



## *The Steeple*

*Summer 2021*

Minister – Reverend Amy Carter – [revcarter@nmchurch.org](mailto:revcarter@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 Archer – [bells@nmchurch.org](mailto:bells@nmchurch.org)  
Director of Christian Education– Becky Passero – [cedirector@nmchurch.org](mailto:cedirector@nmchurch.org)  
Church Council Chair – Susan Chapin – [moderator@nmchurch.org](mailto:moderator@nmchurch.org)  
Treasurer – Evelyn LeCates – [treasurer@nmchurch.org](mailto:treasurer@nmchurch.org)  
Recording Secretary – Pete DelMastro – [secretary@nmchurch.org](mailto:secretary@nmchurch.org)  
Financial Secretary – Katie McKay – [financialsecretary@nmchurch.org](mailto:financialsecretary@nmchurch.org)  
Room Manager – Mike Bensema – [roommgr@nmchurch.org](mailto:roommgr@nmchurch.org)  
Steeple Editor – Janet Wittmann – [steeple@nmchurch.org](mailto:steeple@nmchurch.org)

Office Hours: By Arrangement  
Office Phone: 860.354.8232  
Fax Line: 860.354.4327  
E-mail: [church@nmchurch.org](mailto:church@nmchurch.org)  
Web site: [www.nmchurch.org](http://www.nmchurch.org)

**In-person Sunday services have resumed! We are asking people to sign up – please read the procedures and complete the registration form found on the main page of the church website, or call the church office if you plan to attend. Services will continue to be live streamed, if you prefer not to attend in person.**

In an effort to keep people as safe and healthy as possible during these times, we ask that you please let us know if you have experienced symptoms or tested positive for COVID-19 within 14 days after you have been at a worship service or in-person meeting/event at the church. This way we can initiate contact tracing efforts. Be assured that names and medical information will be kept confidential to the best of our ability and following the guidance of the local health department.

**Your continued support for our church is critical while attendance at services is restricted due to COVID-19. Please visit the main page of the church web site and click, “Donate to the Church!” to find out how you can keep your regular pledge or donation to the church current.**

Please see the link below to review guidelines for community/faith organizations regarding COVID-19. Please visit the CDC website for updates; information can also be found by dialing 2-1-1.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/guidance-community-faith-organizations.html>



### **Prayers**

Anyone wishing to submit a prayer request during the week is asked to send an email to [prayer-requests@nmchurch.org](mailto:prayer-requests@nmchurch.org) or call the church office.

## **Meet Our New Pastor!**



**Reverend Amy Carter** was ordained by the Rhode Island Conference of the United Church of Christ (RICUCC) in 2012, and served Hope Congregational Church UCC, a multi-racial, multicultural congregation, as its settled pastor for nearly nine years. As part of that role, she founded a non-profit day care and oversaw its startup year, in which the skills from running a small side business were invaluable. She is a 2010 graduate of Andover Newton Theological School, and from 2008-2012 served as intentional interim minister at United Congregational Church of Westerly in Pawcatuck, CT. In addition, Rev. Amy has also served as the administrator of the RICUCC and as a bridge interim. Her undergraduate degree was completed at the University of Rhode Island where she studied Human Development and Family Studies with a concentration in gerontology. Her professional passions include healthy congregational dynamics, sustainable ministry, and economic justice.

On a personal note, she is a native Rhode Islander who had been living in eastern Connecticut, but recently relocated to New Milford. Her three children have been successfully launched into the world, and all live out of state. Rev. Amy enjoys outdoor activities such as kayaking and mountain biking; Indoors she likes to read, quilt, knit, embroider, and cook. She describes herself as an extrovert with a love of people, a healthy sense of humor, and a deep and abiding sense of gratitude for what God has done in her life.

Please be sure to introduce yourself, and extend a warm welcome to Rev. Amy, whether in person, digitally, or by phone.

### **Lawn Mowing Sign-up**

The Trustees have asked for volunteers to mow our very limited lawn area each weekend from April through October. Please email Nicole to sign up. This effort saves the church quite a bit of money each summer. Volunteers will be sent a reminder of the date they have chosen. Thank you for helping to keep our church grounds inviting!



### **Deacon's Bench**

Summer is fast approaching and our days are filled with so many events that we have less time to reflect on all that we have been through. For our church and community June is a month for moving forward. There are so many things happening that point to a promising future. The schools are full of children, sports are being played, there will be graduations, and celebrations for all that has been achieved. Our church is opening its doors and expanding the services and events. People are in the sanctuary, the Sunday School is in session, the Youth Group is meeting and preparations have begun for Vacation Bible School. All events that point to us moving forward.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." Jeremiah 29:11

Part of moving forward includes looking back at how we got here. It wasn't an easy year. At times it felt like never ending hard work. Our church family pulled together and worked to keep us connected and the church striving to do God's will. We are grateful for the wonderful guidance and help we received from Rev. Shannon Wall and Rev. Randy Day. Their leadership and willingness to share their skills and talents with us, has helped us get to this new phase, and given us the tools to move forward.

As we welcome Rev. Amy Carter to our church family, let us remember all those who have been on this journey with us. Let us continue to move forward and share the joy of being part of a special church family, and the work we are meant to do together in God's name.

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." Hebrews 12:1

*Jan McCarthy  
For the Board of Deacons*



### **Offering Envelopes**

If you need envelopes and have not yet done so, please let Katie McKay or Nicole Henderson know.



### **Sunday Bulletin Deadline**

Bulletin information and announcements are due to Nicole Henderson, [nhenderson@nmchurch.org](mailto:nhenderson@nmchurch.org) by **Tuesday**, each week. Please keep them as brief as possible and send them in a Word document or email. Thank you!



## **Remembrance Sunday, May 30**

Memorials given to the Book of Remembrance by our church family and friends were dedicated in memory of those dearest to their hearts. Contributions are put into a special fund and are used to enhance the beauty of the church and its spiritual ministry. With your generous support of the A. Russell Ayre Scholarship Fund, we are able to offer financial assistance to deserving college students.

### **BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE**

#### **In Loving Memory of:**

Carol J. Barnhart  
William S. Barnhart  
Vi (Elvira) & Clarence Burden  
Clifford C. Chapin  
Judy & E.B. Collins  
Dianne Cook  
Glenn S. Curtiss  
Rutledge W. Curtiss  
Josephine Fowler  
Richard Fowler  
Stephen Fowler  
Ethel Kranepool  
Betty & Roger Lockwood  
Rev. Dr. Robert McGrath  
Emma McKittrick  
Ernest E. & Gladys T. Miller  
Rev. Dr. G. Barrett Rick  
Bob Rowley  
Susie Coulter Shanks  
Susie Coulter Shanks  
Lillian E. Strain  
John E. Strain  
John H. Strain  
Norman Terry  
Evelyn York  
Gerald York

#### **Given by:**

Charlotte Bostwick  
Charlotte Bostwick  
Doris Curtiss  
Sally Spring Rinehart  
Pam Cafiero  
Barbara McGiver  
Doris Curtiss  
Doris Curtiss  
Jim & Judy York  
Jim & Judy York  
Jim & Judy York  
Barbara McGiver  
Barbara McGiver  
Charlotte Bostwick  
Barbara McGiver  
Lyndall L. Miller  
Barbara McGiver  
Betty Gray "BG" & Dale Brown  
Ellen & Chris Smith  
Carol & Reed Hotchkiss  
Barbara McGiver  
Barbara McGiver  
Barbara McGiver  
Susan Chapin  
Jim & Judy York  
Jim & Judy York

### **A. RUSSELL AYRE SCHOLARSHIP REMEMBRANCE**

#### **In Honor of:**

FCC Women's Ministry

#### **In Loving Memory of:**

Dianne Cook  
Toky VanAsch VanWyck  
The Wells Family

#### **Given by:**

FCC Women's Ministry Book Club

#### **Given by:**

Jan McCarthy  
Maurits & Martin VanAsch VanWyck  
Fred & Marion Warman



Chapel Stitches  
Sale  
In front of the church  
Saturday  
June 12, 2021  
9am - noon



36 Main Street  
On the green  
Come on down!



All proceeds benefit Baby  
Bundles—a ministry of  
our church helping the  
youngest members of  
our community!



## **Social Concerns and Missions Committee**

Our congregation is actively involved with the **Church World Service Tools Program**. A great Father's Day gift – each \$10.00 gift helps Church World Service provide tools to those who have been displaced by disaster. These gifts help build sturdy homes, and livelihoods to those who use them. You can make your gift in honor or in memory of your father, grandfather or another special person in your life! Sunday June 6<sup>th</sup> and June 13<sup>th</sup> are “Tool Sundays” where you can donate in person. There will be forms in the Meeting House for dedications. If you will not be attending live services, you can also mail your gift donations to the church office (payable to First Congregational Church with Tools noted in the memo). Please print and use the form below for any gift in honor or in memory. You can also use PayPal for your gift. Please make sure to note “Father's Day Tools” in the note field, and if desired, mail a note to [news@nmchurch.org](mailto:news@nmchurch.org) telling us of any dedication details.

All gifts and dedications must be received by June 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Tool gifts will be dedicated on Father's Day, June 20<sup>th</sup>**



**Tool Gift given by:** \_\_\_\_\_

**In Honor of** \_\_\_\_\_

**In Memory of** \_\_\_\_\_

We had a very successful Mother's Day Blanket program this year, raising \$420 for Church World Service Blankets!

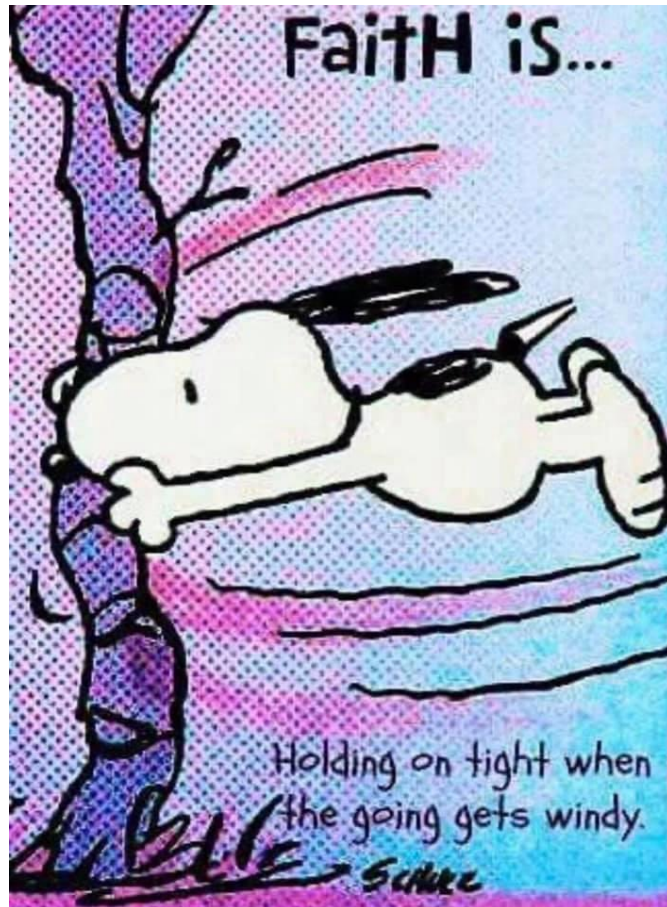
This summer we are once again partnering with St. Johns on our Shared Garden. We have completed two new raised beds, and will be filling them with soil and planting in the next few weeks. We will need volunteers to help water every day. If you can spare 30 minutes once a week, please contact the church office.

We are excited to be part of the broader Outreach Ministry in the new structure, and will be working during the summer to make that transition. One of our key goals coming out of that transition will be to work on the process of becoming an Open and Affirming church. Once Rev Amy is in place, we will align with her on the process to assess, communicate, and present for a congregational vote.

We would welcome anyone with an idea for mission, and anyone that would like to work on mission!

*Dan Martin, Chair*





### **Music Committee**

Senior Choir has been meeting weekly on Zoom to practice virtual choir pieces. The virtual choir videos have been used during most Sundays this year. Thanks to Chris Fay for his editing skills and Sarah for the creative touches for the videos, as well as to all the choir members who have become skilled at recording video solos.

During the summer, soloists or duos will be singing at the services. It is expected that as restrictions are lifted the Senior Choir will resume regular rehearsals in the fall.

The Bell Choir spring season ended on Easter and they are looking forward to resuming practice in the fall.

Dave Elmore, Chair



**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.

✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂

**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.

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

✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂ ✂



**Have you moved? Do you have a new email address? Please keep the church office undated!**

## **Buildings and Grounds**

I have great news to report: our elevator is working again! Jeff Vill and a good friend of his made the necessary repairs and we now have a fully functional way for members and guests to get to Fellowship Hall when they find it difficult or impossible to use the stairway.

The elevator, or correctly called a lift, had become a maintenance nightmare because we were told that original replacement parts were no longer available. After numerous service calls, and the mounting expense, we elected to lock the access doors and take it out of service.

The Meetinghouse Restoration Committee began looking into alternative ways to either rehabilitate the lift or install a new one as part of Phase 2 (where Phase 1 was repairing the broken roof truss). Jeff researched for any company capable and willing to repair the lift, but was unsuccessful, so he decided to tackle the job himself with additional expert help.

Since the lift had been out of service for quite a long time our insurance carrier required that we have it inspected before placing it back in service. I'm pleased to report that on the Town of New Milford Building Department made the inspection and provided a document that it's in good working condition.

Installing a new lift would have exceeded what funds remained after the roof was repaired. A new lift would have cost an estimated \$40,000 and a quote for installing a bathroom near the Sanctuary and on the main floor was \$36,000. Thank you very much, Jeff!

The next project will be installing motorized assistance for the Fellowship Hall bathroom doors to make them easier to access for people using walkers and wheelchairs.

*John Wittmann, Chair*

## **Investment Committee**

The church's invested funds have been doing well as the stock market has improved since the low point in March 2020. At April month-end, the endowment, SJ Johnson, and Scholarship funds were up 7% since the beginning of 2021. The investment and maintenance funds are up about 3%. These funds only recently had money for long-term investment and were only invested for long term growth after the start of the year.

*Dave Elmore, Chair*





### **Youth Group**

We held one in-person youth group meeting on May 23. The youth enjoyed pizza, cupcakes, and cleaned Fellowship Hall. But mostly, after more than 14 months of no meetings, they enjoyed each other's company by playing crab soccer and sardines.

### **Baccalaureate Sunday**

The office would like to have the name of anyone in your family who will be graduating with high school, college, or advanced degrees. Please send their names, schools, and degrees to Nicole at [nhenderson@nmchurch.org](mailto:nhenderson@nmchurch.org) by **June 7**.





### **Sunday Flowers**

If you would like to donate flowers for a special person or occasion, please contact a member of the flower committee: Bonnie Westerberg, Sandy Gammons, or Debbie Poole, at [debpoole@charter.net](mailto:debpoole@charter.net)



- to the Jacksons for their help with the flower beds.
- to Dawn Kraft for her help in the office.
- and a huge thank you to Barb Ahern, Pam Cafiero, and Dan Martin for all their help with the Spring Clean-up - the buildings look amazing.

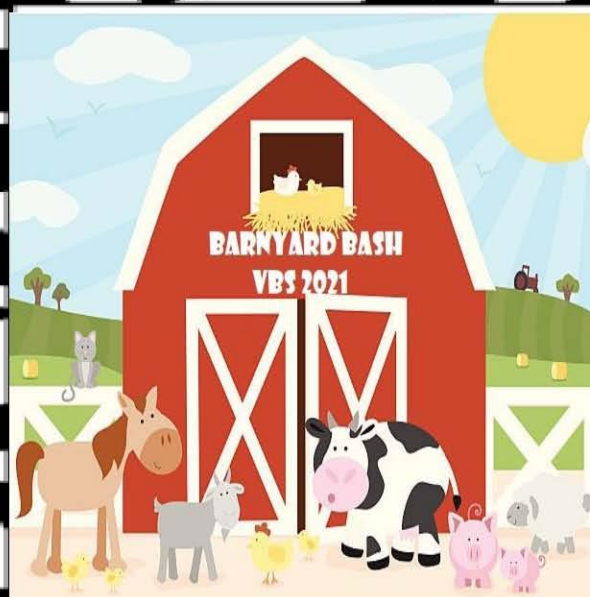
# Church School News

June, July, August 2021



Our annual Children's Sunday Service will be Sunday, June 13th. Please join us for this Worship Service lead by our children.

We will also celebrate our graduating high seniors and college graduates. It is also Scholarship and Baccalaureate Sunday.



## **BARNYARD BASH!**

**JUNE 28—JULY 1, 2021  
9AM—12:30PM**

**JOIN US FOR THIS WEEK FULL OF  
BIBLE STORIES, NEW SONGS, FUN  
GAMES, CRAFTS, AND NEW FRIENDS!**



Celebrate the 2021 Summer Olympics  
in All Ages Summer Church School!!!

**Beginning, Sunday, June 20th running  
through August 29th.**

*(No class July 4th or September 3rd)*

Summer Church School and Nursery Care  
will be held in

**Parish House Room 3 until 11a.m.**