

Guiding To and Growing Through the Christian Life

Pastor, Rev. Sungmu Lee PhD

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Website: avonmumc.org

Office Hours: Tue., Wed & Fri 9 am-2 pm
Sexton Hours; Mon-Sat 6-8 am Mon-Thu 1-2 pm
(estimate) on call as needed via cell (860) 960-3360

Sunday Worship Schedule:
8:30am Worship Service with Communion
9:30am Sunday School for all ages
10:30am Family Worship Service

Online worship:
Facebook: www.facebook.com/avonmumc
YouTube: www.youtube.com/avonmumc

Happy New Year! As we begin another year, I think of the beginning of Christian life through baptism, Christian Initiation. "Remember your baptism and be thankful," we say in our times of baptismal renewal. Yet, I have no memory of my baptism which was done when I was an infant. That is why we have confirmation. If the infant baptism was the decision of our parents, the confirmation is our own decision. We do not remember our infant baptism, but we will remember that we are confirming our baptism.



There are five chief metaphors of baptism in the New Testament. The first metaphor of baptism is the union with Jesus Christ. Baptism conveys to each baptized both the death of Jesus and the possibility of resurrection through him. The ancient practice included a going down into and rising from a watery grave. This was a way to make literal this sharing in Christ's death and resurrection.

The second is the incorporation into the church, Christ's body. Baptism is the sign-act of entrance into the church no matter at what age it is practiced. That is why in some churches, fonts are placed near the entrance to church buildings, and some rites involve an entrance procession into the midst of the building and people.

The third is the new birth. This is closely tied to union with Christ in death and resurrection and to joining a new body, the church. The image of new birth appears in Jesus' discussion with Nicodemus: "No one can enter the kingdom of God without being born from

water and spirit" (John 3:5b). New birth is the most feminine of images, and some fonts have been designed to suggest a pregnant woman.

The fourth is the forgiveness of sin. The most obvious thing about baptism is the cleansing action of water representing the forgiveness of sin. Both 1Peter and Hebrews compare baptism with an outward washing and the inward cleansing of a good conscience. The fifth is the reception of the Holy Spirit. Jesus' own baptism has a theophany of the Holy Spirit visible as a dove. Sometimes, the coming of the Spirit seems manifested most clearly by the laying on of hands.

When I baptize anyone at the church, I invite you, the congregation, to join in the vows because as the baptized, these are your vows. When you renew your baptismal vows, you are invited to remind yourselves of the 5 meanings of baptism which have been mentioned above. You have promised, or it has been promised in your behalf, to submit to the righteousness of God in your life.

"Remember your baptism and be thankful!" Our life is not ours but God's. Thus, let us live our lives as the children of God in the year of 2026. Amen.

Sungmu Lee

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FIRST FRIDAY NEW YEAR'S POT LUCK LUNCH Friday, 1/2 12 pm

We'll kick off the New Year with our first Pot Luck Lunch of 2026 on Friday, January 2. Always great fellowship, friendship and conversation. Bring a dish to share (main dish, vegetable, salad, rolls, dessert) if you can, but it's not compulsory.

FIRST FRIDAY FUN NIGHTS MUMC YOUTH (Gr. 6-12) & FRIENDS

7-9 pm

MUMC Fellowship Hall

Beginning Friday, 1/2/2026!!!



Looking to be YOUTH DRIVEN events!!!

- Game nights
- Ice cream socials
- Open mics
- Service projects
- Movies
- Pizza nights
- Karaoke

Chaperones - parents and MUMC background checked members

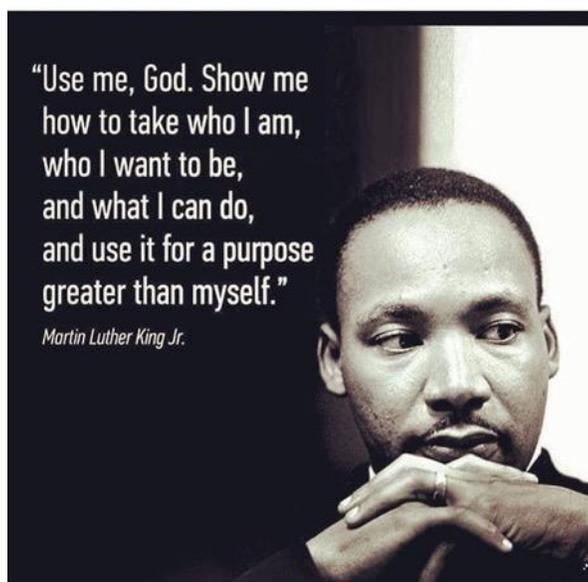
On site Fun Nights will alternate with mid-month off site activities (parent planned)

THURSDAY LUNCH BUNCH

Lunch Bunch is a casual get together of MUMCers in Fellowship Hall every Thursday at noon (except week of First Friday Potluck Lunch).



Although we seem to have a core group, our numbers change from week to week. We share stories, memories and even discuss current affairs a bit. We share happy news and concerns.



PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

Kay Hunter



Now a worldwide ministry, the Prayer Shawl Ministry had its start in Hartford. It first came to MUMC when Beverly Kibbe received a shawl from her co-workers/friends when she was diagnosed with cancer. Bev was very touched by this gift and shared that with her friends at MUMC who then began the ministry here.

Prayer Shawl Ministry provides the opportunity for members to knit independently, but we also plan to meet monthly, the second Monday of each month in the parlor for fellowship and to provide time to knit (or crochet) together and provide assistance and advice. Expenses for yarn will be covered by our prayer shawl funds. Please submit to Kay Hunter who will arrange for reimbursement

Prayer shawls will be available as gifts to church members in need of comfort. Also they can be obtained for friends with a donation to cover expenses. Please contact Joan Robinson if you are interested in obtaining a shawl as a gift.

If you have any interest in being part of this ministry, please join us on **January 12** at 7 pm in the Parlor or contact Kay Hunter. A packet containing the history of this ministry, instructions and other information is available in the literature rack at the downstairs entrance.

YOUTH STUDY "THE CHOSEN"

The youth at Avon MUMC are having a Bible study watching "The Chosen", led by Julia Sweet. We are meeting once a week to discuss the episode. The Chosen is a show about the life of Jesus, spanning his 3 years in ministry and his death and resurrection.



PAIRS AND SPARES

Anne Fitzgerald



We all do it; we see people at church on Sunday, know their names and perhaps the town they live in, but beyond that we truly know nothing about them. Where are they from? Are they employed, work remotely or in an office, and if so, where? Do they have hobbies or come from where we did? Spending an evening with them is a wonderful way to get to know our church family better.

Over the years this group has been called The Couples Club, Pairs and Spares, Eats for Eight and Fellowship Dining, but for the last few years we have gone with Pairs and Spares. Here's how it works:

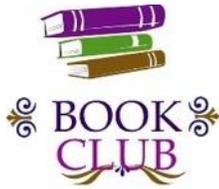
First, let me know that you would like to participate. You can be solo or in a couple, it makes no difference. Next, I will put together a group of people who will take turns hosting the others in their homes, initiating gathering at a restaurant, having potluck at the church, or whatever. Solos can be put together or co-host with a couple. We ask you to invite another person or two who is or are not in another group and might not normally be invited to your home. Each host should ask another person or two up to a maximum of eight if that works in your home.

Once the original group determines a convenient first date and who will be host, the host decides who the spare(s) will be. The host provides the entrée and the others provide side dishes, dessert, and beverage.

At the first dinner, the group may decide who will host next and when, then that host will invite another spare(s). Or the date decision can be made when convenient. Repeat the third time. There is no specific time frame, just whenever it works for the original group during 2026.

If you would like to participate, you can email or call me or speak to me, and I will assign groups to begin dining in 2026. We use one year as the timeframe for all hosts to arrange for their gathering.

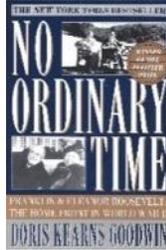
Feel free to email or call me with any questions.



OTHER GOOD BOOK GROUP

[Contact: Heather Kelsey,
hrmkels@aol.com,
(860) 670-1163]

We are kicking off the new year with our discussion of *No Ordinary Time* by Doris Kearns Goodwin. "Winner of the Pulitzer for History, *No Ordinary Time* is a chronicle of one of the most vibrant & revolutionary periods in US history. With an extraordinary collection of details, Goodwin weaves together a number of story lines—the Roosevelt's marriage & partnership, Eleanor's life as First Lady, & FDR's White House & its impact on America as well as on a world at war. Goodwin melds these into an intimate portrait of Eleanor & Franklin Roosevelt & of the time during which a new, modern America was born." [goodreads.com]



We will meet in the Parlor and on Zoom on Sunday, January 18th at 7pm. If the weather looks concerning we may pivot to an all-Zoom meeting. Please contact me if you have a question on this. Happy Reading!



JANUARY FELLOWSHIP HOUR

Linda Kime

Fellowship Hour in Fellowship Hall after Sunday worship continues to be a vital time of conversation and fellowship. Responsibility for hosting Fellowship Hour rotates among the many committees of MUMC. Keeping it very light and simple this year. We appreciate the committee members giving us this service.

January Fellowship Hour Host is...

MEMORIAL GARDEN COMMITTEE

Responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the Memorial Garden, recording of those remembered in the garden, purchase and installation of memorial plaques. Memorial Garden Committee is under the jurisdiction of and overseen by the Board of Trustees.

"COFFEE & CONVERSATION" is available in Fellowship Hall following 8:30 am worship for those who want to gather after, and those who have children in Sunday school, and anyone who comes early before 10:30 worship. Keurig coffee maker will be on for self-serve cup of Joe! Creamer and sweeteners will be out.



ALTAR FLOWERS FOR 2026

Linda Arnold

Sign up for altar flowers for 2026 is active and ready for you to choose and reserve your dates.

You can go to the church website: avonmumc.org. Scroll down home page to bottom to QUICK LINKS and click on ALTAR FLOWERS DONATION which will take you to the link to the Sign-Up-Genius Church Flowers order form with its easy-to-follow directions. If you would rather not use the Sign-Up Genius, contact Linda Arnold via [the online form](#). She will be glad to reserve a week for you. Signup is also available in the narthex.

Immediate openings are available for dedication of altar flowers for January 4 and 18 and February 1. The price for altar flowers is \$40.



FROM THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY

Thank you all for your faithful support of our church this year and your stated intentions for the coming year. As always, we will close the books for the year on December 31. You will receive a report of your financial giving during January. We have the capability of sending your donation statement to you via email. If this is something you would like please notify me (dhornaday@sbcglobal.net) or the Assistant Financial Secretary, Linda Arnold (arnoldl_58@yahoo.com). Otherwise we will print out the reports for you to pick up in the narthex. Those still in the boxes will be mailed the last Sunday in January.

OUR CHURCH FAMILY...



REMEMBERING MAUREEN STARR

Maureen Dale Starr passed away on December 15, 2025, in Georgia, after a long battle with Alzheimer's. Maureen was an active member of Memorial for many years and had moved south several years ago to be near her sons, Cameron and Tyler Starr.

Obituary | Maureen Starr of Atlanta, Georgia | Southcare Cremation & Funeral Society

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

"Happy Birthday!" to the following people who are celebrating birthdays this month.



Martin Kibbe	Mary Tew
Peter Tremback	Deb Slevinsky
Kevin Oommen	Amanda Holtzman
Justin Hunter	Brett Holtzman
Colin Holtzman	Jean Pickens
Jennifer Lamoureux	

If you would like your special day(s) added to newsletter and/or bulletin insert, please notify the church office at avonmumc@gmail.com.

REMEMBERING THOSE WHO HAVE TROUBLE GETTING OUT

A card would be so appreciated.

Bob Erickson
Farmington Station
111 Scott Swamp Rd.
Room 251
Farmington, CT 06032

Katie Morris
11 Briarwood Road
Farmington, CT 06032

Judy Corbeil
Arden Courts
Room 27 Cottage
45 South Rd.
Farmington, CT 06032

Adva Volle
10 Chelsea Place
Avon, CT 06001



PEDALS FOR PROGRESS WINTER NEWSLETTER

Anne Fitzgerald

In the November newsletter, I reported about my delivery on September 29th of 12 sewing machines to Pedals for Progress in New Jersey, and that next week I received two phone calls regarding donations. Happens every time! In fact, I now have three machines in my garage.

This month I would like to give you the opportunity to read the Pedals for Progress fall newsletter that includes references to personal testimonials, two of which I told you about in November. You will learn a lot about what happened with bikes and sewing machines in 2025 and to which countries they were shipped.

p4p.org/fall-2025-newsletter/

Thank you for your continuing support.



METHODIST CHURCHES IN UNIONVILLE

Anne Fitzgerald
Records & History Committee

Throughout 2026 we will celebrate the consecration of our former building at 23 School Street, known to some as the old stone church. At least 21 current members and friends attended worship there, either as children or as adults. Every month there will be an article about the church, but first, a little history.

Methodism came to this area around 1800 when the first Traveling Elder arrived in Burlington. In 1809 Methodists bought and remodeled a private home near the Bristol town line and used it for services. In 1816, a church was built at Lamson Corner near an existing Methodist cemetery, and in 1835, the church was taken down, moved and rebuilt in Burlington Center.

By then, Unionville members who'd been traveling to Burlington for worship began to meet on the second floor of the Tryon and Sanford store (now Claudette's Creative Clippings) at the intersection of Main and Lovely Streets in Unionville. By 1866, they formed the Methodist Episcopal Ecclesiastic Society of Unionville and accepted bids for a new church on Farmington Avenue (now the location of the Unionville Family Restaurant). The church, built for \$950, was occupied in the spring of 1867. By 1913, membership was about 95. The 1921 budget was \$1,601. The church bell was donated by Fred Broadbent and it is now on West Avon Road.



By the 1920s, local Methodists had outgrown their church and in 1926 began building a new one on School Street, a copy of a church in Lake Mahopac, NY. When John Edward Knibbs was building the stone church on School Street, he

used some of the stones from his niece's and nephew-in-law Max Smith's property on West Avon Road, just north of where we are now. His granddaughter Barbara Knibbs lives in Farmington. In 1959, ground was broken for a new parish hall behind the church, which is still there. In 1966, membership was 294.

In 1967-1970, urban renewal in Unionville gave Memorial the opportunity to relocate to its present site at 867 West Avon Road. The new building's cornerstone was dedicated in 1970 and the new church was consecrated on October 3, 1971. An historical connection was made in 2006 when the 1926 School Street cornerstone was reconditioned to reflect the five significant dates in the church's history – 1800, 1835, 1866, 1926 and 1970 - and is still displayed at the church's front door entry. Also, six stained glass windows from the old stone church were completely rebuilt and are now hanging in the sanctuary.

All in all, Memorial United Methodist Church has enjoyed a long and distinguished history in Unionville, and we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the School Street Church in 2026.

OUR CHURCH – UNIONVILLE MUSEUM 2026 CALENDAR



In recognition of the 100th anniversary of the opening of the Methodist Episcopal stone church in Unionville, the Unionville Museum has placed photo of the church on the

cover of their 2026 calendar. Calendars (\$12) are available in fellowship hall following 10:30 worship along with "Cat's Meow" wood ornaments (\$15) depicting the stone church. They can also be purchased at the museum Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday from 2 to 4 pm.



Both are also available from their website:

<https://www.unionvillemuseum.org/.../2026UnionvilleMuseum...>



MUMC REVITALIZATION TASK FORCE / GUIDING & GROWING GROUP

Kay Hunter

We all remember Covid-19 and how it closed down everything in 2020 – stores, schools, businesses, restaurants and churches. We quickly learned how to do most of our living on laptops, I-pads and chrome books. At the same time, we lost our means to gather together to worship, socialize and serve others.

What a relief it was when the worst of Covid passed, and we were allowed to gather in person once more!!! It was at that time that a small group of MUMCers met at the Unionville Restaurant one afternoon to discuss where we could go from there. Out of this group, with John Baily’s leadership, MUMC developed the “Revitalization Task Force”. All were invited to be part of this group. A survey was developed and provided to all MUMCers to see where the priorities were to “revitalize” MUMC. From that list we began the journey of regrowing activities, worship and service at MUMC. A couple of years ago we renamed our band of members to be the Guiding & Growing Group (words from MUMC Mission Statement).

This past year we’ve had numerous opportunities for service, socialization and, of course, worship. The fall months and December included worship in the pavilion, blessing of animals, special suppers, Pumpkin Patch events, Advent and Christmas events and our first Breakfast with Santa Claus – just to mention a few.

Now we are looking forward to 2026 and already have several events on our calendar. Mark yours now and hopefully you can be part of the planning and implementation of these events – and at the very least be able to participate:

- Tue. 2/17 - Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
- Sun. 3/15 - St. Patrick’s Corned Beef Supper
- Sun. 4/5 - Easter Potluck Breakfast
- Sun. 5/3 - Cinco de Mayo Mexican Supper

All are welcome to be part of the G & G Group. Our main purpose is to be sure we have events on the MUMC calendar for members of our church and community. Everyone is welcome and we welcome your ideas for events or programs.

Please join us for our **next planning meeting, Tuesday, January 27 at 7 pm** in the Parlor or on Zoom.



BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP VISION, PURPOSE

Allen Nixon

Contact via [the online form](#)

Everyone grieves differently and in their own way, and your grief will vary from day to day. There is no simple answer or definitive process for your grief, but know that you are not alone. This is the fundamental benefit of MUMC’s Bereavement Support Group, knowing you are not alone and to remember Christ is always with you, and His grace supports us.

This Support Group provides a safe place to share each other’s experiences, concerns and emotions that may be causing pain. Talking with the group about one’s experiences with grief and listening to what others have experienced affords a great benefit to understand and process our personal grief.

Your time with the Bereavement Support Group is a time specifically set aside for you to process your grief, away from distractions and the day-to-day frustrations and interruptions we all experience. Here you may cry, remain silent, and express your emotions without fear of judgment, as the members of this group understand what you are going through.

The Bereavement Support Group meets **the third Wednesday** of every month, except July and August, from **10 am to 11:30am**. The meeting is held in the parlor and also on Zoom; the Zoom meeting ID and password will be sent to Group members several days prior to the meeting.

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

Kay Hunter

What a glorious day as we welcomed children of all ages to enjoy Breakfast with Santa along with the opportunity to participate in Christmas themed games and crafts, cookie decorating and a scavenger hunt that led you to the sanctuary to find the true gift of Christmas – the Baby Jesus in the manger

In addition to those attending, over 40 MUMCers joined together to enjoy a day of volunteering and good fellowship. Special thanks to Hyeonjin Kim, Kevin Sweet and Linda Kime. Also thanks to Will Campbell who filled in at the last minute to serve as our Santa Clause. What a wonderful day!!!

Below are the video links. Enjoy watching!

YouTube: <https://youtu.be/5TfHGpqChDQ>

FB: <https://www.facebook.com/avon.mumc>





CHRISTMAS CAROL SING

On Sunday, December 14 members and friends gathered in the sanctuary to share in the singing of a variety of Christmas Carols. We learned the history of the Carols sung. Thank you to all who had a part in the preparation for this event.



CHRISTMAS DINNER



Our carol sing was followed by a delicious chicken dinner in fellowship hall. Thank you Diane Hornaday for organizing and to the many volunteers that prepared and served the meal and provided cleanup. Free will donations were accepted to support MUMC's music program.



CHRISTMAS COOKIE SALES

Thank you to all who purchased Christmas cookies during our sale to raise funds for U.M. Army. There were many delicious cookies to choose from this year and as you can see in the photo sales went well down to the last cookie!!!



We successfully raised \$336 for our 2026 mission trips.



CHRISTMAS GOODIE BAGS FOR SPECIAL PEOPLE

As has been our tradition, we from Pastoral Care Committee gathered together and prepared goodie bags to be delivered to our special people for Christmas. They contained an assortment of muffins, apples, cuties, cookies, tea bags, and of course candies!!

Thanks to all who donated and prepared the bags and special thank you to Heather Kelsey who created the beautiful bags for all.

Hope all had a Merry Christmas!!!

CHRISTMAS GIVING TREE

Linda Johansen. 860-841-8875



As of this morning, (Monday, Dec. 22nd) the Covenant to Care case manager picked up all the gifts for ten children we were assigned to. The many gifts filled the back of her SUV. I am sure the children will be delighted with the variety of toys / books / clothes they received. Thank you all.



BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

The Blue Christmas service, also known as the Longest Night service was held on December 21, the winter solstice, which symbolizes the longest night of the year. The service included prayers, scripture, singing of special songs and lighting of memorial candles. The longest night is over....



MUMC 24/7 FOOD PANTRY

Please help keep our food pantry stocked by bringing non-perishable food items to be dropped off in the blue bin located outside the kitchen. If you would prefer to make a monetary donation to the missions committee, notated for food pantry, someone will do the shopping.

Most useful food pantry donations:

Pasta sauce and pasta
Canned vegetables
Boxed milk or Powdered milk
Cereal/Instant Oatmeal
Mac and Cheese
Soups/beef stew
Canned fruits
Tuna/salmon
Rice/rice cups
Canned meats/chicken, beef, spam
Beans/black, red, navy, baked
Fresh produce/potatoes, squash, apples, oranges
Peanut butter/Jelly
Pancake mix/syrup
Coffee/Tea/Hot Chocolate
Oil (vegetable, canola, olive)
Salt & Pepper Sugar/Flour
Cake & Cookie mixes/frosting
Dish detergent
Personal hygiene products
Easy open (no can opener required) items:
Fruit cups/Pudding cups
Tuna in a pouch
Single serve soups & pastas
Protein bars



KEEPING MUMC "PEANUT FREE"



While we cannot guarantee MUMC will be totally peanut free, we would appreciate your help in making every effort to support a peanut free environment at Memorial, especially for our little ones.

I HAVE A DREAM

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed; *“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.”*

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by their character.

I have a dream that one day in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and valley shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is our faith. With this faith we will be able to pray together; to go to jail together; to stand for freedom together; knowing that will be free on day.

This will be the day when all God’s children will be able to sing with new meaning –

My country ‘tis of thee, Sweet land of liberty, Of thee is sing. Land where my fathers died, Land of the Pilgrim’s pride, From every mountain side, Let freedom ring.

If America is to be a great nation this must be true. So let freedom ring, from the hilltops of New Hampshire; let freedom ring, from the mighty mountains of New York; from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado; from the slopes of California, and Stone Mountain in Georgia; from every hill and molehill in Mississippi.

When we let freedom ring from every village and hamlet, from every state and city, we will speed the day when all God’s children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing, free at last!

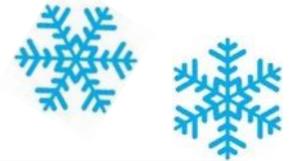
Thank God Almighty, free at last!

(Selected from a sermon delivered by Martin Luther King, Jr. at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC August 28, 2963)





**JANUARY 2026!!
DATES TO REMEMBER!!!**



Day	Date	Time	Pg.	Event
Fri	1/2	12 pm	1	First Friday Pot Luck Lunch
Fri	1/2	7 pm	1	First Friday Fun Night for Youth
Sat	1/3	9:30 am	-	Prayer Warriors
Mon	1/12	7 pm	11	Prayer Shawl Gathering
Sun	1/18	7 pm	4	Other Good Book Group
Tue	1/27	7 pm	7	Guiding & Growing Group Meeting

**PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO FIND OUR LATEST HAPPENINGS
AND UP TO DATE INFORMATION - avonmumc.org**

LOOKING AHEAD!!!

Day	Date		Pg.	Event
Tue	2/17	TBD	-	Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
Wed.	2/18	TBD	-	Ash Wednesday Service

MEMORIAL UM CHURCH

**867 WEST AVON ROAD
AVON, CT 06001**

