The Steeple

Winter 2021–2022

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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. 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.

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**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

It’s hard to believe that it is already my first Advent in New Milford! My first six months at First Congregational Church have gone quickly, and it was with amazement that I left the church the other day to see trees installed on the green and garland twisting up the light poles. The holiday season is arriving, and I don’t feel prepared yet.

Oddly enough, the story of the arrival of the Christ child is similar. A long-awaited Messiah was entering the world and even though his mother certainly knew for six months that the birth was impending, nothing seemed ready for Jesus. Even as I feel the rush of preparing for the church season, I am thankful that Jesus doesn’t require us to be ready for anything.

Jesus is coming and he will meet us right where we are - in our humble places, in our mistaken ideas, and in our brokenness. We believe Jesus is ultimately the Messiah – the One who has come to save the world. He was sent by God to bring us forgiveness, to teach us more about love, and to show us the presence of God within our own humanity.

Whether you have already decked the halls or whether you never hum a carol, you can bet that God’s mission to send salvation to the people will reach you. Thanks be to God!

Rev. Amy Carter
Deacon's Bench

Can you hear me now? How about now? We’ve all seen the commercial for the best phone service ever...Can you hear me now? It’s a good question. But a better question is: “Are you listening?” Not to the commercial, but for the Word of God. Are you listening to the words you speak? Are you listening to the words spoken to you?

We hear the Word of God every Sunday. Luke 11:28, “Blessed rather are those who hear the Word of God and obey it.” But are we listening for what God has to say to each of us? “Listen to the wind, it talks. Listen to the silence, it speaks. Listen to your heart, it knows.” Native American Proverb

Are we listening to the words we are saying? “Whatever words we utter should be chosen with care for people will hear them and be influenced by them for good or ill.” Buddha

Are we listening to each other? “Listen with your mouth closed and your heart open.” Christine Toda “Wise men speak because they have something to say; fools because they have to say something.” Unknown

Now, more than ever as we prepare for the birth of Jesus and the coming of a New Year, is the perfect time to listen. Listen for God’s message to you and welcome His blessing. Take care with the words you say; choose wisely and with great thought. Words can leave an indelible imprint. Pay attention to what the words spoken to you are really saying. Listen with your heart. “When you talk, you are only repeating what you already know. But if you listen, you may learn something new.” Dalai Lama

Sharon Millard
For the Board of Deacons

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, December 12 at 4pm

The Music Team invites you and your friends to the church’s annual Christmas Concert. Celebrate the season with wonderful holiday music featuring the Senior Choir and Bell Choir. It will be a combination of live music and video performances. Due to COVID restrictions it has not been possible for the choirs to rehearse a full program, but recent changes have made it possible to perform some of the music live. It’s a wonderful way to get into the holiday spirit. See you there!

Thanks to Sarah Fay and Sarah Archer for creating the program and leading the choirs. Thanks to Chris Fay for putting together creative videos and to Senior Choir and Bell Choir members for their dedication to rehearsing and performing the program.

Dave Elmore, Chair

Jim Herberick
Judy Packard

November 3, 2021
November 13, 2021
Buildings and Grounds Team

- The new dehumidifier system in the Parish House basement is reducing the dank smell and mold buildup that has been a problem for years. What’s changed is that the two high capacity units are continuously draining now and only stop the compressor from running if not called upon.

- Dan and Carrie Martin donated a brand new and ultra-high capacity dehumidifier to be used in Fellowship Hall. Currently we have four fans running at least through the month of November. One of the fans needs to remain aimed at the stairs and hallway which were troublesome spots this past summer with extensive mold buildup. Once the dehumidifier is positioned so that it can continuously drain, the fans for the most part, can be eliminated.

- Serf (our cleaner), New Milford Custom Lawn Care, Cary Westfall, and I did the initial leaf and debris cleanup in the upper moat, Main Street entrance and roadway, parking lot, and sidewalk. A big shout out to New Milford’s Yardscapes for doing the driveway and lower moat. They were there to tackle Charlie Barlow’s old house and decided to take care of us as well at no cost. All I did was give them a “thumbs up” for the nice work at Charlie’s and they apparently liked that! All totaled, we spent $175 to beat the bad weather by under 24 hours from the first major rainfall in quite a while. Cary also cleaned the Parish House gutters and Bill Jackson placed gutter guards along the full length of the gutters on the back side of the building where the majority of leaf problems happen. What a mess we’d have had to deal with if our grounds were not cleared before the weather.

- We’re still waiting for the storm windows for Amy’s office because they had to be custom made. I believe that we all have had some experience with supply chain issues since COVID-19 caused major disruptions. Lambert & Barr is right on top of the project waiting for the product to arrive.

- The Boy Scouts spent under 90 minutes to bag all of the leaves around the Parish House and pile them on my trailer to be brought to Bill Jackson’s back yard for dumping. Why so much faster this year? Cary spent additional time the week prior to rake all of the leaves into small piles around the building. Way to go Cary!

John Wittmann, Chair
Did you know this? The partridge in a pear tree is Jesus Christ. -Two turtle doves are the Old and New Testaments. -Three French hens stand for faith, hope and love. -The four calling birds are the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke & John. -The five golden rings recalled the Torah or Law, the first five books of ...the Old Testament. -The six geese a-laying stand for the six days of creation....... -Seven swans a-swimming represent the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit--Prophesy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership, and Mercy. -The eight maids a-milking are the eight beatitudes. -Nine ladies dancing are the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit--Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self Control. -The ten lords a-leaping are the ten commandments. -The eleven pipers piping stand for the eleven faithful disciples. -The twelve drummers drumming symbolizes the twelve points of belief in the Apostles' Creed. So there is your history for today. MERRY CHRISTMAS!! ♥ yes, I said MERRY CHRISTmas because Christmas is not without CHRIST!
**Holiday Shop**

Please join us for some holiday shopping. Our holiday shop will be set up in the Chapel on **November 28 & December 5** from 11am – 2pm. All proceeds to benefit our 2022 VBS program.

![Holiday Shopping](image)

**Youth Group**

At the October Youth Group meeting, members competed to see who could carve the best jack-o-lantern for the front steps for the New Milford Trunk or Treat. A sincere thank you again to Harris Hill Farm for their generous donation of pumpkins!

![Pumpkins](image)

First Place – Pumpkin #6  
Ellie & Hannah R.

Second Place – Pumpkin #2  
Jeremy O. & Hudson H.
Open and Affirming (ONA) Team

In this Christmas season we remember, once again, that Jesus came to save the world, the whole world, not just some of it. He came to save all people, not just some people, but ALL people. In the scripture readings for Advent and Christmas we are reminded that Jesus’ love had no boundaries, no barriers, no hierarchy. As followers of Jesus, as disciples of Christ, can we do any less?

The ONA (Open and Affirming) Team is continuing to host listening sessions with ministry teams and over the next few months will broaden the opportunity to engage church members in the conversation, both in person and online. Our hope is to hear the concerns, thoughts, and/or suggestion of as many members of the congregation as possible. The process may be slow, but it is extremely important because the end result will be to write a covenant that is agreed upon, and voted on, by the entire congregation. The covenant will clearly express who we are as a church, who we will welcome and what message we will extend to the community of New Milford.

This is a sample of the type of covenant churches write at the end of the process:

We proclaim that we are an Open and Affirming congregation and we covenant with our community to provide a loving welcome for all God's children into the full life and leadership of ______________. We welcome all who seek to follow Jesus regardless of race, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, nationality, ethnicity, marital status, physical or mental ability, family configuration, political affiliation, economic circumstance, or theological perspective.

Watch for more information. We really need to hear from YOU. 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.)
**Remembrance Sunday, November 21**

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:
Charles H. Aldrich, Jr.
Frederick N. Aldrich
Edward Blomquist
Charlotte Bostwick
Charlotte Bostwick
Charlotte Bostwick
Clifford C. Chapin
John & Virginia Cheney
Rosemary & Carl DallaRiva
Ray (Pop) & Mimi Detwiler
Larry Edwards (Papaw)
Gary Howland Emmons
Jesse Howland Emmons
Josephine Fowler
Richard Fowler
Stephen Fowler
Nicole Ferrari-Garcia
Nicole Ferrari-Garcia
Nicole Ferrari-Garcia

Given by:
Thelma O. Aldrich
The Aldrich Family
Barbara McGiver
Barbara McGiver
Steve & Jan McCarthy
Barbara Ahern
Sally Spring Rinehart
Peter & Anne Richardson
Barbara McGiver
Ross & Sharon Detwiler
Ross & Sharon Detwiler
Bette Lou Emmons
Bette Lou Emmons
Jim & Judy York
Jim & Judy York
Jim & Judy York
Barbara McGiver
Peter & Anne Richardson
Chris & Ellen Smith

*continued next page*
In Loving Memory of:
Anne Bostwick Howland
Harriet May Howland
Ethel Kranepool
Nicole Lindberg
Emma McKittrick
Harold Olson
Pap Pollack
The Missing Mistys
Walter & Jane Richardson
Adeline & William Savoir
Bernard Savoir
Connie & Brian Savoir
John E. Strain
John H. Strain
Lillian E. Strain
Donald Westerberg
Evelyn Taylor York
Gerald York

Given by:
Bette Lou Emmons
Bette Lou Emmons
Barbara McGiver
Thomas R. & Susan Lindberg
Barbara McGiver
Anne & Keith Olson
Barbara McGiver
Ross & Sharon Detwiler
Peter & Anne Richardson
Anne & Keith Olson
Anne & Keith Olson
Anne & Keith Olson
Barbara McGiver
Barbara McGiver
Barbara McGiver
Bonnie Westerberg
Jim & Judy York
Jim & Judy York

A. RUSSELL AYRE SCHOLARSHIP REMEMBRANCE

In Loving Memory of:
Charlotte Bostwick
Linda Tucker
Toky VanAsch VanWyck
The Wells Family

Given by:
John & Janet Wittmann
Tom Tucker
Maurits & Martin VanAsch VanWyck
Fred & Marion Warman

Ladies Ministries

Our Ladies Ministries will host a Gingerbread House decorating night on Tuesday, December 14, 2021 from 6-9pm in Fellowship Hall. Cost is $25/house. Pre-built houses and all decorating items will be supplied. This event is open to ladies in our church and their friends. Please bring snacks and drinks to share. RSVP to Becky at cedirector@nmchurch.org by Tuesday, December 7th.
**Baby Bundles**

Babies and holidays can be a wonderful combination. It can also be a difficult time for parents trying to balance childcare, work, and finances. We hope that the diapers and other baby items we offer them will ease some of their worries.

These past two months have shown us that there is more to offering support than just handing out items. We have had a number of parents stop in to pick up diapers, and stay to talk about their babies and the situations they are facing. It’s not that we have answers – it’s that we are willing to listen to them.

We are looking at ways that we can expand this outreach program. The parents have shared many thoughts and ideas with us. If you have an interest in helping, or ideas on how we can improve our support of young families, please contact any of the Baby Bundles team or Rev. Amy.

We want all families to find joy and peace during this season. Thank you for all of the support you have given us this past year.

*Jan McCarthy, Chair*

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

December and January will certainly bring news with the New Milford Refugee Resettlement (NMRR) work that we are supporting. We have had a few members sign up to volunteer (general help, and driving), and a few members notified us that they had furniture that they could contribute. NMRR has provided all of the documents required to receive a refugee family, and now must wait until notification of a family match comes from the agency. The notification could come in a few weeks or a few months, and we must be patient with the process. Once we receive notification, we will know how large the family is, and the specific items they will need. There will be a general e-mail sent out at that time which will detail items that we are looking for, the timing, and how they will be picked up.

If you would like to volunteer, please contact Dan Martin or complete the Volunteer Application which can be found on the last page of this newsletter.

As with any mission, there will always be a need for cash, so those contributions are welcome as well. Please contact Dan Martin if you would like to donate or if you have any questions. Thank you!

Dan Martin, Chair

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.
• to John Wittmann, Cary Westfall, Bill Jackson, and to the Boy Scouts for their help with Fall Clean-up.
• to Evelyn LeCates for her help cleaning and organizing.
• to Dawn Kraft for her help in the office.

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

________________________________________________________________________
**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.

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**Flowers**

Poinsettias will be available soon – watch for details!
The IN-PERSON Christmas Pageant is BACK!
“The Night the Angels Sang”
Sunday, December 19, 2021 during the regular worship service.

Calling all Church School Kids and Youth!
It’s almost Pageant time!

This year’s pageant has 7 speaking parts! If you are interested in one, please reach out to Miss Becky at cedirector@nmchurch.org by December 5th. You do not need to memorize your parts. As always we have non-speaking parts too.

Important dates:

December 5th: 11:15am Christmas Card making in Fellowship Hall

December 18th: 9am Pageant Rehearsal in the Sanctuary

December 19th: 10am Pageant Sunday!
Distribution of Christmas Craft bags after the service
Advent is here! We from our regular church school lessons to special Christmas inspired lessons (November 28, December 5, and 12, December 19 is Pageant Sunday).

Advent craft bags are also back! They will be available to each family who would like one on Sunday, December 19 following the Pageant Worship Service. Each bag will include the craft for each day leading up to Christmas, additional activities, and coloring pages; one for each child in your family.

This is the season of Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace.

Let’s hold onto HOPE

“Ooh, let there be peace on earth
Let the lonely join together, let them know their worth
Ooh, let the children know
There’s a brighter day ahead (let’s hold on to hope)”

Hallelujah
Song by Carrie Underwood with John Legend
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 ____________________________

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