, Rev. Jane and Don for helping to keep the walks and entrances clear and safe.

We had a heating system repair when the main office wouldn't heat up. After some trouble with the Parsonage furnace, the filter was replaced to remedy that situation.

The Creche is now down and will be stored away when the weather allows.

Many thanks to Shea Electric for donating and installing new LED lighting in the Fellowship Hall and the hallways. These modern fixtures should give us a substantial savings on our electric bill.

In the course of a routine inspection by Eversource a small gas leak was discovered in the kitchen stove. The gas was shut off and repaired the following day.

Dan Camilleri, Chairman Board of Trustees.

A Friendly Reminder

As a shared space, we kindly ask everyone to help keep our church safe and energy-efficient. If you are the last to leave after a meeting or activity, please remember to turn off all lights and ensure the doors are securely locked. Thank you for your help in caring for our church home!

Al-Anon Meetings

Our weekly Al-Anon Meeting is Thursdays at 10:00AM in the library.

The Al-Anon Family Groups are a fellowship of relatives and friends of people with addictions who share their experience, strength, and hope, in order to solve their common problems. Al-Anon has one purpose: to help families of people with addiction issues. Al-Anon does this by welcoming and giving comfort to families of those with substance abuse issues.

Christian Education

Small But Mighty: Our Youth Are Dreaming Big

Sam Nebiolo and Carlane Mattson-Riston deserve our heartfelt appreciation for stepping up to lead our youth group—a small but mighty crew who show up, engage, and make this community better just by being part of it. Their recent brainstorming session over pizza tackled some big questions: what the future of our church could look like, what they want to do together, and how they might serve the kids coming up behind them.

Thoughtful, energetic, and genuinely excited about this place—we're lucky to have them, and the dedicated adults who guide them.

Scholarship Application Available

The Scholarship Committee is now accepting applications for both the Julie Fortin Scholarship and for the Plantsville Congregational UCC Continuing Education Scholarships.

The Julie Fortin Scholarship is awarded to one high school senior each year who will be majoring in an arts or science program. This year's award will be \$1000 and will go to a high school senior who is a Plantsville Congregational UCC member or to a high school senior from Southington who is not a member of Plantsville Congregational UCC.

The Plantsville Congregational UCC Continuing Education Scholarships are available to any Plantsville Congregational UCC member continuing their education. This year, approximately \$1400 will be available to award to suitable applicants.

Applications for these scholarships are available in the church office. Applications will be accepted through March 31, 2026.

