NOURISH NURTURE SERVE BUILD

The Courier

Newsletter February/March 2026

Worship

February 1st
Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany
Communion Sunday

February 8th
Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany

February 15th
Transfiguration Sunday

February 18th
Ash Wednesday
6 pm dinner and
7pm service at MHCC

Ash Wednesday

February 22nd
First Sunday in Lent

Dear Friends,

We approach the season of Lent, a time for self reflection and prayer patterned after Jesus' fast for 40 days in the wilderness. I know that for many of us, with so much that is tumultuous happening in our country and in the world, it may already feel like we're in the wilderness. Given the stress and the brokenness in our lives, putting on the traditional fasting associated with Lent may feel like "too much". Instead, we might shift the focus a little bit. Jesus didn't go into the wilderness specifically to fast, but to find clarity and connection with God. So we'll look at Lent this year as a time of centering. A time to follow in the footsteps of Jesus in finding what is most important for us as people and who we are called to be. We practice Lent before Holy Week, but Jesus didn't enter the wilderness to prepare for the crucifixion, but before his ministry. Jesus was ultimately preparing to proclaim the good news of the reign of God, with healing for those who were in need, and release of those who were captives!

So this year for Lent we're going

continued

Worship

March 1st
Second Sunday in Lent

March 8th
Third Sunday in Lent

March 15th
Fourth Sunday in Lent
One Great Hour of Sharing Offering

March 22nd
Fifth Sunday in Lent

March 29th
Sixth Sunday in Lent

to be starting a theme of finding our "Why". Reflecting on where we are and what we need. Why have faith today? Why do we come together and do this thing we call church? Why do we think this matters? And then, what can we proclaim and do that gets at why we are here?

This will be a time for personal and group reflection as each of us has different and diverse experiences, and we each have our own "Why" in how we live our lives. We'll explore where we are in this wilderness of life and where we find joy and connection amidst those places that feel stark and share in this together. Lent begins with our Ash Wednesday service as we gather in our sanctuary to receive ashes on February 18th.

Blessings and peace on the journey,

Pastor Chris

Service and Outreach

One Great Hour of Sharing

On Sunday, March 15th, we will join with many other denominations to collect donations for One Great Hour of Sharing. With these funds our denomination works with domestic and international partners to support disaster, refugee, and development initiatives. You can donate by check or via our church website "Donate" button (select One Great Hour on the drop-down).

Service and Outreach Continued

A Servant's Heart Food Pantry

The Food Pantry continues to see an increased need for groceries and everyday supplies. Please consider picking up a few items for the pantry for February.

Cereal—Cheerios, Mini Wheats, or Special K
Fruit cup packs
Instant coffee
Paper towels

Donations can be brought to church on any Sunday or dropped off at Faith Evangelical Church (200 Franklin St. Melrose). You can enter the driveway on the Albion St. side of the church and locate a wooden shed to place your items. Thank you for your continued support!

Bread of Life
Food for the body...Nurture for the soul

54 Eastern Avenue, Malden, MA 02148 • 781-397-0404 • info@breadoflifemalden.org

December 9, 2025

Pastor Chris Lyman Waldron
Melrose Highlands Congregational Church
355 Franklin St.
Melrose, MA 02176

Dear Pastor Waldron, We are so thankful for your generous gift and for your heart and hands to serve and love those in need of food and presence. God bless you all. Bill

Thank you for your donation of $2,500.00 on November 24, 2025. Your gift helps us stop food insecurity right here at home:

> *Mr. Guo, a grandfather raising his young granddaughter, was struggling to keep food on the table. His small income often ran out before the end of the month, leaving him worried about how to feed them both. Everything changed the day they discovered Bread of Life. From the moment they walked in, volunteers greeted them with warmth and respect. The shelves were filled with fresh fruit, vegetables, and bread—simple things, yet they brought joy and relief. His granddaughter's face lit up with excitement as she helped carry the groceries home. Thanks to us, Mr. Guo no longer feels alone in his struggle. Together, they found not only food but also a caring community that gives them hope.*

In 2024, Bread of Life povided food for 157,000 people, 76,000 households, through our Malden Food Mart, Everett Mobile Market, grocery delivery to seniors, motel meals outreach, congregate meal and Everett school backpack program.

Your support enables us to distribute the equivalent of 1 million meals per year to low-wage working families, unemployed people, homeless families, disabled individuals and senior citizens.

Thank you for partnering with us to eliminate hunger and help families transition to self-reliance. We look forward to partnering with you in the future.

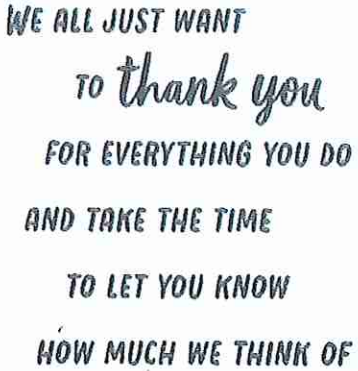
Sincerely,
Gabriella Snyder Stelmack

Gabriella Snyder Stelmack
Executive Director

I appreciate your generous donations. Happy Holidays! -Les.

Thank you for your generosity over the past several years. Our students appreciate all you do to brighten their holiday season -Kristy

Thanks for your generosity! -take care, Al



Thank you for making our families holidays a little brighter! Merry Christmas! -Jessalynne

Thank you all for your amazing generosity to the MHS community merry Christmas! ~Erin

Thank you so much! Merry Christmas -Ann

Thank you so much! The Church communities generosity means so much to our students. Happy Holidays! ~Tawyn

Thank you so much for your generous donations! Our students really appreciate you all! -Amy

Merry Christmas!

Thank you so much for supporting our students & brightening their holidays! -Sharon

11/24/25

Hello Scouts and Church members,

Just a quick thank you from A Servants Heart food pantry for your awesome food delivery.

It's always a great pleasure to see all the scouts with their donations and seeing our pantry.

Thank you adults for all the extra heavy bags you load on to the cart.

We look forward when ever you are able to come again.

Thanks giving blessings to all. Joan & Sue

From the Desk of the Moderator

Hello, Friends.

In all the years I went to Sunday School, none stand out for me quite like the year my father taught our class (or I should say, *co-taught* — credit also to Mrs. Combs). Perhaps those lessons stand out in my memory because I was on my best behavior (or close to it) and thus more focused. I distinctly remember him covering the Ten Commandments in detail (which may have been strategic on his part). But I think the main reason it made such an impression was that I knew he was a busy guy — with three other sons, a full-time job, and other church-related duties — so it was clear that he saw my spiritual education as a top priority.

And now that I'm an adult, of course I want the same for not just my son but for every kid in our congregation. No doubt you do, too. Toward that end, our amazing Christian Education team is seeking additional support in their efforts to foster the spiritual growth of MHCC's youth. They're encouraging any interested adults to fill out (or update) a CORI form and sign up to help out at one or two class sessions this year. It's about more than just having another adult in the room; the CE team benefits from additional perspectives, experiences, and energy. They're always looking for new ways to keep it fun!

So if you're up for it, please reach out to me, Pastor Chris, Amberly Ticotsky, or Val Bowden, and we can get you a CORI form. I've filled mine out. I think Dad would be proud … or maybe just relieved. Either way, it's worth it.

Thanks for all you do!

John Swanson

Sunday School Update

We are hoping to create a pool of Sunday School support volunteers who would be willing to help from time to time—whether to cover vacations or illness, or simply to share their gifts and interests around a particular topic.

To make this possible, anyone who may be interested in serving in this way is required to complete a CORI form. Completing a CORI does not commit you to a regular role; it simply allows us to have a group of approved volunteers ready when help is needed. CORI forms can be completed at any time.

Thank you for considering this opportunity to support our children's ministry.

Sunday School has a lot of fun things planned and we are looking forward to learning a little more about David and being part of the church community in the upcoming months.

Sunday School Schedule:
Sunday, February 1st Communion Sunday – all in Worship
Sunday, February 8th Valentine Decorating for MHCC's Sunshine List and Elders
Sunday, February 15th No Sunday School – President's Day Weekend
Wednesday, February 18th Ash Wednesday – *official start of Lent – Pancake Supper Held at MHCC*
Sunday, February 22nd Sunday School Hosts Coffee Hour – Have a Heart for Heifer

Respectfully Submitted,
Val Bowden, Interim Sunday School Coordinator
Amberly Ticotsky, Deacon of Christian Education

Return of Purple Patrol!

During Lent, wear your purple to church on Sundays and receive a prize from the Purple Patrol!

Sunday School Continued

MHCC's Sunday School Partners With Heifer International
Through the years – MHCC's Sunday School class has focused on an animal for Heifer and the work they do for those in poverty. This year – we have made the decision that our monthly donation that we were making to "Save the Children" will instead go to "Heifer International" an organization whose goals the children have been working towards each year. Through the years, we have raised funds for things such as mating cows, bees, clean water, goats, etc. This year – we are taking more of a big picture approach – focusing our efforts on caring for the Earth. Look for ways that you will see the Sunday School kids practicing what we preach (Reduce; Reuse; Recycle) when hosting Coffee Hour. The Girl Scout cookies served will be a reminder of Heifer's goal of female empowerment. Kids may even find some seeds and birdseed hidden in this year's Easter eggs. To learn more about Heifer International and the wonderful work they do around the world: **www.heifer.org**.

Have a green thumb? The Sunday School could use your help around an Earth Day project planned for Sunday, April 26th. Please do not hesitate to reach out with your expertise.

The Heifer Marketplace is planned for Sunday, June 7th – we will hopefully have some fun items for sale, including plants!

Valerie J. Bowden, Interim Sunday School Coordinator, Highlands Hero - 2025

Sunday School/Heifer Continued

FAMILY FARM CARE PACKAGE >

$72

Give a family the tools to jumpstart their farm, including training and education about best farming practices, conservation, and more.

GARDEN SEEDS > $60

Your gift includes a variety of fruit and vegetable seedlings and saplings, along with education about healthy soil.

EARTH GIFT BASKET >

$60

Give a hive of bees and tree seedlings to help families increase their crop production while caring for the Earth.

GARDENER'S GIFT BASKET >

$170

Give tree seedlings, rabbits, chickens, and a hive of bees, along with education in animal care, fertilization, and sustainable farming.

Senior Youth Group Schedule

Sunday, February 8th, Laser Tag - We'll play some laser tag at XtremeCraze in Woburn from 1:00-3:00pm. Either meet there at 1:00pm or meet at MHCC at 12:30 if you need a ride.

Friday PM-Saturday AM, March 13th-14th, Overnight - We'll meet around 5:30pm on Friday at MHCC. There will be pizza, movies, snacks, etc. Pick-up no later than 9:00am on Saturday.

Friday-Sunday, April 24th-26th, Possible Service Retreat in Maine - This would be to Pilgrim Lodge in Maine and is still coming together. Plan would be to go up Friday afternoon/evening and come back mid-day Sunday.

Saturday, May 16th, Treetop Adventures - High ropes course in Canton. Exact time TBD, but we'll likely meet at MHCC at 10:00am.

Saturday, June 6th, Hiking - Continuing our annual tradition, we will go for a hike, probably somewhere on a mountain in New Hampshire. Details TBD as we get closer.

Middle School Youth Group Announcement

Middle School Youth Group Activity:

Boda Borg **February 22, 1-3pm**. We can meet there or at church if anyone needs a ride.

Please join us in praying for God's comfort and guidance in their lives and this world, as well as for all those whom you know need God's love and caring.

Please call or email the church office to add a name to our prayer list.

Nancy Chappel
Christyne Cheney Daley
Mary Edwards
Laurie Lowman
Lois Mackey
Marcia McCarthy
Judy McSween
Andy Wescott
Ana Wescott
The Andrews Family

Our Sunshine List: *Please send cards, visit and hold in your prayers.*

Charlotte Swan, Greenwood Nursing & Rehab Center, 90 Greenwood St., Wakefield, MA 01880

Michael Harrison, Steele House, One Nason Ave., Apt. 514 Melrose, MA 02176

MHCC

Feb 2026 (Eastern Time - New York

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 10am - Holy Communion 10am - Worship	2 7pm - EC meeting	3 9am - Office Open 12pm - Bible Study 6:15pm - Polymnia -	4 9am - Office Open	5 9am - Office Open 7pm - Choir - Sanctuary	6 4:30pm - Pack 615, Blue &	7
8 10am - Worship	9	10 9am - Office Open 12pm - Bible Study 6:15pm - Polymnia -	11 9am - Office Open	12 9am - Office Open	13	14 1pm - Beethoven Society,
15 10am - Worship - No SS	16	17 9am - Office Open 12pm - Bible Study 6:15pm - Polymnia -	18 Ash Wed./supper FH 9am - Office Open	19 9am - Office Open	20	21
22 10am - Worship 1pm - MYG Boda Borg 2pm - Pack 615, Den	23 7:30pm - Outreach Team 7:30pm - Outreach Team	24 9am - Office Open 12pm - Bible Study 6:15pm - Polymnia -	25 9am - Office Open	26 9am - Office Open	27	28 3pm - Tentative Dance FH

MHCC

Mar 2026 (Eastern Time - New York

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 10am - Holy Communion 10am - Worship	2 7pm - EC meeting	3 9am - Office Open 12pm - Bible Study	4 9am - Office Open 6:15pm - Polymnia -	5 9am - Office Open 6:30pm - Pack 615, 7pm - Choir - Sanctuary	6 5pm - Pack 615, Pinewood Derby set-up & event - FH	7
8 10am - Worship	9	10 9am - Office Open 12pm - Bible Study 6:15pm - Polymnia -	11 9am - Office Open	12 9am - Office Open	13 5:30pm - SYG Overnight	14 7am - SYG Overnight FH
15 10am - Worship 2pm - Pack 615, Den	16 12pm - TM Pasta Dinner -	17 9am - Office Open 12pm - Bible Study 6:15pm - Polymnia -	18 9am - Office Open	19 9am - Office Open	20	21 12pm - Beethoven
22 10am - Worship 1pm - Beethoven Society,	23 7:30pm - Outreach Team 7:30pm - Outreach Team	24 9am - Office Open 12pm - Bible Study 6:15pm - Polymnia -	25 9am - Office Open	26 9am - Office Open	27 Craft Fair - FH	28 Craft Fair - FH @ AH
29 Palm Sunday 10am - Worship	30	31 9am - Office Open 12pm - Bible Study 6:15pm - Polymnia -	1 9am - Office Open 12pm - TM Art Fair - FH	2 Maundy Thursday at FCC 9am - Office Open 7pm - Choir - Sanctuary	3 Labyrinth Walk at MHCC	4