



The Steeple

November 2021

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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. Fellowship coffee hour will be held downstairs in Fellowship Hall following worship service. Masks are required unless sitting at tables.

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!

Deacon's Bench

As November rolls in I like to think of all the things I am grateful for. One of the reasons for this is the Thanksgiving holiday, it always puts me in a grateful mindset. You may ask yourself, what exactly is gratitude? The dictionary states it is the quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness. In the news, we have been inundated with stories of a lack of appreciation, and little to no return of kindnesses. It can be disheartening, to say the least.

We as children of God and good neighbors of our town need to remember that "when the peace of Christ rules in our hearts, thankfulness overflows. Even in the darkest of times, we can "praise God for his love, his sovereignty, and his promise to be near us when we call." Psalm 145:18.

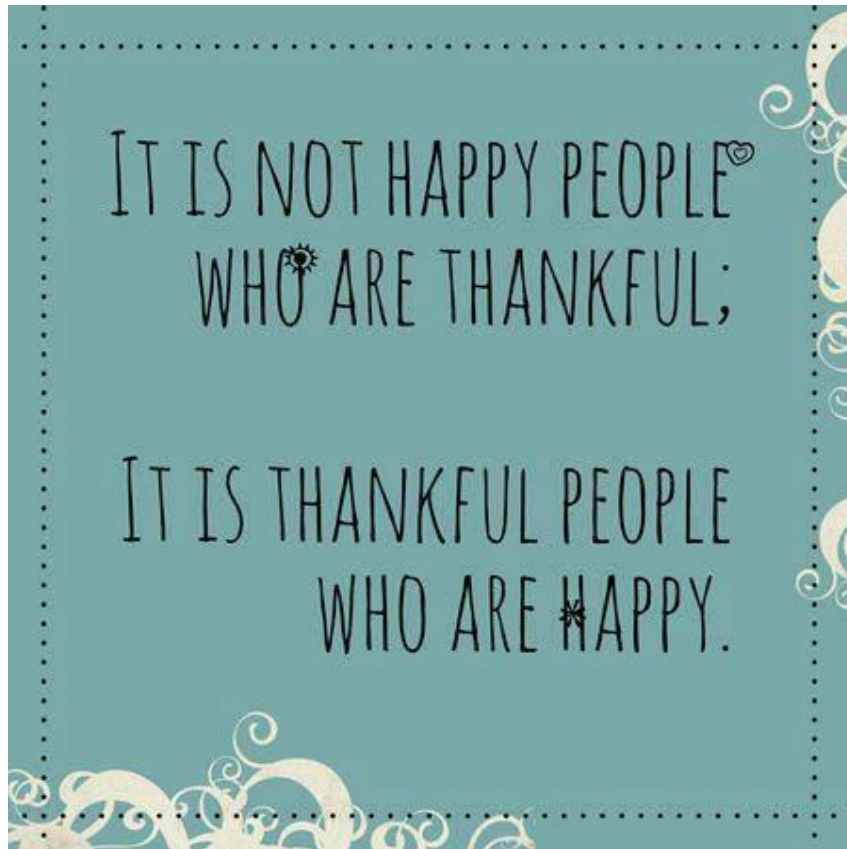
I recommend starting a gratitude list for every day in the month of November and praise God for one thing you are grateful for each day. I am positive that by the end of November we will all be in the grateful mindset to begin the Advent season.

*In Christ,
Sheri Gunn*

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.





The Fall Meeting of the congregation, when we will vote on changes to our constitution and budget, will be held Sunday, November 14, following the worship service. All members are encouraged to attend and to participate in the governance of the church.



Open and Affirming (ONA) Team

We are off to a good start! On Sunday, October 17th we met with the Church Council members for an informal listening session. We had a great conversation. The ONA team was able to explain more fully what becoming an official Open and Affirming church might mean for the future of our church. However, we spent most of the time listening to the insights of the Council members and answering their questions. It was a meaningful time, sharing diverse thoughts and great suggestions. It gave us all a chance to imagine how becoming an even more welcoming church can open up so many ways of living the Gospel and following Jesus' call to discipleship. Can you imagine what transformation is possible if we respond to Christ's call and make a real effort to welcome ALL people? Yes, ALL people, regardless of age, race, gender, economic status, nationality, ethnicity, marital status, political affiliation, theological perspective, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or family configuration. How exciting would that be?!

In the coming weeks we are planning to meet with small groups to hear your thoughts, suggestions, and great ideas. We will be setting up a schedule of Listening Sessions. Watch for more information. If a small group isn't your thing, please get in touch with one of us and we will gladly speak to you individually. 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.)



Nicole Ferrari-Garcia September 22, 2021

Charlotte Ruth Bostwick October 2, 2021



Music Team:

The Music Committee is thrilled that the sound in the sanctuary has been improved so much by the recently installed sound system. Sound on the livestream is also better. It can now be controlled from a seat in the sanctuary rather than a closet in the back.

The choir continues to practice weekly for videos used in the Sunday worship service and for Christmas. Choir members are pairing up each Sunday to lead the hymns and responses and to sing some of the anthems.

Since conditions do not suggest large concert gatherings, the plan for the Christmas Concert is for the choir to present virtual videos with the bell choir playing live. The date will be **December 12** at 4pm. We invite people to join us, and will be seating them in alternate rows for safety.

On **November 7 and 14** the church will welcome Jon Lafleur back as guest organist. Jon has played for us many times over the years, and it will be a treat to have him with us.

Dave Elmore, Chair



Book Club

Our next meeting is **Tuesday, November 2** at 7pm. We will meet and discuss *The Midnight Library* by Matt Haig. 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.

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



Men's Breakfast

The next Men's Breakfast is **November 20th** (always the 3rd Saturday of the month). We are planning a return to Fellowship Hall! We will start cooking at 7:45, and eating at 8:30. Please contact Dan Martin (daniel.k.martin@gmail.com) if you would like to be added to the mailing list.

Please note: This month, we will be discussing the impact of bacon on self-esteem. This is an important topic, so please plan on participating!



- to Harris Hill Farm for the donation of 8 pumpkins for our front steps. The youth group carved them at their meeting on October 24, to be displayed during the New Milford Trunk or Treat on October 31. We also thank those who donated additional mums and pumpkins to keep up our traditional fall festive front steps.
- to Dave Elmore for his help with PowerChurch.
- to Dawn Kraft for her help in the office.
- to those who helped with mowing duties this year!

Baby Bundles

Fall has arrived, and there are so many events and outdoor chores to keep us busy. As we start to think about holiday events and family gatherings ahead, we need to also think of how we can assist the many families who are struggling. Baby Bundles is working on ways that we can reach out to the families we help and give them a little more support. Together we can show our community that we care and are here to help. Thank you for all of the outreach that you do!

Jan McCarthy, Chair



Outreach Ministry

The Outreach Ministry currently has three parts: Social Concerns & Missions, Baby Bundles, and the Scholarship Committee. Each of these parts has struggled with transitioning from our traditional calendar and approach to the new COVID environment. We will continue to work through this transition for the balance of the year, and would appreciate your prayers and your ideas.

The New Milford Refugee Resettlement organization will be receiving and settling a new family in the next few months. We have worked with this organization for over 5 years, and we recently had several members volunteer to help. This could become a core part of the Social Concerns & Missions work in 2022. Please see the flyer on the next page for additional information. Contact Dan Martin if you have any questions (daniel.k.martin@gmail.com) If you would like to volunteer, please use this link, the QR code on the flyer, or print and send to the address on the flyer.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeXc5cCkdhpbbp9mh4VYSf1IXqiFsv8D6O0T3Zksfz2hkQMgFw/viewform>

Rev. Amy has provided a wonderful resource book, *Outreach and Mission for Vital Congregations*, by Dale Rosenberger. This book has helped many churches think through their outreach plans, and it can help us as well. Once completed, we will work with Amy to help understand how we can apply the learning.

Dan Martin, Chair



New Milford Refugee Resettlement Volunteer Application

Interested in volunteering with the New Milford Refugee Resettlement Committee (NMRR) to settle new refugee families? In partnership with IRIS (Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services; www.irisct.org) NMRR hopes to be assigned a refugee family in late November - early December. If you would like to work with us, please mail this application to Saun Ellis, Volunteer Coordinator, 93 Upland Road New Milford CT 06776. Please forward to friends and family.



Scan for online form

Applicant Information

First and last name _____

Cell Phone _____ Email _____

What volunteer opportunities are you interested in? Please note that IRIS requires background checks.

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Welcoming our family - acculturation, and hospitality
- ☐ Setting up the house - getting furniture, appliances, stock pantry
- ☐ Working with our housing team - (find a rental for the family)
- ☐ Finding clothing for the family-seasonally appropriate
- ☐ Working with our health care team - setting up appointments, etc
- ☐ Translating for the family in person and through Zoom or Facetime
- ☐ Driving to appointments - grocery shopping, to IRIS, school functions, etc
- ☐ Teaching English - working with our (ESL)English as a Second Language coordinator
- ☐ Tutoring the children one on one
- ☐ Donating to NMRR through St. John's church - As NMRR awaits the final IRS approval of 501(c)3 charitable status, we are currently using St. John's Episcopal Church as our fiscal agent. All checks should be made out to St. John's Church, mailed to 7 Whittlesey Avenue, New Milford CT 06776. Indicate on the check that it is a donation to NMRR.

Please list languages spoken _____

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.



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: _____





The Fall Clean-up will be held on **Saturday, November 6**, at 9 am. Please email Cary Westfall with any questions or to volunteer.

When my arms can't
reach people who are
close to my heart...

I
always
hug them
with my
prayers.





Church School News November 2021

Annual Christmas Pageant
Sunday, December 19th during the 10am service
Stay tuned for details!



*Do you like working with children?
Do you like making crafts?
Do you have 45 minutes to spare on a
Sunday morning ?
Then, the CE Team could use your help!*

The CE Team is looking for teachers and teacher assistants. Help one Sunday a month or more in our One Room School House Classroom Teaching/ Assisting children ages PreK– 6th grade.

Please see Becky Passero, Christian Education Director (cedirecto@nmchurch.org) or Carol McKay, Christian Education Team Chair (carolmckay@sbcglobal.net) for more information.

Important Dates for Church School and Youth Group:

November 2nd— 11am “No School” All Ages Scavenger Hunt Hike
Lover’s Leap Park (cancelled if rain)
Meet in Lover’s Leap Parking Lot

November 11th— 1pm “No School” Hike at Steep Rock
Meet in Steep Rock Parking Lot

November 28th— All Church Advent “Cookies & Cocoa” Coffee Hour
Fellowship Hall/Front Steps 11am

November 28th— Senior Youth Group Meeting
5:30-7:30pm Parish House Room 3
Dinner provided

December 18th— Pageant Rehearsal 9:00am
Sanctuary

December 19th— 10am Pageant Sunday
CE Advent Activity Bag distribution

December 26th— No Church School or Nursery Care

