



## *The Steeple*

*February 2020*

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Acting Pastor – Reverend Shannon Wall – [revwall@nmchurch.org](mailto:revwall@nmchurch.org)  
Music Director – Sarah Fay – [musicdirector@nmchurch.org](mailto:musicdirector@nmchurch.org)  
Manager of Church Operations – Nicole Henderson – [nhenderson@nmchurch.org](mailto:nhenderson@nmchurch.org)  
Bell Choir Director – Sarah Albright – [bells@nmchurch.org](mailto:bells@nmchurch.org)  
Director of Christian Education – Becky Passero – [cedirector@nmchurch.org](mailto:cedirector@nmchurch.org)  
Moderator – Susan Chapin – [moderator@nmchurch.org](mailto:moderator@nmchurch.org)  
Vice Moderator – Michael Curley – [vicemoderator@nmchurch.org](mailto:vicemoderator@nmchurch.org)  
Treasurer – Evelyn LeCates – [treasurer@nmchurch.org](mailto:treasurer@nmchurch.org)  
Recording Secretary – Pete DelMastro – [secretary@nmchurch.org](mailto:secretary@nmchurch.org)  
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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February 2	Worship Service—Communion Souper Bowl Luncheon	10:00 AM See page 6
February 9	Worship Service Annual Meeting Chapel Stitchers	10:00 AM See below See page 5
February 14	Healing Circle	See page 5
February 15	Men's Breakfast	See page 7
February 16	Worship Service	10:00 AM
February 17	Church Night – Taylor Room	7:00 PM
February 19	Baby Bundles Distribution	See page 12
February 23	Worship Service Chapel Stitchers Youth Group Meeting – Parish House Youth Room	10:00 AM See page 5 5:00 PM
February 25	Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner	See pages 12 & 17
February 26	Ash Wednesday	
February 28 - March 1	Annual Women's Retreat	See page 13
March 1	Worship Service - Communion	10:00 AM



The 304th Annual Meeting of the congregation will take place on Sunday, **February 9**, immediately following the worship service. All members are encouraged to attend and to participate in the governance of our church.

## **Our Church's wider mission – New Milford Homeless Shelter**

We, as the church, have hosted our homeless guests for the past 17 years. This February we will once again invite them to stay in our Fellowship Hall from 9pm until 6am to provide safety and warmth during this coldest month of the year. Please include the homeless, especially during this time, in your thoughts and prayers.

## **Prayers**



Anyone wishing to submit a prayer request during the week, or to alert the pastor to a need or a member you have not seen in church for a while is asked to call the church office at 860-354-8232. We have an answering service, so you can call at your convenience, anytime day or night.

## **Pastor's Page**

Dear Church,

My husband Larry and I greatly appreciate the church's agreement to grant a leave of absence from February 1 through May 15 so that we may travel. I am also gratified that I was asked to return after that time away, and recently signed a call agreement through the end of 2020. Rev. Randy Day has been brought on as Extended Supply Pastor during my time away. FYI, I will receive no compensation while I am away and will be paying for my own health insurance.

While Rev. Day is your pastor, I will not be engaged in a leadership role, return emails or calls, or provide pastoral care, even remotely. In keeping with good pastoral ethics, I ask you to consider him fully your pastor and know that he will be excellent in that role. He has a great deal of experience (and I hear that he is a wonderful preacher, too!).

It is likely that the construction in the meetinghouse will begin during his tenure. Plans are still being discussed among the Deacons and the Meetinghouse Restoration Committee about where to worship during the construction. We will all appreciate your flexibility and help as this project gets underway.

Wishing you a warm and wonderful 2020 with many blessings,



Rev. Shannon Wall, Acting Pastor

Dear Members and Friends of First Congregational,

I am deeply honored and extremely pleased to begin a 14-week journey with all of you as your Extended Supply Pastor in your beautiful, historic church on the green. I will be fully available for your pastoral needs. I welcome the opportunity to preach from Groundhog Day to Mother's Day with all the liturgical and spiritual pinnacles in between as well as the challenge of temporarily relocating during construction!

God is always with us during times of change in the parish and in the world. With God's help, we will keep the ship steady for Shannon's return. Our prayers will be with Shannon and Larry during their travels.

Deacons, pastor and staff have been most welcoming to me and my family. We sincerely appreciate that. Now, we look forward to meeting each and every one of you. I learned from your rich history that your first minister became a friend to Waramaug, one of the great East Coast Sachems...an excellent example of inclusivity, tolerance and respect. I'm committed to doing my part!

Ironically, Emily and I camped for 10 years during the summers with our four children in your "backyard" on Lake Waramaug—a serene and lovely place to contemplate nature. The cows on a nearby farm woke us at feeding time and we would rise from our tents to watch the dawn break and the early morning fog lift each morning. Together, we are entering a place where my hope is that dawn and the spring sun will touch all of us together as we join hands and hearts in God's name.

Grace and peace,  
Rev. R. Randy Day

### **Deacon's Bench**

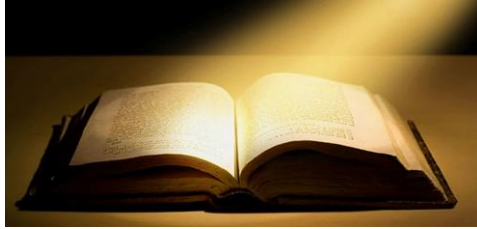
I think February is an appropriate time to think about all the ways in which people have shown their love for this church and for one another. If you look around, you see it everywhere, in the way people greet one another when they walk in the door or during the passing of the piece, in the way they teach the children about why we gather in the church to worship together, in the way they share their wishes for the new settled pastor and the future missions of the church, even in the way they provide feedback on the service on Christmas Eve.

Whether it is praise for the wonderful sermon Shannon gave on Sunday or a smile at a baby's attentive gaze during Baptism or shared sorrow over the passing of a beloved member of the church, love is all around.

"And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them." 1 John 4:16

On behalf of the Deacons, I encourage you to share your love for this church and for one another and in this way show why this church and its congregation are so special, so welcoming, so caring.

*With blessings from the Board of Deacons,  
Pam Cafiero*



### **Lay Readers**

We are looking for volunteers to read our call to worship and first Scripture during Sunday Worship. If you are interested, please let Nicole Henderson at [nhenderson@nmchurch.org](mailto:nhenderson@nmchurch.org) know!

### **The Chapel Stitchers**

The Prayer Shawl Ministry will meet on Sunday, **February 9<sup>th</sup>**, the second Sunday of the month. All are welcome – beginner and/or advanced stitchers. Our informal meetings are a great place to relax, enjoy friendships, share experiences, and learn from long time experts! Join us as we gather in the Chapel for a time of faith and fellowship at 11:30 am. Yes, we are working on a project for Easter this year – come check it out. We are planning an extra meeting on **February 23<sup>rd</sup>** for a special workshop on rug braiding. Donna Ramsey and Kathy Elmore will work with us to complete some projects for our Fair Days sale. If you need a shawl or know someone who does, please call the church office or see Leslie Schlemmer. Donations of yarn are always welcome.



### **Constant Contact**

The Board of Deacons publishes an e-mail newsletter periodically to the congregation. The First Congregational Church of New Milford Happenings tries to highlight upcoming events and dates within the church. It does not replace the content of The Steeple. If you currently do not currently receive this e-mail and would like to, please e-mail [fccnm10@gmail.com](mailto:fccnm10@gmail.com) to be added to the mailing list, or call the church office with your updated e-mail address. Thank you.

### **Healing Circle**

Healing Circle will be held the second Friday of every month. The next meetings will be on **February 14 and March 13** in the Auditorium of the Parish House. This healing circle is free of charge, and open to all.

## **Social Concerns and Missions Committee**

Join us on **Sunday, February 2, 2020** as we participate in the Souper Bowl of Caring. This is a national movement of people working to fight hunger and poverty in their own communities around the time of the Super Bowl football game. In the weeks leading up to or on Super Bowl Sunday, people take up a collection (many use a soup pot), asking for one dollar or one item of food for people in need. They give 100% of their donation directly to the local hunger-relief charity of their choice.

Here at the First Congregational Church we support the New Milford Community Food Bank all year long, and will add this special collection. Please bring a can of soup or other nonperishable item to donate – look for the shopping cart and soup pot in front of the sanctuary.

**Let's make a difference! Collection has started!**



### **Soup Luncheon**

The Fellowship Committee will be hosting a pot luck soup luncheon featuring your homemade soups! Please let us know what soup you will be bringing - look for our sign-up during coffee hour.

All are welcome to join us in Fellowship Hall following the worship service on Super Bowl Sunday. Bring a pot or crock pot of your favorite soup to share; drop off in Fellowship kitchen before the service.

*Leslie Schlemmer*



Notices for the **Sunday Bulletin** Parish Notes are due to Nicole Henderson by Tuesday [nhenderson@nmchurch.org](mailto:nhenderson@nmchurch.org)

## **Confirmation**

A big thank you to Ross Detwiler for taking the time in December to speak to the Confirmation class about the history of the church. No one does it better. The January lesson was based on the church liturgy and sacraments. The class went on a special "treasure hunt" (prepared by Deacon Joan Vill) throughout our sanctuary, looking for worship items and then "walked" through the bulletin with Rev. Pat Nicholas. It was definitely an eye-opening experience for the confirmands and sponsors. The confirmands and their sponsors continue to read through the book of Mark (they are up to Chapter 12). Coming up will be our field trips to the mosque in Danbury and the synagogue here in New Milford. Dates for these trips are still to be determined.

*Becky Passero*

## **Music Committee**

The Christmas Concert on December 8, 2019 was well-attended. The free-will offering netted about \$860, which will be used to supplement the budget for music. The audience was enthusiastic and there were many "rave reviews" afterward. The Music Committee thanks the members of the Christmas choir and Village Ringers for their hard work. Thanks also to Sarah Fay and Sarah Albright for creating an exciting program.

The Music Committee held its annual after-concert party in Fellowship Hall for performers and family. The party featured sandwiches, salads and drinks. The dinner was very well attended.

Sarah Fay will be on vacation, and Bob Rowley from our choir will be the substitute organist for worship services on January 26 and February 2.

*Dave Elmore, Chair*

## **Men's Breakfast**

On Saturday, **February 15** we'll begin cooking at 7:45, so that we're ready to eat at 8:30. Bring a friend if you'd like, and pot-luck contributions are always welcome. Please contact Dan Martin for more information, or to be added to the email reminder list. [daniel.k.martin@gmail.com](mailto:daniel.k.martin@gmail.com)





## Social Concerns and Missions

Proceeds of this concert will benefit New Milford Refugee Resettlement.



# Echoes of Sinatra

Saturday, Feb. 8      7 - 9 p.m.      \$50

*An Evening With Ol' Blue Eyes*

## FRANK SINATRA

Featuring Steve Kazlauskas

Maguire Auditorium  
Canterbury School

Benefits: New Milford  
Refugee Resettlement

For tickets:

- Scan QR Code
- Send checks to  
St John's Church  
7 Whittlesey Ave.  
New Milford, CT 06776  
memo line "Sinatra"
- Visit  
[brownpapertickets.com](http://brownpapertickets.com)

Sponsors:

St John's Episcopal Church - Rev. Jack Gilpin  
Temple Shalom - Rabbi Ari Rosenberg  
St Francis Xavier Church - Father Gerald Dziedzic  
Congregational Church - Pastor Shannon Wall  
United Methodist Church - Pastor Alex da Silva Souto





## **Sunday Snow Day - Church Closing/Snow Emergency**

People involved: John Wittmann, Becky Passero, Nicole Henderson, Sarah Fay, Barbara Ahern, Joan Vill, Mike Bensema, Dave Elmore, Leslie Schlemmer, Gail Peck, Mary Eherts, Sheri Gunn, Pastor

1. If the Governor declares a state of emergency, church will be cancelled.
2. If the weather is bad but no emergency is declared, then John Wittmann will call Joe Goodell, who will be out on the roads in his plow. John will text the pastor re: the conditions by 7:30 am. The pastor and Joan Vill will make the call to have church or not. The pastor will send a text and email to the group named above. (Barbara Ahern, check email before leaving home.)
3. If the church will be open and the pastor cannot get here, then the Deacons will lead the service. The pastor will email the sermon and prayers to Joan Vill, and she will coordinate with the Deacons.
4. Becky Passero and Sarah Fay will make the call for the Sunday School and choir/musicians and will contact people directly, informing the rest of the group.
5. Nicole Henderson will contact the answering service and the cleaning service.
6. Mike Bensema will notify TV channels WFSB channel 3 or WVIT channel 8.
7. Becky Passero will post on Facebook.
8. Dave Elmore will post the notice on the church website and send an email to the General Church Committee.
9. Leslie Schlemmer will send out the Constant Contact email, with Sheri Gunn as a backup if Leslie is away.
10. John Wittmann will post signs on the church's doors.



We are looking for individuals who would be interested in being "on call" for Sexton duties for special worship services. For more information, please email Nicole Henderson at [nhenderson@nmchurch.org](mailto:nhenderson@nmchurch.org)



### **Church Directory**

Our church directory is available to view on any web browser! Instant Church Directory — the program we use to build our church directory — has a free website for church members to view our directory online.

To view the directory online, go to <https://members.inttantchurchdirectory.com/> You will be asked to enter in your email address as it's listed in our directory. If your email address isn't listed in the directory, let [news@nmchurch.org](mailto:news@nmchurch.org) know so it can be added.

The first time, click on the "Create a login now" under the Sign In button. Enter your email address and set up a password to be sent an email confirmation. Click on the link inside that email to confirm your email and log in with the password you just created.



### **Steeple**

We hope that everyone enjoys the convenience of having our newsletter available online. This saves hundreds of dollars in the church budget, as well as helping our environment by using less paper, ink and other precious resources. Hard copies will be available in the back of the Sanctuary, side entrance of church and in the Parish House hallway. Please contact Nicole Henderson at the church office if you need to make different arrangements. Articles and news for the next issue should be sent to Jan Wittmann ([steeple@nmchurch.org](mailto:steeple@nmchurch.org)) by **Monday, February 17** for inclusion.

*You can save the Calendar page at the front of each issue for reminders of upcoming church meetings and events.*



## **In Loving Memory**

Spencer Bartley Cox  
Marjorie A. Landry  
Christopher Murphy

November 24, 2019  
December 14, 2019  
January 13, 2020

## **Planned Giving**

That's the name that has come to be associated with gifts to your church or other charity that happen after your lifetime. Simply put, you plan now, for a gift that will occur later. In our church, we recognize those who have declared they have arranged for a planned gift by receiving them as members of the Deacon Roger Sherman Society.

There are many ways to make a planned gift, and depending on your unique circumstances, some methods are better for you and for the church than others. Contact the Church Office for more details. The simplest and most direct way to make a planned gift is to include the church as a beneficiary on your life insurance policy. Your insurance agent can guide you on the specific forms and options available from your insurance company. Just tell them you want to add a beneficiary; the agent will take it from there.

When you have arranged your planned gift, be sure to let our Pastor know – no details, just that you made arrangements – so we can appropriately recognize your generosity. For your convenience, you may use the form below.

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## **THE DEACON ROGER SHERMAN SOCIETY**

**A gift to First Congregational Church of New Milford is in my (our) estate plans.**

☐ ***Yes!***

**Please count me (us) as a Member of The Deacon Roger Sherman Society.**

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**Please Print Name(s) as you would like them to appear on recognition documents**

✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂

## **Baby Bundles**



Baby Bundles is a program which each month provides diapers to families in need in New Milford. Our church supports this mission through the collection of money and diapers on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday each month. Please consider bringing packages of diapers and/or baby wipes to the church for collection, or make a monetary donation using the envelope provided in the bulletin.

If you have any questions please contact Jan McCarthy, Baby Bundles Chairperson, at [j.mccarthy101@sbcglobal.net](mailto:j.mccarthy101@sbcglobal.net). Help is needed to supervise the double doors in the Parish House from 4:30 - 5:30 PM on Baby Bundles distribution Wednesdays. If you have the time to volunteer, please contact Jan McCarthy or call Nicole Henderson at the Church office. Thank you!

## **Offerings / Pledges**

If you are in need of envelopes and have not yet done so, please let Deb Staib or Nicole Henderson know. If you have any questions regarding your General Fund giving, feel free to email Deb Staib, Financial Secretary [financial@nmchurch.org](mailto:financial@nmchurch.org); for Raise the Roof contribution questions, please contact Evelyn LeCates [treasurer@nmchurch.org](mailto:treasurer@nmchurch.org)

## **Youth Group**

Youth group continues to be well attended events. The once a month meetings draw 15-20 youth. The January meeting will be on **January 26, 2020**. Our 7<sup>th</sup> graders are invited to attend this meeting.

Mark your calendar: **Tuesday, February 25, 2020** is the Annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Brinner. It will be held from 5-7pm in Fellowship Hall. Please come and enjoy this FREE meal of pancakes, sausage and bacon prepared and served to you by our youth!

## **Ladies Ministries**

In December the ladies gathered in Fellowship Hall for a night of gingerbread house decorating. It was a relaxing evening of laughter, food, beverage and too much CANDY!

The Annual Ladies Retreat, "Whatever is...(Philippians 4:8)", is scheduled for the weekend of February 28, 29, and March 1, 2020 at Silver Lake Conference Center in Sharon, CT. The cost is \$150, this includes lodging and 4 meals in the dining hall, plus crafting materials. To reserve a spot, a deposit of \$50 or the entire balance is due by February 16<sup>th</sup> to Becky Passero. Checks can be made to FCCNM. Scholarship is available. Don't miss out on this fun-filled and relaxing weekend. Something to think about when deciding to join us at the retreat:

Whatever is:

- ♥ True- Things which are accurate and correct, no rumors or unproven accusations.
- ♥ Noble - Things of exalted moral excellence, not crude jokes or stories.
- ♥ Right - Things in accordance with what is good, proper, or just, not profanity or slander.
- ♥ Pure - Things uncontaminated and un-compromised by worldly values and philosophies.
- ♥ Lovely - Things that are spiritually pleasing, not evil.
- ♥ Admirable - Things worthy and inspiring, not discouraging.
- ♥ Excellent - Things outstanding and superior, the best of things.
- ♥ Praiseworthy - Things that deserve praise and inspire godly values.

## **Investment Committee**

Our first full year of "total return investing" has helped the church's invested funds surge ahead. Total return investing is based on investing for growth and income to protect the value from the effects of inflation and to help grow the principal. In prior years the church's funds had largely been invested for income driven by the demand for income to support church operations. This strategy produced more income than we are currently generating, but it provided no growth or protection from inflation. The new approach takes a portion of the average growth over time and income to a percentage of the total. During 2019, the committee set a withdrawal rate of about 4.5%.

The endowment fund has grown 19% this year. \$30,000 was withdrawn to support the operating fund. The SJ Johnson fund grew 20% and contributed \$4,000 to the operating fund.

The investment committee has approved a withdrawal percentage for 2020 of 4.5%.

*Dave Elmore, Chair*



## **Food Bank**

Non-perishable foods are gratefully accepted, but cleaning supplies are also needed. Government subsidies do not cover the purchase of laundry detergent or basic home cleaning products. Also appreciated are personal care items. If you travel, and do not use the little bars of soap and bottles of shampoo provided by hotels, please take and donate them! You may leave donations in the hutch by the side entrance to the sanctuary, and they will be brought to the New Milford Social Services office for distribution to those in need. The first Sunday of each month is Food Bank Sunday - there are envelopes tucked into the bulletins for monetary contributions as well. More information is listed on the next page.





Accepting Donations at  
2 Pickett District Road  
Mon.-Thurs. 8am-4pm/ Fri. 8am-2pm



Thank you for donating to The New Milford Food Bank. We hope you will help us with our effort to stock our shelves with healthier food options.

<b><u>LOW SODIUM</u></b> Less than 140 mg for VEGGIES Less than 200mg for BEANS Less than 480mg for SOUPS/BROTHS		<b><u>LOW SUGAR</u></b> No added sugar or syrup to canned fruits & vegetables Less than 6g for CEREAL	Please consider before buying:  See below for complete List of Needed Items
<b><u>LOW FAT</u></b> <b><u>GLUTEN-FREE</u></b>	<b><u>WHOLE GRAIN</u></b> <b><u>ORGANIC</u></b>	<b><u>NATURAL</u></b> <b><u>No HYDROGENATED OILS</u></b>	

[Accepting Donations of New or Gently-Used Reusable Shopping Bags]



Thank you for donating to The New Milford Food Bank. We hope you will help us with our effort to stock our shelves with healthier food options.

<b>Canned Fruit in Natural Juice</b> <b>Canned Soups/ Broth</b> <b>Canned Vegetables</b> <b>Canned Beans</b> <b>Bagged Beans</b> <b>Canned Meals</b> (Ravioli/ Stews/ Chili)  <b>Lentils or Barley</b> <b>Quinoa</b> <b>White or Brown Rice</b> <b>Wild Rice</b> <b>Pasta</b> <b>Jar Sauce</b> <b>Diced Tomatoes</b> Canned Tuna, Salmon, or Chicken	<b>Macaroni &amp; Cheese</b> <b>Seasoned Rice/Pasta</b> (i.e. Rice-Roni/ Near East)  <b>Natural Peanut Butter or</b> <b>Other Nut or Seed (Sun) Butter</b> <b>Fruit Spread/ Jelly/Jam</b> <b>Cereal and Oatmeal</b> <b>Pancake Mix/Syrup</b> <b>Condiments</b> [Mustard..Ketchup..etc] <b>Baking Ingredients</b> [i.e. Flour...] <b>Salad Dressing</b> <b>Spices/ Herbs/Oils</b> <b>Granola Bars</b> <b>Crackers</b> <b>Baked Chips/Gold Fish</b> <b>Dried Fruit</b> [i.e. apples...raisins]	<b>100% Fruit or Vegetable Juice</b> (bottle or lunch box size)  <b>Shelf Milk 1%-2% Fat</b> <b>Coffee or Tea</b> <b>Hot Chocolate</b> <b>Water</b> <b>Dessert/ Bread Mixes</b> <b>Baby Food/ Formula</b>  ..... <b>(Limited space for:</b> <b>Eggs/ Milk/ Butter/ Fresh Fruit/</b> <b>Vegetables)</b> .....  <b>Personal Care Items</b> <b>Paper Goods      Diapers</b> <b>Household Cleaners</b>
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First Congregational Church

# Church School News

February 2020

2019 Christmas Pageant  
"The New Star"



Thank you to the Christian Education Committee for another wonderful Pageant!  
...and to our Fellowship Team (team, because that is what they truly are!) for another fabulous and delicious brunch!

Thank you  
Mike Bensema  
For the wonderful  
Pictures!!!







## What is Silver Lake?

Did you know that there is a church summer camp right in our backyard, that being Sharon, CT?

Did you also know that during the summer of 2019 our church sent 6 of our youth to attend 8 different camps?:

Amanda Bensema and Katelyn Simmons were just two of our church school students who attended!

There are camp opportunities for children in grades 4th-12th as well as camp counselor positions for high school and college aged youth.

*Sign your child up for a "once-in-a-lifetime" experience of camp in an "inclusive and nurturing Christian community."*

For more information about the summer camp programs please visit [www.silverlakeect.org](http://www.silverlakeect.org) or see Becky Passero for a pamphlet.



**Mark your calendars NOW!**

**February 25, 2020  
Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner**

**Where? Fellowship Hall**

**What time? 5:00pm-till they run out!**

**How much you ask?  
FREE!**

**Donations graciously accepted for good table service  
provided by our youth groups**

Shrove Tuesday is the day before Lent starts on Ash Wednesday. The name Shrove comes from the old middle English word 'Shriven' meaning to go to confession to say sorry for the wrong things you've done. Lent always starts on a Wednesday, so people went to confessions on the day before. This became known as *Shriven Tuesday* and then **Shrove Tuesday**.

The other name for this day, Pancake Day, comes from the old English custom of using up all the fattening ingredients in the house before Lent, so that people were ready to fast during Lent. The fattening ingredients that most people had in their houses in those days were eggs and milk. A very simple recipe to use up these ingredients was to combine them with some flour and make pancakes!