



The Outreach

The newsletter of the Milford United Methodist Church
Milford, NH, Rev. Matthew Wissell, Pastor
January 2026

Pastor's Corner

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Dear MUMC Family,

Every January, we stand at a threshold. The old year has passed, and a new one stretches before us like an unmarked page. We make resolutions, set goals, and promise ourselves that this year will be different. Yet within weeks, many of those promises fade, and we find ourselves settling back into familiar patterns.

But what if the beginning of a new year offered us something deeper than self-improvement? What if it invited us not just to better ourselves, but to surrender ourselves?

For the people called Methodist, a Covenant Renewal has long provided exactly this kind of spiritual reset. At its heart lies the Covenant Prayer, attributed to John Wesley and used by Methodists for over two centuries. The prayer doesn't ask us to work harder or be stronger. Instead, it invites us to let go.

"I am no longer my own, but thine," the prayer begins. These words cut against everything our culture tells us about the new year. We're told to take control, to assert ourselves, to claim our power. But Wesley's prayer starts with relinquishment. It acknowledges that the deepest transformation doesn't come from gripping tighter but from opening our hands.

The prayer continues with a remarkable series of surrenders: "Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt. Put me to doing, put me to suffering." Here we see the full scope of discipleship. We don't get to choose the comfortable parts and avoid the rest. We can't select only the assignments that make sense or the companions who make us comfortable.

What makes this prayer so powerful is its honesty about what faith actually requires. "Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee," it says, naming the reality that faithful living sometimes means obscurity rather than recognition, waiting rather than acting. "Let me be full, let me be empty" acknowledges that spiritual life includes both abundance and want, both satisfaction and longing.

This is a far cry from the prosperity gospel that promises blessing and suc-

Pastor's Corner Cont'd

cess to the faithful. Wesley understood what the saints have always known: that following Christ means walking a path that sometimes leads through darkness, that obedience sometimes looks like suffering, that faithfulness doesn't guarantee comfort.

Yet the prayer doesn't end in grimness. "I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal," it concludes, before affirming, "And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it."

There's joy in this surrender. The joy of knowing we belong to God, that we are held by grace larger than our circumstances. When we yield control, we discover we're not left empty-handed but held in divine embrace.

As we begin this new year, perhaps the question isn't "What do I want to accomplish?" but "What might God be calling me to release?" Not "How can I improve myself?" but "How might I make myself available to God's purposes?" This January, I invite you to pray Wesley's Covenant Prayer. Pray it slowly, letting each phrase settle. Notice where you resist, where you hesitate. Those places of resistance are often where God is calling you to grow. Notice also where you feel relief, where surrender feels like coming home. Those places reveal where grace is already at work.

The new year will bring challenges we cannot anticipate and opportunities we cannot yet see. We'll face moments when control seems possible and others when it clearly isn't. Through it all, the Covenant Prayer offers us a different way—not the way of striving and anxiety, but the way of trust and yielding.

The old year is gone. The new year beckons. And the God who makes all things new invites us, once again, to begin.

**I am no longer my own, but thine.
Put me to what thou wilt, rank me
with whom thou wilt.**

Put me to doing, put me to suffering.

**Let me be employed by thee or laid
aside for thee,
exalted for thee or brought low for
thee.**

**Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have
nothing.**

**I freely and heartily yield all things
to thy pleasure and disposal.**

**And now, O glorious and blessed
God,**

**Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
thou art mine, and I am thine.**

So be it.

**And the covenant which I have made
on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven.**

Amen.

Under the mercy,

Pastor Matt

Email
pastor@milfordumc.org

Our MUMC Family Out in the World

Here are some of MUMC Family spreading Joy in December



Lincoln & Quentin with Santa



Lincoln Biron baking



Lily & Jamie Eves enjoy the Christmas lights



Jacqui Cook as an AI image of her "fave" game.



Cora Herlihy playing Basketball.



Children's Church Kid's Nativity

Would love to see how you spread Joy. Friend me on Facebook or send a pic to office @milfordumc.org

Christmas Photos



Tim, Jaclyn, Cora Avery, Emmy Herlihy



Jenny, Natalie, Gavin Lawton, Marilyn Edmondson



Kim, Lily, Jimi, & Jamie Eves



Grace & Lincoln St Jean



Some of the Harvey-Olson kid with Santa, IvyRose, Matty, Neva,, & Patrick

**In January
SHARE Is Collecting.**

Condiments, Cooking Sauces & Seasonings, Cooking Oil, Pasta Sauce, Tomato Sauce, Tomato Paste, Diced Tomatoes



**Food
Pantry
Needs**

**SHARE
Collection**

***Activate Moving Milford UMC
Forward
From Steve Kimner***

Greetings my friends in Christ,

I am writing to let you know that we have begun a process with the United Methodist Foundation to help our church become more involved in our surrounding community. Our greatest strength here at MUMC is our people. In the past we have had an engaging presence in our local community. When COVID came along a few years ago, there was a withdrawal from that long standing tradition. After things settled down a few years later, some of us in leadership began to ask how we reenter the community at large not as we were, but better and more visible. We felt we needed some help to get us moving in the right direction. With the arrival of Pastor Matt, he brought to our attention information regarding the Activate Program from the United Methodist Foundation and felt that we should learn what this program had to offer.

A small group of us, Jim Lawler, Pastor Matt, Callie McMahan, LeeAnne Steenhoek, Kerri-Lynn Kimner, Steve Rafter and myself, met in September with Dave Abbott from the United Methodist Foundation of New England. He presented the big picture of what Activate is all about and let us have some time to decide whether it is something we should pursue. After some discussion we decided it was worth our time and effort to get involved.

Activate is a 4-step program as well as group process with other church communities and the Foundation itself as guide. The four steps are Discern, Define, Design, and Deploy. In the Discern stage, we look at what we have done in the past and recall all the things we as a church have been involved in over program. From there we will Design a

program and recruit others to assist in our plan. We will address the Who, What, Where, and most importantly, the Why of our program.

Finally, we come to the Deploy stage of this new program. At this stage, we can apply for a grant from the United Methodist Foundation to help us get the program up and running if we feel additional funding is needed to bring the program to fruition.

The important thing to note here is that we are not doing this alone. We are working with Dave along with two other churches at the New England Conference, one in Burlington, VT and the other in Putnam, CT. This is a year-long process, and I hope we can get everyone in our church family to participate as we decide to pursue. We meet monthly as a whole group to check in and discuss what is going on in our respective projects. We also meet regularly as a local church to see where we are and what we have learned so far.

It is my hope that we can find a meaningful and productive way to engage in our community. I know we have done something recently by sponsoring the Boy's and Girl's basketball teams at Milford high school. This is just one small thing we can do to help those around us.

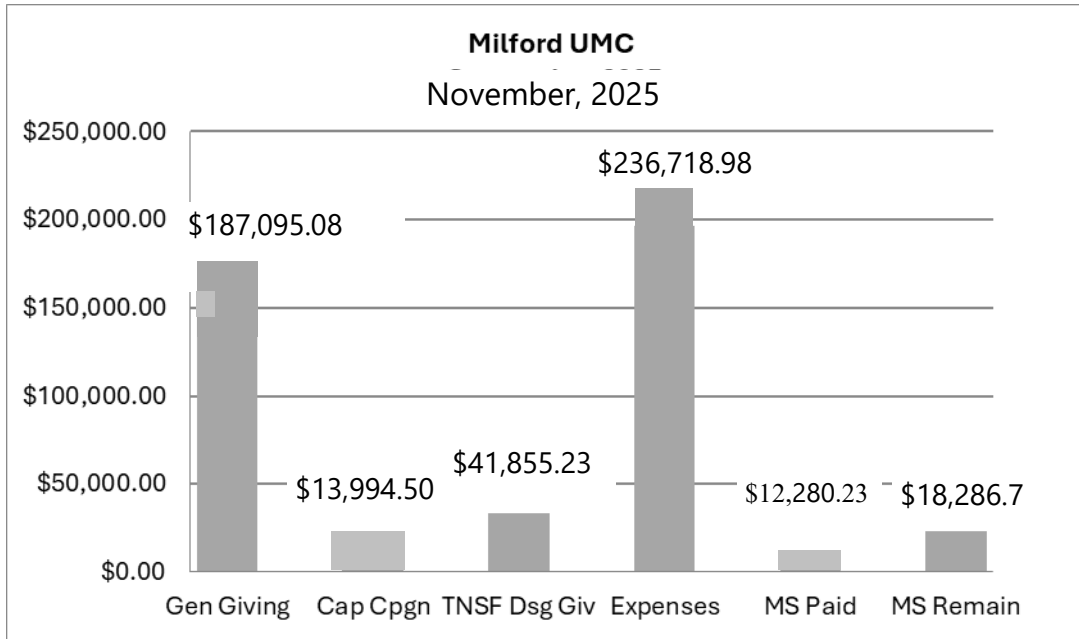
I look forward to sharing more details as we move forward in this process. If you have any questions regarding this process, please feel free to contact myself or one of the team members.

Peace to you all.

Steve Kimner
Lay Leader, Milford UMC
sakmnr91@gmail.com
603-930-0909

Financial Reports

From Deb Santinelli, for the Finance Committee



The Year end numbers were not available at the time of this printing. We are delighted to share that 2025 Mission Shares will be paid in full. Also, a significant principal payment will be sent to lower our mortgage balance.

Thank you everyone!!

YTD Financials

General Giving	\$187,095.08
Cap Campaign	\$ 13,994.50
TSF Dsg Giv *	\$ 41,855.23
Expenses	\$ 236,718.98
Mission Shares Paid	\$ 12,280.23
Mission Shares Remain	\$ 18,286.77

*Dsg = Designated giving accounts that are being used to fund items that show up in the Expense category.

The miracle of giving is that giving makes miracles.
—Bishop Robert E. Goodrich

A Purposeful New Year

The man who goes into the new year without some priorities governing his life and without some principles guiding his behavior, is prey to the tempting, unimportant and destructive things in life.

The new year is an opportunity to sort out the useless tasks and plan for the important; to review the failures and resolve to be successful; to take an inventory of causes and pledge life to purpose and service. These being done, the new will truly be new, different and better.

— C. Neil Strait



New Fellowship Hour Hosts for January

A big "thank you" to our December hosts from the MUMC Praise Band. January's hosts are primarily from the Praise Band and as of today include Rudy Rumohr, Chris & Jenn Erdody, Lisa Payne, Emma & Jason Lambert, Linda Mossey, and Kris Jensen.

January's hosts are from the worship committee, Heidi Rocha, Kathy Holland, Peggy Dotter, Dana VanBuskirk, & Sally Landis.

Thank you for making everyone feel welcomed.



When all else fails—God Reigns

When we deliberate, God reigns;
When we decide wisely, God reigns;
When we decide foolishly, God reigns;
When we serve God in humble loyalty, God reigns;
When we serve God self-assertively, God reigns;
When we rebel and seek to withhold our service, God reigns —
The Alpha and the Omega, which is, and which was and which is to come, the Almighty.

— William Temple
at the Lamberth Conference, 1930



Scripture Keys to a Joyful New Year

Hold fast to your faith (Hebrews 4:14)

Assemble with the saints (Hebrews 10:25)

Pray earnestly every day (1 Thessalonians 5:17, 18)

Pray for great blessings (Malachi 3:10)

Yield not to temptation (1 Thessalonians 5:22)

Neglect not your talents and opportunities (Galatians 6:10)

Examine yourself daily (2 Corinthians 13:5)

Work diligently for the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58)

Yield your members to righteousness (Romans 6:11,16)

Exercise yourself in godliness (1 Timothy 4:7)

Aim at sinless perfection (Hebrews 6:1)

Redeem the time (Ephesians 5:15, 16)

— Gus Nichols



This Month's Lectionary

January 4: Jeremiah 31:7-14, Psalm 147:12-20, Ephesians 1:3-14, John 1:1-18

January 11: Isaiah 42:1-9, Psalm 29 Acts 10:34-43, Matthew 3:13-17

January 18: Isaiah 49:1-7, Psalm 40:1-11, 1 Corinthians 1:1-9, John 1:29-42

January 25: Isaiah 9:1-4, Psalm 27:1, 4-9, 1 Corinthians 1:18-31, Matthew 5:13-20



Driving Ministry

If you are in need of a ride and have no place to turn, call the office and we will notify the driving ministry to help you out. This program is primarily directed to our handicapped and seniors, but anybody who needs a ride and can't find one is eligible. There is no charge for this service. Office 603-673-2669 Steve Takacs 603-672-5118
 office@milfordumc.org
 trumpetchoo@msn.com



If you
 see any of these folks around town, be sure to wish them a happy day!

Birthdays:

- January 5:** Genevieve Steenhoek
- January 6:** Easton Rafter
- January 11:** Callie McMahon
Jimi Eves
- January 13:** Steve Kimner
- January 14:** Anita Merrill
- January 15:** Jillian Rafter
- January 17:** Betty Herlihy
- January 19:** Heidi Rocha
- January 21:** Gerrie Hopkins
Nancy MacKay
- January 26:** Nadia & Ryder Tlapa
Tessa Farnsworth

Anniversaries
 We have no anniversaries on our calendar. Hope we didn't miss you!

We would love to include you on the birthday and anniversary list. Won't you share your special dates at office@milfordumc.org

Hope your day is extra special!



Family Ministry
From LeeAnne Steenhoek

SPOTLIGHT EVENT:
PJ's and Storytime

Remember when you were quite small and someone you loved and who loved you very much read you a story? Did you have a favorite Story that you delighted in night after night? Mine was *Goodnight Moon* by Margaret Wise Brown. Did they ever play with the words to see if you were listening? Mine did! Argh! "Read it right Daddy!" I'd exclaim. Remember that delicious feeling on the brink of sleep when all is right with the world and you have just been read to. Mmm, one of life's perfect joys. Bring your blankie or comfort toy, We will have Pizza and Hot Cocoa. We will share stories and play sardines. When:
Wednesday January 14
Time:
5:30-7:30

January 30, starts 6:00-6:30 (for staggered set up)-9 p, Praying with Beads, with Pastor Boo Jackson Landsperg. Come learn about and make prayer Beads, Light Supper. All ages Welcome!

Would you be willing to Save February 11 5:30-7:30 for our next Spotlight Event? The Snowman, a short film by Dianne Jackson (I'm walking on the Air).

Children's Church is taking a break until January 25.

See you January 31 Children!

Backpack is at the back of the sanctuary filled with fidgets and puzzles and col-

oring supplies.

Devin, Child and Family Ministry Assistant is available in the Family Worship Room for Play and to Livestream our Service Please reach out to talk, go for a winter walk or find a sledding hill. I'd love to share special time with individual parents, grandparents and kids this January.

Email: childfamilyministrydirector@milfordumc.org

Cell:
(603)864-9005

Choir News
From Jenn Erdody

Thanks to all who brightened our holiday season with music! From our musicians, to our staff, tech crew, congregation, and audiences, we were so happy to be able to make music together!

Chancel Choir rehearses at 5:30 on Thursdays. All are welcome!



Share Supper

January 20, 2026

Sign ups will be posted in the Narthex

It's a great way to get involved.

Christmas Fair Wrap Up From Pat Rafter

It continues to amaze me each year!

We have a wonderful and hard working Christmas Fair Committee that always works like a well oiled machine along with the support of a loving church family. We all know the saying... many hands makes light work and MUMC is living proof! There are still donations trickling in but our last count had the fair total at \$10,882.96! God is Good!!

So many have heard in the community how everyone says it is the best fair in town. I just love that folks enjoy our hard work and take great pleasure in attending. Most of the funds raised will go towards paying our mission shares with the hopes we will once again pay 100% by mid Jan.

Craft workshops will begin on January 24 12:30-3. We will continue to meet on the 4th Saturday of each month. We invite anyone with interest in crafting to come join us. We have a great time crafting, fellowshiping, meeting new friends and snacking too! If you have questions please feel free to ask 1 of our frequent crafters; Peg Dotter, Shirley Nielsen, Callie McMahan, Hazel Palmer, Nicole Masters, Deb Santinelli, Betty Herlihy, Maureen Lockwood, Amy Wissell, Kathy Holland, Sylvia Buttemeier, or Pat Rafter.

If you can't make these sessions but like to craft. We can give you some me ideas to work on at home or come up with your own creations. As always we look for more folks that enjoy making jams and jellies and other canned goods for our country cupboard. Pat

has quite a supply of mason jars and is willing to share!

Blessings,
Pat Rafter & the rest
of the committee.



Christmas Craft Fair

Little Sparks of Wisdom

"Belief is truth held in the mind; faith is a fire in the heart."
—Joseph Fort Newton

"If you live right each day, you will be neither afraid of tomorrow nor ashamed of yesterday."
—E. C. McKenzie

"Worry is interest paid on trouble before it falls due."
—Dean Inge

"You can accomplish more in one hour with God than in a lifetime without him."
—Author unknown

"Getting me into hot water is often God's way of keeping me clean."
—Ruth Zimmerman

Safer Sanctuaries Corner ***By Dave Haag***

As we enter 2026, I am happy to report that two new people have elected to join Callie McMahon and myself on the Safer Sanctuaries Committee. They are Sara Murphy and Kathy Holland. Please give them a shout out as they will be very busy with our project. After an initial training period they will start their research and writing.

Our United Methodist General Conference has reaffirmed and reminds us that "A Safe Sanctuaries Policy is an overt expression of a congregation in creating a safe place - a sanctuary - where children, youth and adults of all ages and abilities may experience the abiding love of God and fellowship within the community of faith".

We will continue to explore this more in 2026 as your Safer Sanctuaries Committee continues to build our Policy.



Precious Lord, Take My Hand

Thomas Dorsey, a jazz musician from Atlanta, made a bold decision in 1926 to leave behind secular music and devote his talent to writing songs for the Lord. But following that call wasn't easy. During the Great Depression, many church leaders criticized his soulful gospel style, calling it "the devil's music." Dorsey later joked, "I got kicked out of some of the best churches in the land."

Then, in 1932, tragedy struck. While in St. Louis for a revival, he received a telegram that his wife had died suddenly during childbirth. His faith was shaken to the core, and grief nearly silenced him. Yet in his deepest sorrow, Dorsey turned back to what he knew best — music. Out of that heartbreak came one of the most beloved hymns of all time:

*"Precious Lord, take my hand,
Lead me on, let me stand.
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn..."*

Dorsey's song reminds us that even in our valleys, God is near — guiding us, strengthening us, and using our pain to comfort others who walk the same road.

**REMEMBER YOUR TO
WEAR YOUR NAME TAG**

Noise Offering for Wanakee

January 11, 2026



***Think before you spritz or spray.
Someone may thank you.!***

Scents can make some people sick.

An Opportunity for Mission Engagement From Janet Hromjak



A collection box will be placed in the narthex for greeting cards. These cards will be donated to the New Hampshire prisons, where the fronts are used for crafting projects. New or used cards are welcome (for used cards, please submit only the front), and cards from any occasion or source may be donated.

We also donate children's books from our yard sales. Inmates record themselves reading these books and create "books on CD" to send to their children.

An Invitation from the Voice Committee.

Princess Mononoke is a 1997 Japanese animated historical fantasy film written and directed by Hayao Miyazaki. Set in the Muromachi period of Japanese history, the film follows Ashitaka, a young Emishi prince who journeys west to cure his cursed arm and becomes embroiled in the conflict between Iron town and the forest of the gods, as well as the feud between the town's leader, Lady Eboshi, and San, a human girl raised by wolves.

The theme of the movie explores the conflicts of nature, technology, and humanity .

We hope you will join us. It's free!



Faith in Action

A Christian is someone who makes it easier for others to believe in God — not through perfection, but through kindness, grace and love in everyday life. When people see Christ's compassion in us, they're drawn closer to Him.

Committees, Groups and Ministries

If you are interested in becoming involved with, or learning more about, a committee or group on the calendar, here's who to talk to.

Administrative (Ad) Council: Steve Kimner
Reviews monthly committee meetings, discusses pending issues and votes on church-wide decisions.

Adult Mission Trip Steve & Pat Rafter

Bell Choir: Heidi Rocha
For adults and older kids interested in hand bell ringing.

Christian Aftercare Ministry: Callie McMahon
Serving primarily men leaving prison, helping them settle in new homes and productive, positive lives.

Chancel Choir: Jennifer Erdody
Open to adults and teens interested in singing in the Chancel Choir at the second service.

Community Supper: Kerri-Lynn Kimner
A supper we host at SHARE in Milford every 6-8 weeks. Volunteer to help bake or prep ahead of time, or to work at the supper itself.

Driving Ministry— Steve Takacs
Provides transportation for those in need of help. Call the church office for contact information.

Finance: Andy Baver
Oversees church financial commitments

Hospitality : Callie McMahon and al of the family
Providing opportunity for hospitality churchwide.

Lamplighters: Carol Rowlette & Elaine Driscoll
A Bible-study group for women.

Nominations: Pastor Matt. *Matches people with the committees they might be interested in serving on.*

Mission/Outreach Diane Miller Sue Kostuk
Focuses on ways our church can reach out to the local, regional and international community.

Children & Family : LeeAnne Steenhoek
Focuses on involving Children and Families in church events and spiritual growth.. Family Worship room available during service

.Praise Band: Steve Rafter, Lisa Payne, Rudy Rumohr
Contemporary Christian music that plays at the first service on Sunday.

Staff Parish Relations (SPR): Sue Rudolf
This committee acts as liaison between our staff and the congregation.

Safer Sanctuary Team Dave Haag. *Rewriting our safe sanctuary policy to new guidelines.*

MUMC Care Team: Callie McMahon
Provides confidential one-on-one Christian care with trained lay ministers.

Pastor Transition Team Led by SPRC Sue Rudolf

Trustees: Steve Rafter
Oversees and facilitates the care and keeping of the church building and parsonage.

White Tops: Everett Gale
A social group for retired men of all denominations.

Worship Committee: Heidi Rocha
Plans and facilitates Sunday service needs and organizes special Sundays

Worship Design: Steve Rafter
Plans music and worship for the contemporary Sunday service.

Vacation Bible School: LeeAnne Steenhoek,
Usually happens in July. A time for the kids to be immersed in learning about Jesus.

VOICE *Giving voice to the marginalized in our community. Janet Hromjak, Callie McMahon, Kerri-Lynn Kimner, Annika Weis*

Men's Group: Jim Lawler *For men interested in fellowship and service. Meet Sunday Evenings*

Youth Mission Trip Tom Knapp *Provides support for youth ministry in the world. Works with the youth and organizes mission work near and far.*



For Virtual Services starting at 10:30 a.m. Sunday, join Us On-Line from our Facebook page Milford United Methodist Church, A Reconciling Congregation or

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

				1 <i>Happy New Year!</i>	2	3
4 8:30 Spirit Celebration 9:40 Adult Sunday School 10:30 Traditional Service 5p Men's Group	5 1p Bible Study 6 SPRC /TT Virtual	6 1p. Bible Study 4 Worship 4:45 Staff 7 Praise Band	7 9 White Tops 6:00 Princess Mononoke	8 8:45 Coffee, Donut Express on Elm St 5:30 Choir 7 Bells	9	10
11 8:30 Spirit Celebration 9:40 Adult Sunday School 10:30 Traditional Service 5p Men's Group	12 1p Bible Study	13 1p Bible Study 7 Praise Band	14 9 White-tops 1 Lamplighters 5:30 –7:30 Cocoa the Snowman Child & fam-	15 8:45 Coffee with Pastor Matt, Donut Express on Elm St 5:30 Choir 7 Bells	16	17
18 8:30 Spirit Celebration 9:40 Adult Sunday School 10:30 Traditional Service 5p Men's Group Human Relations Sunday	19 MLK Day 1p Bible Study 5:45 Voice	20 1p Bible Study 4-7p Share Supper 7 Praise Band	21 9 Whitetops 1 Lamplighters 7 Mission Outreach	22 8:45 Coffee with Pastor Matt, Donut Express on Elm St 5:30 Choir 7 Bells	23	24 Crafting Workshop/ 12:30-3p
25 8:30 Spirit Celebration 9:40 Adult Sunday School 10:30 Traditional Service 5p Men's Group	26 1p Bible Study 6 Finance	27 1 p Bible Study 7 Praise Band	28 9 Whitetops 1 Lamplighters	29 8:45 Coffee with Pastor Matt, Donut Express on Elm St 5:30 Choir 7 Bells	30 6-9 p Making Prayer Beads	31
					Please Remember to wear your name tag!	



Milford United Methodist Church

327 No. River Rd
PO Box 476
Milford, NH 03055
(603) 673-2669
www.milfordumc.org

January, 2026

Sunday Worship Times:

8:30a. Spirit Celebration, 10:30a. Traditional Service, 9:40a Adult Sunday School & Children's church. Watch Us live Online Facebook & YouTube @10:30 Rev. Matthew Wissell, Pastor
Email: pastor@milfordumc.org

Milford United Methodist Church

A Reconciling Church

Discover the Joy!

Rev. Matthew Wissell, Pastor

Our Mission:

The Milford United Methodist Church exists to help **all** people discover the joy of knowing and serving Jesus Christ.

Our Vision:

We will help all people discover the joy of knowing and serving Jesus Christ by:

- Providing joyful and meaningful worship experiences.
- Establishing and encouraging small groups for study, support, prayer, fellowship and service.
- Empowering people to discover, develop, and deploy their gifts for ministry.
- Reaching out beyond our congregation in Christian love and service.

Our Values:

We commit ourselves to:

- Know scripture and live it.
- Act with integrity.
- Be faithful to Jesus Christ, our families, and our church family.

- Strive for excellence in all we do for the Lord.
- Celebrate the ministry of all Christians, lay and ordained.
- Treat all people with respect and sensitivity.
- Encourage people to grow in Christ.
- Care for the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of all people.

Welcoming & Inclusion Statement:

Milford United Methodist Church is a welcoming and inclusive church which celebrates that all persons are created in God's image and are of sacred worth. We welcome and serve persons without regard to age, race, culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, family configuration, religious background, economic status, or developmental and physical abilities. Milford United Methodist Church recognizes the diversity of the Body of Christ and gives thanks to God for this divine gift. We invite ALL to discover the joy of knowing and serving Jesus Christ.