



The Steeple

October 2021

Minister – Reverend Amy Carter – revcarter@nmchurch.org
Music Director – Sarah Fay – musicdirector@nmchurch.org
Manager of Church Operations – Nicole Henderson – nhenderson@nmchurch.org
Bell Choir Director – Sarah Archer – bells@nmchurch.org
Director of Christian Education– Becky Passero – cedirector@nmchurch.org
Church Council Chair – Susan Chapin – moderator@nmchurch.org
Treasurer – Evelyn LeCates – treasurer@nmchurch.org
Recording Secretary – Pete DelMastro – secretary@nmchurch.org
Financial Secretary – Katie McKay – financialsecretary@nmchurch.org
Room Manager – Mike Bensema – roommgr@nmchurch.org
Steeple Editor – Janet Wittmann – steeple@nmchurch.org

Office Hours: Monday – Thursday, 9:00 AM - 12:00 Noon

Office Phone: 860.354.8232

Fax Line: 860.354.4327

E-mail: church@nmchurch.org

Web site: www.nmchurch.org

In-person Sunday services have resumed!

If joining us in person, please know that in accordance with CDC, state and local recommendations, we are requiring all individuals to mask indoors until further notice. Light refreshments for fellowship are currently discontinued.

The office remains open during its regular scheduled hours Monday through Thursday, 9:00 AM to 12 noon.



Sunday Bulletin Deadline

Bulletin information and announcements are due to Nicole Henderson, 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!

Minister's Message

Save the Date! November 7th, 2021 has been declared Gratitude Sunday and we are planning to celebrate the hard work of many of our members and to rededicate our sanctuary. Come and see old friends, hear beautiful music, and be part of blessing the building where the amazing people that are the First Congregational Church gather!

As the fall busy season is underway at church, we continue under pandemic conditions. This has meant that although I have been here since June 1st, I have not yet met everyone in person! I would love to be able to meet each of you and get to know your stories and your families, but I also want to be careful to respect COVID19 exposure comfort levels. This means that if you would like to arrange a visit, I would be happy to do so in the way that makes you most comfortable.

Perhaps you would like a phone visit, or gathering in some lawn chairs, or an indoor visit with masks? Maybe you have an idea that might work? Please let me know! I can be reached at 860-354-8232 ext. 2 or revcarter@nmchurch.org and I would love to hear from you.

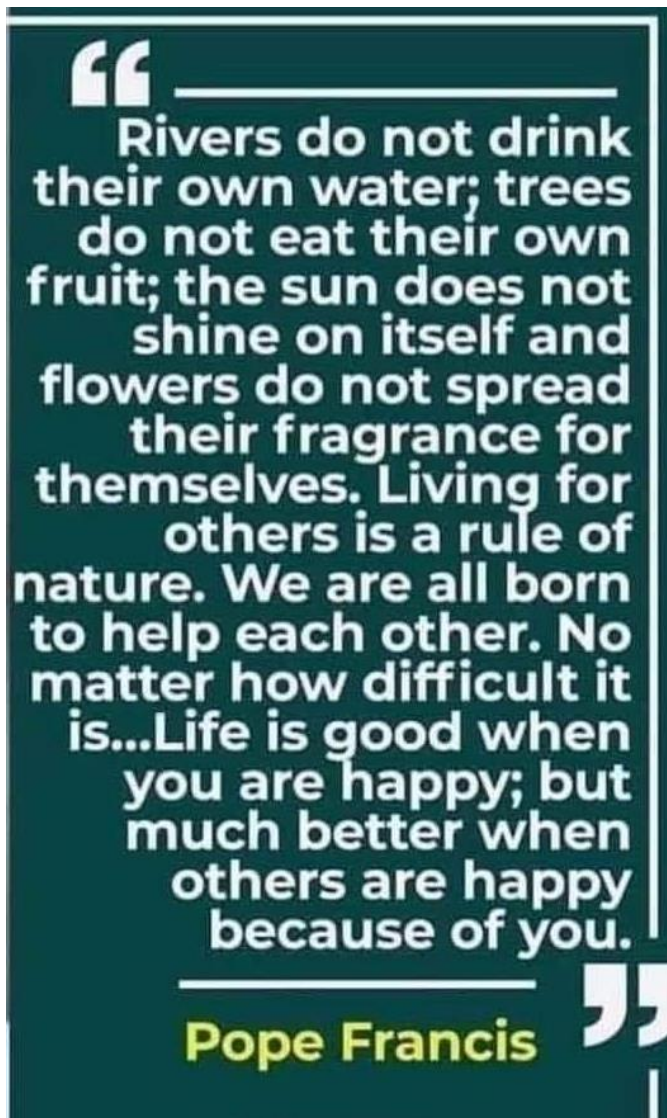
See you soon!

Rev. Amy Carter

Prayers

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





Sunday Flowers

If you would like to donate flowers for a special person or occasion, please contact the Flower Committee: Sandy Gammons, Bonnie Westerberg, or Debbie Poole, debpoole@charter.net





Open and Affirming (ONA) Team

When you hear the words Open and Affirming, what comes to mind for you? Those words can conjure up different pictures and feelings for every individual. Are you anxiously awaiting this new designation to welcome all, without exception? Are you hesitant because you are uncertain about change? Are you excited to learn more about how focusing on being a church that truly welcomes all people will impact our church life? Are you interested in delving into what scripture says about welcoming all? What are your thoughts?

Exploring our individual responses and opening up an honest dialog on what being an Open and Affirming Church means is the first step on our journey of discernment. The ONA team is taking one step at a time. We will begin by meeting with the Church Council and individual Ministries for small group listening sessions, but the input of every church member is important. We are cautiously planning for future small group gatherings, but due to COVID, we may have to shift to more remote methods.

If you have questions, ideas, concerns, or just want to chat, please don't wait to contact us. We need to hear from you! Please don't hesitate to get in touch with one of the team members: Chairperson Pat Nicholas (patnicholas@charter.net, 203-770-1885), Dan Martin (daniel.k.martin@gmail.com,) or Doris Papp (pappducc4@gmail.com, 203-770-3392).

The date for the Fall Meeting of the Church will be announced soon!



KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN

Music Team:

The Music Team has met several times to discuss performances during the continuing pandemic. As recommended by Sarah Fay, the Senior Choir is rehearsing Thursday nights for 45 minutes. Sarah has purchased singing masks for participants, and seating is distanced for safety. Sundays will continue to feature two vocalists leading hymns and responses. Choir members are recording videos to be shown on selected Sundays.

Sarah Archer has begun bell choir rehearsals. The group is rehearsing Wednesday nights and performing with small groups on many Sundays this fall.

The current plan for the Christmas Concert is to once again use choir videos. It is hoped that the pandemic will be under control and we can show the videos to a live audience; the Music Team will be following the guidance provided by the church. It is likely that the Village Ringers can perform live.

The church choirs always welcome new members. If you or someone you know are interested in joining, please email musicdirector@nmchurch.org for the Senior Choir or bells@nmchurch.org for the Village Ringers.

Dave Elmore, Chair



Book Club

Our next meeting is **Tuesday, October 5** at 7pm. We will discuss *The Lost Apothecary* by Sarah Penner. Please RSVP to Nicole.

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.



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!

FCC of New Milford - Emergency Cancellation Process

People involved: Pastor, Building & Grounds, Worship Ministry Chair, Christian Education Ministry Chair, Communications Team, Staff

1. If the Governor declares a state of emergency, church will be cancelled.
2. If the weather is bad but no emergency is declared, Building & Grounds will determine road conditions and reach out the Pastor by 7:30am. The Pastor and Worship Ministry Chair will make the call to have church or not. The pastor will send an email to the group above and Ministry Chairs will contact their teams.
3. If the church will be open and the pastor cannot get here, then the Deacons will lead the service.
4. Worship Ministry Chair, Christian Education Ministry Chair, and staff will make the decisions for the Sunday School and music and will contact people directly, informing the rest of the group.
5. Worship Ministry Chair will email TeamMembers@nmchurch.org.
6. The Communications Team will notify TV channels, post on Facebook, post on the website, and send out Constant Contact.
7. Building & Grounds will post signs on the church's doors.
8. Office Staff will contact the cleaning service.

In Loving Memory

Elizabeth "Betty Lou" Haxo

September 6, 2021

Investment Team

The church's investment continue to do well as the stock market advances. The investment team manages five investment funds: endowment, investment, SJ Johnson, scholarship and maintenance.

Dave Elmore, Chair



Baptism

September 12, 2021, by Rev. Carter

Nathaniel Ivars Archer, son of Rodney and Sarah Archer



Men's Breakfast

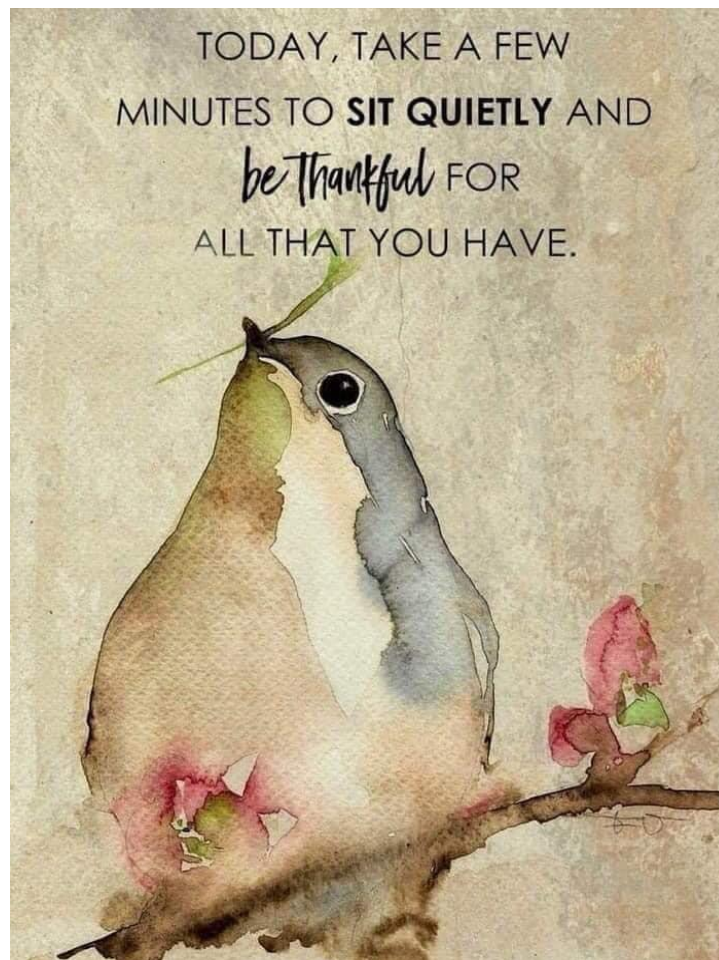
The next Men's Breakfast is **October 16th** (always the 3rd Saturday of the month). We usually have this in Fellowship Hall, but recent months have found us at Theo's on Railroad Street. When we meet in Fellowship Hall, we start cooking at 7:45, and eating at 8:30. When we meet in a restaurant it is usually at 8:30. We will send a reminder as we get closer to the 16th. Please contact Dan Martin (daniel.k.martin@gmail.com) if you would like to be added to the mailing list.

Christian Education Ministry

During the month of October, the Church School program will once again be running a clothing drive for the Philippines. Items needed: summer clothing - adult, baby/toddler, gently worn shoes, hygiene products (toothbrushes/paste, floss, bar soap, diapers, wipes), monetary donations for shipping (\$80/box). All donations will benefit the village/church where relatives and friends of the Jackson family live. Items will be blessed on Sunday, November 7, 2021, the Service of Gratitude Sunday. Please direct all questions to Becky Passero at cedirector@nmchurch.org

On Welcome Back Sunday, "The New Adventure Bible: The NIV Study Bible for Kids" were given to two of our third graders, Carrie Bohr and Isaiah Haynes. Our hope is that they will read and use them right away in their Church School class and at home.

Becky Passero, CE Director



Audio/Visual Team

The church voted in May to replace the sound system in the sanctuary and to upgrade the livestream system. The new equipment was recently installed, and it has been a welcome change. The system is louder and provides richer and more even sound throughout the sanctuary. The livestream video is now full HD and a video switcher will enable graphics and videos to be shown on the livestream.

The Audio/Visual Team is looking for additional members who can help run the sound system and livestream during services and other events. Training will be provided. No experience is necessary. Email avteam@nmchurch.org for more information.



Baby Bundles

Our mission to help families of young children continues. We have been blessed this month with donations from Thrift Mart, Social Services, and from our Chapel Stitchers. Our group of dedicated volunteers has been discussing new ideas and new avenues for the future of Baby Bundles. All of the recent changes in our day-to-day lives has led to the need to find new partners and new ways of helping the families in our area. We are looking for your ideas and input. Please consider joining us in this process. Reach out to any member of our team, or to the church office. Together we can share our talents and gifts to help make raising a family a little less stressful.

Jan McCarthy, Chair



*Thank
You!*

- to the Jacksons for their continued help with the flower beds.
- to Bill Jackson and John Wittmann for their help in moving furniture.
- to Dawn Kraft for her help in the office.
- to Evelyn LeCates for her hard work in the Fellowship Hall kitchen.

Deacons Bench

The Importance of Fellowship

Do you remember those Sunday mornings when Fellowship Hall was packed? Some long-time church members could be found sitting with the same friends at the same table every Sunday. Others enjoyed their coffee and someone's delicious baked goods while waiting for their children to reappear from Church School. The members of the Fellowship Committee filled coffee urns, set out the week's donated treats, and worked feverishly behind the scenes to ensure that we all enjoyed that hour. Fellowship Hall buzzed with activity, laughter, and a sense of belonging.

So many of us miss those days and wish they were back. Until we can, once again, gather around the tables downstairs, let's think about what true "Fellowship" means for us...

In Acts 2:42, the early church was urged to join in fellowship with one another to not only share the Good News about Jesus Christ, but to also realize that they, as Christians, belonged to each other in a relationship that helped them focus on faith. In Proverbs 27:17 we are told, "As iron sharpens iron..." so we sharpen one another in faith, and we share that faith through love and good works to fulfill God's goals for us.

Let's think of other ways we can "sharpen" one another in faith until we can, once again, fill Fellowship Hall. The Chapel Stitchers plan to meet on the Green to gather in fellowship while they busy their hands. Others may bring their own chairs and sit outside Parish Hall while waiting for the Church School kids to finish their lesson. Still others may choose to call a member of the church and just say "Hi, I'm thinking about you." No matter how we choose to continue to grow our relationships through and with Christ, let's keep at it through these trying times. We need each other more than ever and we need to keep "sharpening" our faith to do God's work.

In Peace,
Lynn Holcomb

Outreach Ministry

Each of the teams is continuing to update their calendar of events/programs for the balance of 2021 and the beginning of 2022.

- The key activity for Social Concerns in September was working to help host the September 19th Walk a Mile for a Meal event. This was a good event that not only brought blessings to the community, but also showcased our church. We had volunteer bakers that provided an abundance of cookies and brownies for the walkers, a large amount of church members walking, and a great bunch of members hosting the tables of snacks/baked goods and water/lemonade. The New Milford Social Services team was very appreciative, and complimented us on how well our church supports this event. The net result from this event is that the Food Bank now has 30 days of food for families in need.
- Baby Bundles is working on ideas to better serve families as the COVID restrictions change, including efficient ways of providing baby needs given the alternative options that have emerged in New Milford
- The Scholarship Committee is looking at options since Village Fair Days is cancelled, and the tag sale is not planned. They would be interested in working with other groups for fundraising events.

Dan Martin, Chair

Remembrance Sunday, November 21

Book of Remembrance: Memorials given to the Book of Remembrance by our church family and friends will be 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. Donations may be sent in any time of the year to the church office, in care of the Book of Remembrance. Those gifts received later than **November 7** will be dedicated in May. The list will be posted for review on the bulletin board by the side door entrance of the church on **November 14**.

A Russell Ayre Scholarship: With your generous support we are able to offer financial assistance to deserving college students. Donations of any size may be sent in any time of the year to the church office, in care of the Scholarship Committee. Please indicate who your gift is in memory/honor of, as well as to whom an acknowledgement should be sent. Those gifts received later than **November 7** will be dedicated in May. The list will be posted for review on the bulletin board at the side door entrance on **November 14**.

Donation forms are on the following page. Checks should be made payable to: **The First Congregational Church**, indicating in the memo line either Book of Remembrance OR A. Russell Ayre Scholarship. (Please note: The A. Russell Ayre Scholarship and The Book of Remembrance are two separate checking accounts.)



Book of Remembrance Committee

Donor(s): _____

Address: _____

In Memory of: _____

Amount Enclosed: _____

Send Acknowledgement to: _____

Address: _____



A. Russell Ayre Scholarship Committee

Donor(s): _____

Address: _____

In Memory of: _____

or

In Honor of: _____

Amount Enclosed: _____

Send Acknowledgement to: _____

Address: _____



Fellowship Team: Members needed - help us to serve one another. If interested, please email news@nmchurch.org or talk to any Fellowship member.

A-V Team: The church is upgrading its audio and video systems. We are looking for volunteers to help run sound and video at services and events. Training will be provided. Email avteam@nmchurch.org for more information.



Prayer Shawl Ministry

The Chapel Stitchers will meet on **Sunday, October 10, 2021**, 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 some long time experts! Join us as we gather on the Green if weather allows, or in the Chapel (masks required) for a time of faith and fellowship following worship service. 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.

The Chapel Stitchers participated in the 1st Annual New Milford Apple Festival on September 25, 2021. It was a great success. We spread church awareness along with selling our handmade knitted and sewn items. Thank you to all those who made items for our sale. And special thank you to Kathy Maher, Janet Junz, Kathy Elmore, Mary Schenzer, Chris Mrozinski, Barb Ahern, Gail Peck, Jan McCarthy, Cary Westfall, John and Leslie Schlemmer for your time working our booth. All proceeds from the event go to Baby Bundles and our own Women's Ministry. Save the date for next year's festival; Saturday September 24, 2022!



The background of the entire page is a close-up, slightly blurred image of numerous green LEGO bricks. The bricks are scattered and overlapping, creating a textured, geometric pattern. The lighting is soft, highlighting the studs and grooves of the plastic.

DON'T THROW AWAY OLD LEGOS BRICKS!

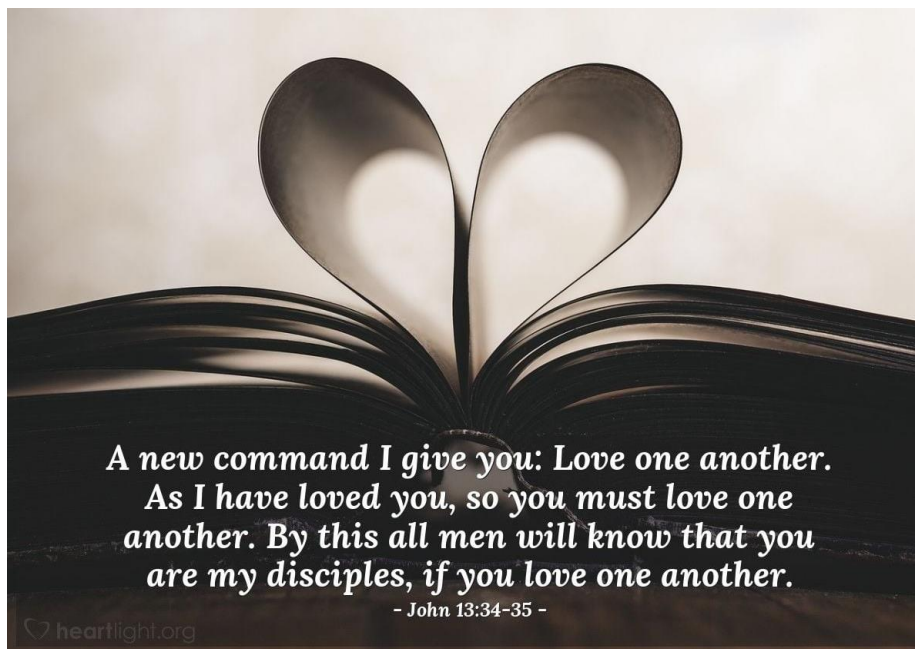
The company has a new service called **LEGO Replay** that will wash, sort, and donate your old bricks to charities that work with children. They will even cover shipping. Visit lego.com/replay to print a free shipping label and give the gift of play to a child in need.



Called to Care

Our condolence bakers baked items for the Walk a Mile event hosted by our church for New Milford Social Services. Over 200 bar cookies were made for the event with donated ingredients. Thank you to our bakers Ruth Almond, Kathy Maher, Evelyn LeCates, Kathy Maher, Jan McCarthy, Mary Eherts, and Leslie Schlemmer, and to all those who donated ingredients.

Called to Care ministers to the members of our church and beyond. Would you like to be involved? Let's have a conversation - please contact Leslie Schlemmer at news@nmchurch.org.





Church School News October 2021



Philippines Donations Drive

When: October 1—31, 2021

Items Needed:

Summer clothing

Baby/Toddler clothing

Gently worn shoes

Hygiene products

(toothbrushes/paste, floss, bar soap, diapers, wipes)

Monetary donations to ship box (\$80/box)

**All donations to benefit the village/church where
relatives and friends of the Jackson family live.**

****Items will be blessed on Sunday, November 7,
2021, the Service of Gratitude Sunday***



Silver Lake Events for Youth

These are independent opportunities

****Covid safety protocols are in place. Please see website for more information.****

For our Senior High Youth:

(9th grade—Adult)

2021 Fall into Action Weekend

November 19-21, 2021

Cost TBD

Catch up with old friends, make new friends, and work hard to prepare Silver Lake for the coming season. From chopping wood to repairing buildings, moving picnic tables to raking leaves, there's a project for everyone.

Join just for the day on Saturday or come Friday evening and stay Saturday evening for additional programming and community time, and do some more work on Sunday!

2021 Pride Retreat

November 5-7, 2021

Cost: \$140

This weekend retreat is a safe space for members of the LGBTQIA+ community and their allies to explore issues of identity and faith through a lens of progressive Christian values.

All are welcome, regardless of faith identity or belief.

Join a community of your peers for fun, laughter, connection, music, community, campfires, history, low ropes, arts and crafts, fashion shows, and discussion.

Weekend lodging is determined by age, not by gender.

For Grades 4th-6th:

Christmas at the Lake

December 10-12, 2021

Cost \$125

Celebrate Christmas, Silver Lake-style!

Join your friends and make new ones as we anticipate Christ's birth at Silver Lake, with or without snow! We will get busy and creative with Christmas crafts, outdoor play, baking, worship, and lots of singing of Christmas songs around the fire.

Register at:

www.silverlakeect.org

(Scholarship available)



223 Low Road
Sharon, CT 06069