

MARY TAYLOR MEMORIAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
168 South Broad Street Phone: 203.874.1982
Milford, Connecticut 06460 FAX: 203.877.8973

First Methodist Church in Milford: 1836
Current building dedicated: 1893
Merged with Myrtle Beach Community Church: 1969
Nesting Ghana Emmanuel U.M. Church: 2016

Whoever you are, wherever you are
on your spiritual journey, you are welcome here.

A SERVICE OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS
ADVENT IV
December 24, 2017

Order of Worship
10:00 a.m.

(* Those who are able may stand. °°° Late arrivals will be seated.)

THE BELL TOLLS – *Welcoming us to worship God*

PRELUDE “O Little Town of Bethlehem” W. Held

WELCOME TO THE CHURCH

*HYMN #250 “Once in Royal David’s City” Irby

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH (seated) The Candle of Love
Lisa, Sarah, Stephen and Lindsay Sobolewski

THE BIDDING PRAYER *(by the pastor)*

THE LORD’S PRAYER Hymnal #895

BLESSING

Pastor: The almighty God bless us with divine grace, Christ give us the joys of everlasting life, and unto the fellowship of the citizens above may the King of Angels bring us all.

People: **Amen.**

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CAROL “Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light” Hymnal #223

FIRST LESSON Genesis 3:8-15, 17-19 **Pastor Dani Levine**
God announces, in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve’s punishment for their rebellion and that the seed of woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.

CAROL “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus” Hymnal #196

SECOND LESSON Genesis 22:15-18 **Kelly O’Hara**
God promises to Abraham that by his descendants all the nations of the earth shall obtain blessing.

CAROL “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” Hymnal #211, verses 1,3, 6

THIRD LESSON Isaiah 9:2, 6-7 **Laura Perregaux**
The prophet announces the birth of a king to a people in darkness.

CAROL “Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming” Hymnal #216

FOURTH LESSON Micah 5:2-5a **Don Hastings**
The king is coming and will usher in a reign of justice for the poor and peace for all of God’s creation.

CAROL “O Little Town of Bethlehem” Hymnal #230

FIFTH LESSON Luke 1:26-35, 38 **Sandy Morgan**
The angel Gabriel announces to the virgin Mary that she will give birth to God’s promised Son whose kingdom shall never end.

CAROL “To a Maid Engaged to Joseph” Annunciation

SIXTH LESSON Luke 2:1-7 **Pastor Hal Vink**
Against a backdrop of emperors and taxes, Jesus is born.

SOLO “The Birthday of a King” William Howard Neidlinge
(Brian Bodt, Soloist)

SEVENTH LESSON Luke 2:8-16 **Leigh Bak**
The shepherds go to see the Savior of the world, lying in a manger.

CAROL “Infant Holy, Infant Lowly” Hymnal #229

EIGHTH LESSON Matthew 2:1-11 **Tom Beyer**
The wise men follow a star to find the child Jesus, the King of the Jews.

CAROL “Love Came Down at Christmas” Bell Ringers
(Eileen Doyle, Tina Gage and Rick Riccardi)

NINTH LESSON John 1:1-14 **Beth O’Brien**
John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.

CAROL “Love Came Down at Christmas” Hymnal #242

MESSAGE “Love Came Down at Christmas” Dr. Bodt

THE PASTORAL PRAYER *(including submitted intercessions)*

*THE PEACE

Leader: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: *And also with you.*

(Greet each other with signs of Christ's peace.)

PRESENTATION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Offertory Anthem: "Ding Dong! Merrily on High/He Is Born!" Traditional French Carols
Arr. by Anna Laura Page

(The Adult Choir with Eileen Doyle, Tina Gage and Lisa Gloates, ringers)

*Presentation: "There's a Song in the Air" Hymnal #249, vs. 4

*We rejoice in the light, and we echo the song
that comes down through the night from the heavenly throng.
Ay! We shout to the lovely evangel they bring,
and we greet in his cradle our Savior and King!*

*Prayer of Dedication

*CAROL "Joy to the World" Antioch

*DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING

Pastor: May the Christ who by his Incarnation gathered into One things earthly and heavenly, fill you with the sweetness of inward peace and goodwill; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be upon you and remain with you always.

People: *Amen.*

Pastor: Go forth in peace and joy.

People: *Thanks be to God. Alleluia!*

*THE BELL TOLLS – *Sending us to walk with and witness for Jesus*

*POSTLUDE "Joy to the World" G. Young

(During the postlude you may leave following the pastor or remain seated.)

THE WORSHIP IS ENDED: THE SERVICE BEGINS.

A FESTIVAL OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS

In 1880 E.W. Benson, then Anglican Bishop of Truro, England, composed a Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, based on ancient sources, for Christmas Eve. In 1918 it was adapted for the chapel of King's College, Cambridge, by its Dean, Eric Milner-White, who also wrote The Bidding Prayer. The Blessing after the Lord's Prayer, added by Milner-White, was first included in its present form in 1930. The Nine Lessons given here have been customarily used in recent years at King's College. The service has been edited for United Methodist congregations.

from The Book of Worship of the United Methodist Church, 1992

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Telephone: 203.874.1982 Fax: 203.877.8973

Website: www.mtm-umc.org www.facebook.com/MTMUMC

E-mail: mtmumc@sbcglobal.net

Ministers	All the People of God	Bishop	The Rev. Dr. Thomas J. Bickerton
Lay Leaders	Shelly Lapadula & Beth O'Brien	Superintendent	The Rev. Dr. Alpher Sylvester
Prayer Chain	Stacy Meszaros	Pastor	The Rev. Dr. Brian R. Bodt
Administrative Assistant	Mary Lou Kampert	Pastoral Assistant	The Rev. Harold V.W. Vink
Sexton	Andy Thomas	Outreach Pastor	Danielle Levine
Child Care Coordinator	Laura A. Brennan	Music Director	Dr. Richard L. Riccardi
		Theologian-in-Residence	The Rev. Dr. Judith F. Bennett

**ADULT SPIRITUAL FORMATION
FOR 2018**

Different Books, Common Word

Muslims and Christians Together Building the Good Community

The Rev. Dr. Judith Bennett, MTMUMC Theologian-in-Residence, will offer a study on Christianity and Islam beginning in January, 2018 in response to requests for this kind of study. Her summary states:

Worship God and join nothing with him; and do good to parents, relatives, orphans, to the needy, to neighbors who are near, neighbors who are strangers. The Qu'ran (4:36)

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Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. Matthew 22:37-39

Given this “common word”, love of God and love of neighbor, how hard should it be for Christians and Muslims in America not only to live together in peace but to work together for the good of the communities in which we live? What keeps us apart? What is there in our separate histories that blinds us to this shared word? What is truly central to each faith and what is culturally determined?

This study will help us look at these questions and more, searching for a deeper understanding of Islam as we seek to deepen our understanding of our own faith. While there is no assigned text, we will turn to many other resources, including print articles, online materials, video and more.

The seven-week course will begin January 9th and 10th and follow our usual format of Tuesdays from 7 – 8:30 p.m. and Wednesdays from 10 – 11:30 a.m. The course will conclude on February 20/21. To register, please call (203.874.1982, ext. 110) or e-mail (mtmumc@sbcglobal.net) the church office. Since there is no assigned text, the cost is to be determined. Whatever it is, scholarship help is always available.

*Grace Notes
December 24, 2017*

Dear Mary Taylor Memorial Church community,

God came a meddlin' at Christmas.

Not that everything was fine. It wasn't. Romans occupying the land. Rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer. A puppet king that did nothing to make Israel great. But at least everyone knew where they stood, even if they didn't like it.

Then comes God, meddlin'. A single poor mother giving birth to the Savior of the World! Outrageous! Shepherds – a profession left to old men and boys, the opposite of the social elite – become the first to hear the news. Preposterous! Mysterious astrologers from the East tell the reigning King Herod – documented by historians as a paranoid megalomaniac – that they are searching for the “new born king.” Unsettling! “King Herod...was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him...” Yet the angels trumpeted “Don't be afraid!” Unpredictable!

My prayer this Christmas is that the outrageous, preposterous, unsettling and unpredictable God will bring you everything you need as you welcome the Savior of the World.

Merry Christmas!

Rev. Dr. Brian R. Bodt, Pastor

P.S. On a personal note, please accept my thanks to all for your very generous Congregational Christmas Gift to me and to the members of the staff. This is truly a touching blessing from all of you to me and our staff. May God bless all of you at Christmas.

AT WORSHIP TODAY

Head Usher: Dennis Darak

Cross Bearer: Michael Firmender

Bible Bearer: Paige Perregaux

Liturgists: As noted in the Liturgy

Greeters: Bob and Becky Virgalla

Acolytes: Josh and Nate Carr

THE ALTAR FLOWERS are the poinsettias donated in honor and memory of loved ones; and in memory of my husband, Benjamin Lopez, who passed away on this date 11 years ago, given by Lodemia Lopez; in loving memory of our son William, given by his parents Paul and Betty Daneault; and in honor of my mother Julia's birthday, given by Cheryl Griffin.

TO ASSIST YOU IN WORSHIP, see our ushers for:

- Large print Bibles, hymnals and bulletins
- Hearing Assist Devices
- Children's bulletins for ages 3 – 6 and 7 – 12

WELCOME VISITORS! May you experience God's presence today. Please complete a red visitor's card (in the pew racks) and wear the "Visitor" peel-and-stick name tag to help us greet you. Our Ambassadors will look for you! **CHURCH INFORMATION** is in the Narthex.

PLEASE OFFER PRAYER CONCERNS using the "Blue Sheets" in the attendance pads in each pew; or obtain one from an usher. **Please return them completed to an usher or to the center aisle where the ushers will collect them on the opening hymn.** Our Lay Leaders speak them during the Prayer of Intercession and Petition. **You are also invited to speak your concerns when we pray.** Please obtain others' permission to share their concerns. Prayers are included in our on-line prayer chain and Monday night Healing Service. **Please also consider joining our Yahoo e-communication group** (which was created for prayer concerns) to offer immediate posting of intercessory prayer requests. To sign up, contact the church office.

CHILD CARE for children five years old and younger is provided in the Wesley Center, the building to your left. Please note that children over five are expected to remain in the sanctuary since our child care is not staffed to provide for older children.

IF YOU NEED TO LEAVE THE SANCTUARY DURING WORSHIP, please exit by either the side aisle to your left or by the rear (Broad Street) doors. **RESTROOMS** are in Dodd Hall (behind the altar) and can be accessed either way. **PARENTS are respectfully urged to accompany their children** as required by our Safe Sanctuary policy. **PLEASE RE-ENTER** the sanctuary by the Broad Street doors if weather and mobility allows.

TODAY'S LITURGY is based on Holy Scripture and The United Methodist Hymnal.

SERMON COPIES from previous Sundays are in the rear of the church or at www.mtm-umc.org.

VITAL CONGREGATION WEEKLY REPORT FOR December 17

Total worship attendance all services: 230 Dec. 17: 167; GEUMC: 10; Dec.18th Blue Christmas Service: 53; Total Offerings for Dec. 17: \$6,221.00; Amount given to Charities and Benevolence \$4,945.69; Engaged in Small Groups: 276; Dec. 16 Pageant and Dinner: 90; G.U.T.S: 6; Men's Club Luncheon: 100; Prayer Shawl: 7; Sunday School: 31; No Confirmation; Disciple 4: 8; Bell Choir: 7; Adult Choir: 19; Office Volunteers: 8; Total persons received on profession of faith: 0; Total Persons involved in local, national, and international missions: 0. *Small Groups – please contact the church office mtmumc@sbcglobal.net or 203.874.1982) with your attendance.



FOURTH SUNDAY OF

Advent

TWO-WEEK CALENDAR AT MARY TAYLOR MEMORIAL~

TODAY

<i>Sunday, December 24</i>		CHRISTMAS EVE
	10:00 a.m.	Worship– Sanctuary (NO Sunday School today)
	11:00 a.m.	Fellowship Time- Dodd Hall
	3:30 p.m.	GEUMC Emmanuel UMC Worship – Chapel
	4:45 p.m.	Living Crèche- front of church
	5:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Worship – Sanctuary
	10:45 p.m.	Bell Choir - Christmas Eve Worship – Sanctuary
	11:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Worship – Sanctuary
<i>Monday, December 25</i>		CHRISTMAS DAY
		The Office is Closed; NO Healing and Wholeness Worship
<i>Tuesday, December 26</i>		The Office is Closed
<i>Wednesday, Dec. 27</i>	9:00 a.m.	Beacon Volunteers – Egan room
	Noon	Taize Worship – Sanctuary
		NO choir rehearsals
<i>Thursday, Dec. 28</i>	5:30 p.m.	Community Dinner – Dodd Hall
	6:45 p.m.	Taize Worship – Sanctuary
<i>Friday, Dec. 29</i>	10:00 a.m.	Office Volunteers
<i>Saturday, Dec. 30</i>	9:00 a.m.	Men’s Tres Dias reunion group – Chapel
<i>Sunday, December 31</i>		CHRISTMAS I - NEW YEAR’S EVE
	10:00 a.m.	Worship– Sanctuary (NO Sunday School today)
	11:00 a.m.	Fellowship Time- Dodd Hall
	3:30 p.m.	GEUMC Emmanuel UMC Worship – <u>Sanctuary</u>
	4 - 7 p.m.	Youth Group Party – 47 Commodore Place
	6:00 p.m.	Alcathon 6 pm today through 7 pm January 1st
<i>Monday, January 1</i>		The Office is Closed
	7:00 p.m.	Healing and Wholeness Worship- Chapel
<i>Tuesday, January 2</i>	5:45 p.m.	Confirmation class – Gunn Library
	7:00 p.m.	Disciple 4- Egan Room
	7:00 p.m.	Church Security Task Force – Gunn Library
<i>Wednesday, Jan. 3</i>	2:30 p.m.	Golden Hill Community Supper- Bridgeport
	5:15 p.m.	Pastors-Lay Leaders meeting – Pastor’s study
	6:30 p.m.	Choir Party – 70 Morningside Drive, Stratford
<i>Thursday, Jan. 4</i>	6:30 p.m.	Missions Committee meeting- Wesley Center
	7:00 p.m.	Board of Trustees meeting – Wesley Center
<i>Friday, January 5</i>	10:00 a.m.	Office Volunteers – Gunn Library
<i>Saturday, January 6</i>	9:00 a.m.	Men’s Tres Dias reunion group – Chapel
	2:00 p.m.	Memorial Service – Leonora Wilhelm – Sanctuary- Reception to follow in Dodd Hall

FELLOWSHIP TIME TODAY is hosted by Pastor Dani Levine and friends. Next Sunday’s hosts will be the United Methodist Women – N-Z.

2018 ENVELOPES are available on the tables near the Broad Street entrance to the sanctuary. If you desire envelopes and do not find yours, please contact Eileen Doyle or Lisa Sobolewski.

LIVING CRECHE concludes TONIGHT, 4:45 – 6:15 p.m. in front of the church.

THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD, CHRISTMAS EVE: TWO EVENING SERVICES: 5:00 p.m. This family service of carols and candlelight is designed for the young, and young at heart, as we hear the traditional story of Jesus’ birth (Luke 2:1-20). The message will be “A Tale of Three Trees.” Our Praisemakers Choir will provide choral music. The Advent wreath and Christ Candle will be lit by Jim and Phoebe Repetsky and Mark, Barbara, Elizabeth, Amanda and Mary Repetsky.

10:45 p.m. Our Bell Choir calls us to worship with carols of the Season.

11:00 p.m. Carols, candlelight and Communion are the hallmarks of our late Christmas Eve service with music by the Adult and Bell Choirs. The message “Christmas This Year” will be based on Isaiah 9:2, 6-7; Luke 2:1-20 and John 1:1-5, 10-14. The Advent wreath and Christ Candle will be lit by Tom Beyer and Wendy Hoffmann.

NO YOUTH GROUP THIS EVENING. See the notice for a New Year’s Eve party.

CHRISTMAS MAIL AT MTMUMC: Please use the internal mailbox in Dodd Hall under the Rev. Ford plaque to send Christmas cards to your MTMUMC friends **and** support mission work through January 7th, 2018. Consider making a donation equivalent to postage saved to the United Methodist Women for mission work to Joyce Haig (203.302.0210), Sue O’Shea (203.494.5339) or Deb Dubien (203.449.4601); or contribute through the offering with checks payable to the United Methodist Women (UMW) with the memo “Christmas mail.” **Donations are strictly voluntary and the mail system may be used by all, whether or not you choose to donate.** To know more contact Lodemia Lopes at 203.572.0618 or llopes4@optonline.net.

SEE THE WEEKLY CALENDAR for regular meetings and activities.

THIS WEEK

THE CHURCH IS CLOSED CHRISTMAS DAY AND ST. STEPHEN’S DAY, Monday and Tuesday, Dec. 25 and 26th. We reopen on Wednesday, Dec. 27, 9 a.m.

OFFICE VOLUNTEERS meet this Wednesday, 9 a.m. in the Egan Room to mail the January “Beacon.”

MTMUMC COMMUNITY SUPPER: Thurs., Dec. 28, 2-6:30 p.m. If you can help, contact Deb Dubien at 203-877-4959.

CHURCH SECURITY TASK FORCE

The Church Security Task Force will reconvene on Tuesday, January 2, 7 p.m. in the Gunn Library. Many thanks to all who have given oral and written feedback to the preliminary steps implemented on December 2nd. We welcome your continued responses as we begin to develop policies and procedures for this important work. Please contact any member of the Task Force: *Steve Bettencourt, Pastor Brian Bodt, Laura Brennan, Michelle Connor, Cathy Cono, Dennis Darak, Dave Doyle, Deb Dubien, Holly Firmender, Sheryl Hollyday, Pastor Dani Levine, Shelly Lapadula, Lee Littrell, Kelly O'Hara, Mark McAvoy, Chris Paton, Maryann Petremont, Becky Virgalla and Bob Virgalla.*

OUR LIFE IN PRAYER, MINISTRY AND MISSION

BULLETIN NOTICES are due by noon Wednesday for the weekly bulletin.

DONATE ALTAR FLOWERS OR A MISSION CROSS. *Beth O'Brien (203.877.8668 or bgobrien11@optonline.net) is now taking orders for 2018.* Flowers are \$20. Donations, in lieu of flowers, to support missions are honored with a cross and miniature mission scarf on the altar. Checks for both are payable to MTMUMC, mailed to Beth O'Brien, 7 Breakneck Court, 06460.

FOOD BASKET: Please place non-perishable food items in the basket located in the back of the church and monetary donations in the Beth-El envelope.

ANIMAL SHELTER DONATIONS: Wet and dry cat food is needed for seniors with pets and for the canine facility. Towels and blankets are needed. Animal Control will not take peoples' released pets but will spay and neuter feral cats. Please leave your donations in the designated basket in the back of the Sanctuary. The Youth Fellowship brings these items to Animal Control each week. Bless you for caring for God's children with fur. **If you and your animals are in need please help yourself to the available donations.**

CONTACT THE PASTORS directly or through the church office (203.874.1982, mtmumc@sbcglobal.net) with pastoral care needs and hospitalizations: **Pastor Brian Bodt:** brian.bodt@yahoo.com; 203.874.1982, ext. 111 or 203.895.3753. He is typically in office **10 am – 1 p.m.**, Mon. – Thurs. **Pastor Hal Vink:** 203.878.8977 or vinkhaljane@gmail.com. **Pastor Dani Levine:** 203.927.9077 or Danielle.levine@mail.com.

“**FIX IT BOX**” is in Dodd Hall. See a need? Drop a completed form in the box.

WE HOST Alcoholics Anonymous AND Gamblers Anonymous WEEKLY. Please call the church office for the schedule or see it posted on the bulletin boards.

PLEASE NOTE: During a medical or other emergency the Head Usher or a designee will call #911. Please do not call on your cell phone as multiple calls may delay response.

TAIZE SERVICE: Wednesday, December 27th at noon and Thursday, December 28th at 6:45 p.m. following our Community Supper. This 30 minute service of contemplative prayer and music creates a quiet atmosphere for communion with God. Do come!

NEXT SUNDAY, December 31st

NEW YEAR'S EVE/CHRISTMAS I: The service will be the historic “*Wesley Covenant Service*” with the message “Looking Forward” based on Luke 2:22-40. Worship will include our ritual of prayer and healing anointing.

NO CARING MINISTRIES MEETING next Sunday. They will meet again January 28, 2018. Visitation Ministries will meet Sunday, February 25, 2018.

The **Growing Up Together Spiritually (G.U.T.S)** event at the parsonage for December 31st has been changed. This event will no longer be an overnight. G.U.T.S will now have a party at the parsonage, 47 Commodore Place, Milford, CT, from 4 - 7 p.m. This will be both a holiday and New Year's party. There will be a grab bag gift exchange (\$10 or less) and games. Please bring a dessert or appetizer to share. Please RSVP to Shelly Lapadula (m.lapadula@rubens-lazinger.com).

CHRISTMAS JARS CONVERSATION

It is time to deliver your Christmas jar *anonymously*. Be creative! Don't forget to put a tag on your jar that lists the website: christmasjars.com, that way your recipient will be able to read others' stories about giving or receiving a jar. Please plan to attend our final Christmas Jars follow-up meeting on January 7, immediately after worship. Come share your story and your feelings. Merry Christmas! *Becky Virgalla & Don Hastings*

JANUARY MEMORIAL SERVICES

Leonora Wilhelm, mother of Ken, will be held on Saturday, January 6, 2018, 2 p.m. in the sanctuary with reception following. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Ken Wilhelm, 31 Arlington Street, West Haven, CT 06516. Memorial contributions may be made to MTMUMC, memoed “Music Fund.”

Loretta Kelly, mother of Lamar, will be held on Sunday, January 14th 2 p.m. in the sanctuary with reception following. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to LaMar and Eileen Kelly, 1 Mansfield Grove Road, Unit 309, East Haven, CT 06512. Memorial contributions may be made to MTMUMC, memoed “Memorial Fund.”