



A Sunday Morning Visitor's Guide to the United Church of Bernardston, Massachusetts

We hope you will join us Sunday morning for worship. We know that, for those not used to church worship, this can be a daunting experience. Here is a description of what to expect when you join us for worship. We are glad you are here!

Worship Times

During most of the year, our worship services begin at 10:30 am on Sundays. From the second Sunday of June through the Sunday of Labor Day weekend we begin at 10:00 am. Usually the services last from an hour to an hour and 15 minutes in length, depending on the service.

Where is the Church?

The United Church of Bernardston is located at 58 Church Street, in Bernardston, Massachusetts. We are about 5 miles south of the Massachusetts/Vermont border. We are very easily accessible from Interstate Route 91 (exit 28B northbound or exit 28 southbound). After exiting I-91 drive west on Route 10 for about a quarter of a mile. The church will be on the right (north) side of the road.

Where Do I Park?

We have a nice parking lot just to the east of the church. In addition there is usually on street parking along Church Street (Route 10) in front of the church. There are handicapped parking spots located close to the church building for your convenience.

What Do I Wear?

In years gone by people would always put on their “Sunday best” to come to church, but more recently dress in church has become casual. While you will still find men in suits, and ties and jackets, and women in nice dresses, you will also find people wearing more comfortable clothes as well. Please feel free to dress in whatever manner feels natural to you. Church is about “who you are,” not about “how you look.” You are welcome here.

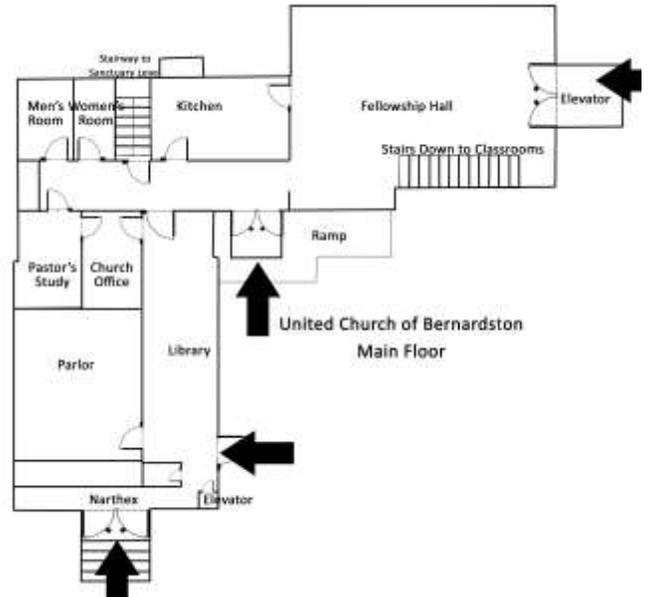
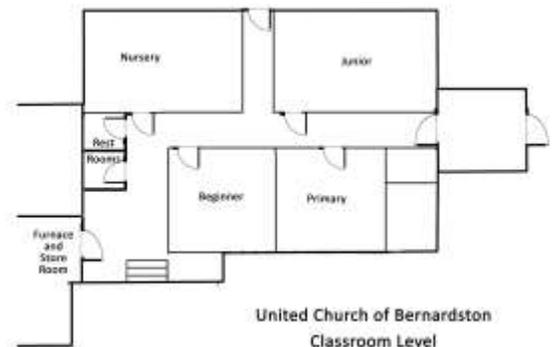
How Do I Get In?

There are a multitude of entrances to UCB. The main doors into the narthex (the small “lobby-like” room in the back of the sanctuary) can be found off Church Street. The sanctuary is the big, main room on the top floor of the church, where the worship service is held. There are also two entrances to the church off the parking area and one entrance to the lower classroom level off the parking area. These are marked with the arrows on the layout map.



The sanctuary of the United Church of Bernardston is located on the top level of the church building. The sanctuary level can be reached from the main doors off Church Street, or through the hallway past the church library and parlor.

The Sunday School classrooms at the United Church of Bernardston are located on the lower level of the church directly beneath the fellowship hall. There are four classrooms on this level as well as both a men’s and women’s rest room. The classroom level is accessible via the stairs going down from the fellowship hall (directly to your right as you enter the fellowship hall) or from the outside entrance from the parking lot.



If you need handicapped accessibility to our building, there is a concrete ramp to the main level of the building through the glass doors into the hallway near the fellowship hall. We also have an elevator from the main level to the sanctuary level and an elevator at the classroom level to

allow provide to the fellowship hall. The church also as a wheelchair and walker for the use of anyone who might need them.

And the most important thing... where are the restrooms?

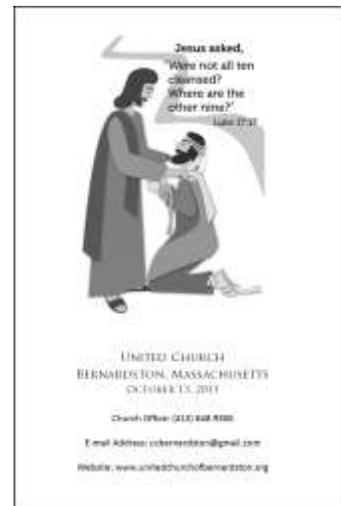
Glad you asked! There are three sets of restrooms at the United Church of Bernardston. The main restrooms, which are fully handicapped accessible, are located on the main level near the kitchen. There is also another set of restrooms on the main level next to church parlor. The third set of restrooms is on the classroom level at the base of the stairs.

Greeters and Ushers

As you enter the narthex or into the sanctuary, you will most likely encounter a greeter and an usher. The greeters will welcome you with a smile and handshake. Our ushers will give you a Sunday worship bulletin and show you into the sanctuary. If you identify yourself as a first time visitor, our greeters and ushers will go out of their way to make sure you feel comfortable and welcome. You are also invited to fill out a visitor's card to let us know a little bit about you. The visitor's cards are yellow forms located in each pew (or row of seats) and on a table in the back of the sanctuary.

Sunday Worship Bulletin

The ushers will give you a Sunday worship bulletin. This is an outline of what will be happening during the service that morning. (See the section entitled "**Typical Sunday Worship**" for more details about what happens during the worship time.) During most of the year there will also be a second piece of paper inserted in the bulletin called "***The Goodale Chatter.***" This contains announcements of upcoming events and other items of interest to the friends and members of the church, as well as a church calendar for the week. If you see an event listed that interests you, please talk to one of the ushers or the pastor to get more information on the event.



Activities for Children

We love having children as a part of our church and worshipping community. There is nursery care available for the youngest children. From September until June, children are invited to be a part of the first portion of the worship time in the sanctuary. They stay with their parents until after a children's time entitled "**Message for all ages**" in the bulletin. During the second verse of the middle hymn the children are invited to go to Church School with their teachers. Children who are visiting are invited to join a Sunday School class for the morning. Please ask

one of the departing adult teachers for directions in locating the appropriate age group for your child. We offer children’s bulletins that match the themes we use during the service.

Hearing Assistance

If you need assistance in hearing the service, please let one of the ushers know. We have personal hearing assistance units with headphones available.

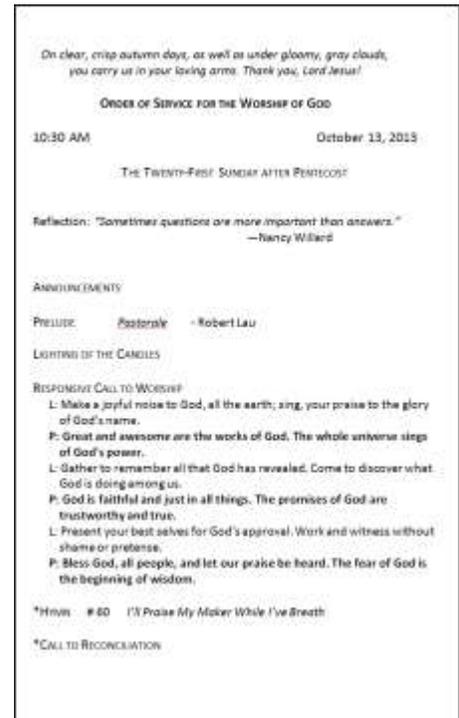
Typical Sunday Worship

Your worship bulletin will provide you with an order of what will be going on during the service for that Sunday morning. The prayers, hymns and readings vary from week to week, but the order of the worship is usually pretty similar.

When you enter the sanctuary on a Sunday morning, you may see several things going on. There may be clusters of people greeting each other, some people reading over the bulletin, and others sitting quietly in prayer, preparing themselves for the worship time. We encourage you to use this time to relax, say a quiet prayer, and get yourself into the mood for worship.

A few minutes before the beginning of the service, our organist plays some music to focus us on worship.

Following that prelude there is a time of **WELCOMING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**. Someone from the church, often the pastor, will briefly share highlights of important happenings in the life of the church. There is often more information printed about these items in the Chatter.



The announcements are followed by a musical selection called the **PRELUDE**. The prelude serves as a transition into our worship time, preparing our hearts, minds and spirits for the time ahead. On occasion our chime choir may also provide prelude music. While the prelude is being played, our **ACOLYTES** come forward to light the candles on the altar.

The service then proceeds to the **CALL TO WORSHIP**. These opening sentences are usually done “responsively” with a leader (usually the pastor but sometimes a lay person) saying a sentence and then the congregation responds with a sentence.

The service then continues with the first “**HYMN**” of the morning. A hymn is a song of praise to God that is sung by the whole congregation, by all the people gathered for worship. Most often the hymns are found in our church hymnal, a book of songs and prayers. At the United Church

of Bernardston we use ***“The United Methodist Hymnal.”*** It is a blue hard covered book that you will find in the racks directly in front of the pew that you are seated in. The hymn number is printed in the worship bulletin. On occasion there might be an inserted piece of paper with words and/or music to a hymn not included in our hymnal.

After the singing of the first hymn, we join together in a ***TIME OF CONFESSION.*** This will be led by the pastor and includes a call to confession following by a unison prayer of confession followed by words of assurance of forgiveness. The prayer of confession reminds us that there are times when we fall short of being the kind of people God would like us to be. The assurance of forgiveness tells us that even though we fall short, God forgives us and loves us and helps us move into a better tomorrow. On occasion we will use a general unison prayer in place of the prayer of confession. After the prayer we sing the ***“Gloria Patri,”*** an ancient hymn that has been a part of the Christian Church tradition since the 4th century. Gloria Patri is the Latin phrase for “Glory be to the Father” and is traditionally done in churches all over the world of almost any denomination. The words are in the bulletin and the words and music are on page 71 in our Hymnal. If you are not familiar with the music, please feel free just to stand, if you are able, and read the words as the congregation sings.



We are blessed with a number of wonderful musical groups who are a part of the ministry of UCB. We have our choir, our praise choir, and our chime choir. At this point in the service usually one of those groups will share an ***ANTHEM,*** or musical selection with us. This is not a performance or a concert. Musical selections in a worship service help set the spiritual tone for the service. The focus is not on the choir, but on God. There is an old saying that puts it very well: ***“God gave us music that we might pray without words.”***

Our service now continues with what we call ***“THE MESSAGE FOR ALL AGES.”*** Often this is called a Children’s Sermon, but we recognize that the heart of this message is appropriate for people of any age. The children gather down in the front of the church in front of the first pew, or row of seats. Then the pastor or another member of the church shares a story or object lesson with the children. The children’s time concludes with a brief prayer. After the prayer, they return to their seats.

Our ***OFFERING TIME*** is the opportunity for us to give back to God some of the gifts that God has blessed us with. Following words of invitation the ushers will move through the congregation passing offering plates down the rows of seats. Many of the church members will have offering envelopes in which they put their weekly gifts to the church. Some may place a check or cash directly into the plate. As visitors you are welcome to do this as well, but please do not feel obligated. Your presence in worship is a Gift to God, and we hope our worship service will be a gift from God to you. As the ushers pass the plates through the sanctuary, the service will

include **OFFERTORY MUSIC** of some sort. Often it is another anthem, or musical selection, presented by one of our musical groups. On occasion it will be a piece played by our organist. The purpose of the offertory music is, again, to add to the spiritual mood of the service as we express our gratitude to God. The offertory music will move into the **DOXOLOGY**. A doxology is a song of thanksgiving to God, and is sung as the ushers bring forward the offering plates. The pastor places the plates on the altar. The congregation stands during the singing of the doxology and remains standing through the **OFFERTORY PRAYER**. The words and the music to the doxology are from hymn #95.

The congregation then joins together in the middle **HYMN**. During the second verse of this hymn the children and their teachers leave the worship service and go to their Sunday School classes. This hymn is often used as a means to move the mood of the worship into a more reflective mood.

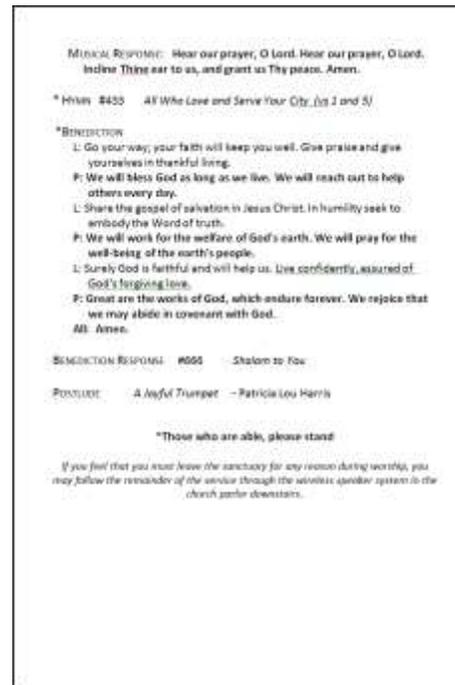
The service then moves into our morning **SCRIPTURE READINGS**. The readings are usually done by a lay member of the congregation. If you are interested in being a scripture reader we welcome volunteers. There may be one or more than one of these readings. There is usually an Old Testament Reading, a New Testament Reading, and/or a Gospel Reading. The readings are listed in the bulletin with the name of the Biblical book followed by the chapter number and then after a "colon" the verse numbers being read. The pages listed there are where you could find the specific reading in the pew Bibles if you want to read along. The pew Bibles use the Revised Standard Version translation and may differ slightly from the selection being read, which is often from the New Revised Standard Version. (Also please note that in the pew Bibles, the page numbers start over again from "1" when the New Testament portion begins. The Old Testament portion takes up the first 75-80% of the book (about 890 pages) and the New Testament the last 15-20%. The Gospels (which are 4 books that chronicle Jesus' life) are the first 4 books in the New Testament section.

Following the Scripture Reading, comes the **SERMON**. Sermons are an important and distinct part of worship in most Protestant traditions. One of our distinctive focuses is on hearing and understanding the Word of God. The sermon, usually given by our pastor, is a talk and teaching on one or more of the scripture readings that were read at the service. The purpose of the sermon is to inspire, enlighten, motivate, comfort, and challenge each of us as we move along our journeys as God's people. It is to make the love of God more tangible. Sometimes a sermon might speak directly to you. Sometimes it might not relate directly to where you find yourself at the present moment. But in the long run, it is our hope and prayer that the message you will hear at UCB will help and guide you in your spiritual growth and life. Sermons at UCB generally run about 15 minutes in length although sometimes they are a little shorter and sometimes a little longer.

Following the sermon, we have a morning **PRAYER TIME**. The prayer time starts with call to prayer. This is a responsive reading that you will find printed in you bulletin. Following the call to prayer, those in worship are invited to share prayer requests that they might have. One of the ushers will carry the wireless microphone around to those who would like to request a prayer. The prayers can be for either joys or concerns. If you have a prayer request you may also write it on a form available in the back of the church and get it to an usher who will pass it to the pastor. After all the prayer requests have been shared, we have a brief time of silent prayer and meditation, to allow each of us to add our own unspoken prayers to those shared out loud. Then the pastor will share the **PASTORAL PRAYER** for the morning, which is followed by the congregation reciting together the words to the Lord’s Prayer, a version of the prayer Jesus taught his disciples or followers to say. In the congregational tradition we use the phrase “forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.” Other Christians traditions use “trespasses” in the prayer and still others substitute the word “sins.” Please feel comfortable using which ever phrase feels right to you. Following the Lord’s Prayer there is a Musical Response with words printed in the bulletin. If you are not familiar with the music, please feel free just to say or read the word along with us.

We then sing our final **HYMN** of the morning. Again, you will find the hymn name and number listed in the bulletin.

The final element of the service is the **BENEDICTION**, or closing. Most often you will find the benediction printed in the bulletin and it is done in responsive style, being led by the pastor. The benediction is followed by a **BENEDICTION RESPONSE**. During the singing of the benediction response, the pastor will move down the aisle to the back of the church to be able to greet those in worship.



Following the conclusion of benediction, our organist will play an organ Postlude to help inspire us and send us on our way. During the postlude you may notice some people leaving the sanctuary, some standing and greeting the other worshipers, and some sitting and listening to the postlude. You are free to do any of these options. Please, do not hesitate to say hello and introduce yourself to others who are there for worship. And say “Hi” to the pastor greeting at the back of the sanctuary.

After the Service

After the service is completed, you are welcome to join us for our coffee hour which is held on the main floor in our fellowship hall. At the coffee hour (which doesn’t really last an hour) you

will have the opportunity to meet some of our church members more informally and find out more about UCB.

Occasional Special Services

Occasionally we have a special element as a part of our Sunday morning services. The two primary special services involve **BAPTISM** and **COMMUNION**, the two sacraments, or special Holy rituals, that most Protestant churches recognize. **BAPTISMS** are sometimes included as part of a Sunday morning worship. Baptisms can also be performed in private ceremonies if that is what the family wishes. Being a member of UCB is not a requirement for baptisms. **COMMUNION** is also regularly included in the morning worship at UCB. Communion, which is also called the Eucharist or the Lord's Supper, is a commemoration of the last meal that Jesus ate with his disciples here on earth. We have communion on the first Sunday of each month as a part of our main worship service. Communion at the United Church of Bernardston is open to anyone who wishes to take part. You don't have to be a member of UCB to join us in the sacrament; all are welcome at God's table. When we serve Communion, the deacons will pass the "elements," the bread and a little cup of grape juice, to the congregation in their seats. After each in turn has been distributed, the congregation will eat or drink at the cue of the pastor.

We Are Glad You Are Here

We are so glad that you decided to join us for worship. We hope that this information has made the experience a little less daunting. You have blessed us with your presence in worship and we hope that you feel God's spirit moving as you worship with us. If you have any questions about our church please feel free to contact one of our deacons or our pastors.