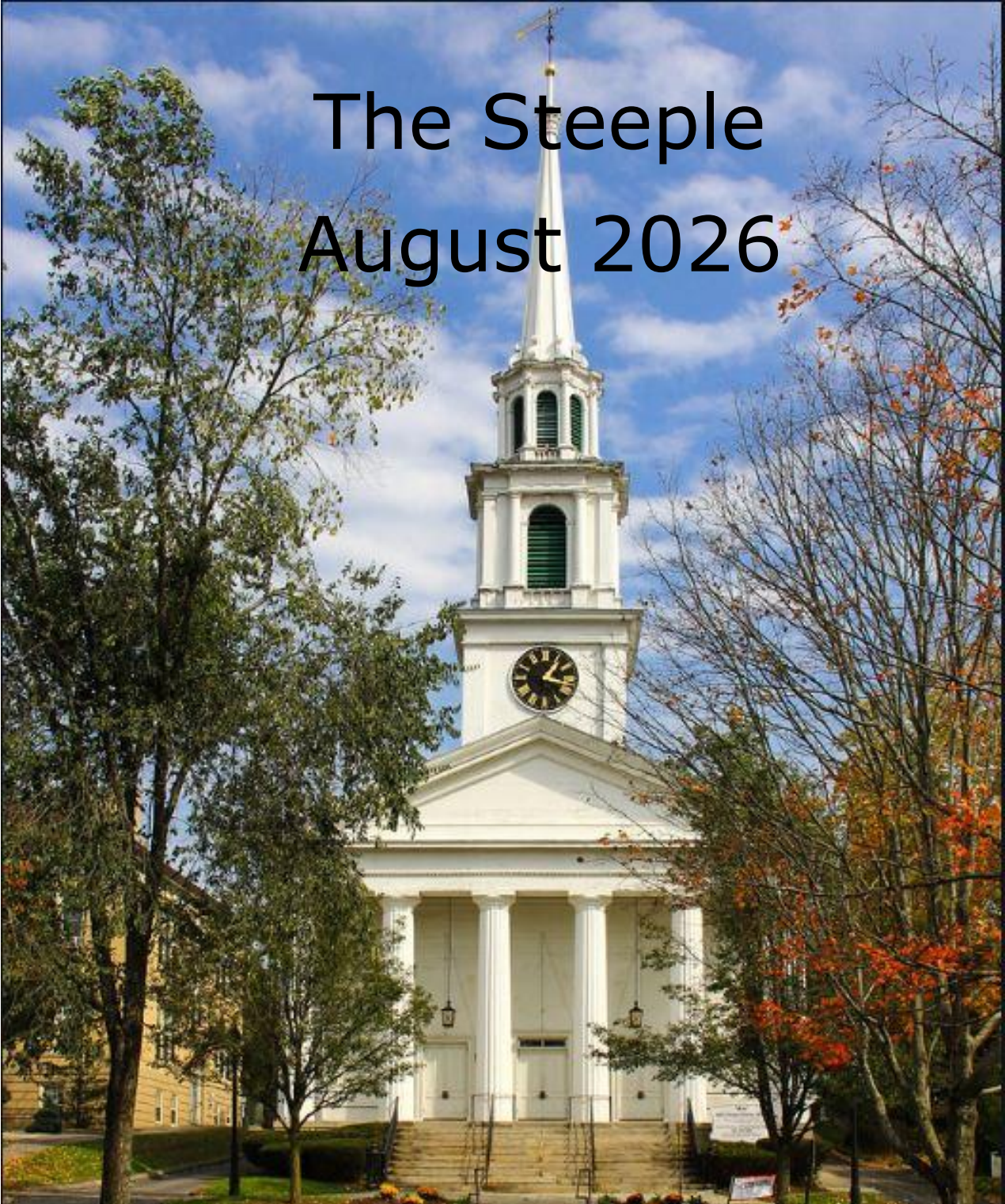




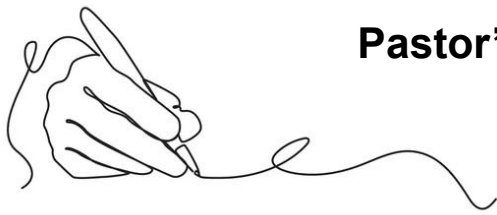
The Steeple

August 2026

First Congregational Church

36 Main Street, New Milford, CT, 06776

860-354-8232 | nmchurch.org



Pastor's Message

Dear Friends,

I pray that you had a summer that was refreshing and renewing. Fall, and the new program, is upon us. There are many activities planned. Church School, the Senior Choir, the Cherub Choir, and the new Alleluia Choir are all ready for you to return. So please join us!

This new program year gives us the opportunity to continue our vital ministries here in New Milford and beyond. We have a wonderful foundation that is ready to spring us into even more new avenues of ministry and mission.

We are a growing congregation and even though we forget this fact at times, new people and new opportunities are here with us. We can dream and plan for our beloved traditions as well as seeing where God's Spirit leads us in new directions.

Galatians 6:9 says: "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." We are at that proper time when we will begin to see fruits of your years of hard and good work. This is an exciting time at First Congregational Church of New Milford. Come join us and make it even better!

Blessings,

Rev. Marie

Looking Ahead

August 17-23: Rev. Marie Vacation
September 13: Welcome Back Sunday
September 20: Walk a Mile
October 4: Pastor Emeritus Celebration
Roger Sherman Presentation 3:15 pm

thank you



I am writing to express our heartfelt gratitude for your generous donation. Your support helps the children in our community who rely on the services of Camella's Cupboard.

Thank you



Lunch & Learn

Lunch & Learn is a potluck luncheon open to all. This event happens monthly on the First Wednesday of the Month at 12:30pm in the Taylor room from September to June.

Started in 2024, the format includes a speaker at the beginning of our meeting. We have had several very excellent presenters - The New Milford Historical Society, The New Milford Public Library with an Oculus trip to Machu Pichu, The Merwinsville Hotel, The White Memorial, Rev. Marie with an Advent program and Church History, The Village Ringer bell choir, CERT, and most recently Guiding Eyes for the Blind to name a few.

This informal gathering is a wonderful outlet for church fellowship. We enjoy a meal together prepared by all that attend. Mark your calendar!

Children's Choir

Our children's choir program is growing. This year ended with 8 singers in the Cherub Choir and 4 in the Joyful Noise Choir.

As our children get older, we are making some adjustments to the choirs.

Next year we will have 2 choirs:

Alleluia Choir - 2nd - 6th grade; This choir will rehearse on Tuesdays from 5:00 - 5:45.

Cherub Choir - 4 year olds through 1st grade. This choir will rehearse on Tuesdays from 4:30 - 5:00.

We will begin our **rehearsals on September 8.**

Toni Sullivan, Director

Handbell choir

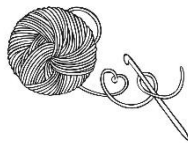
The Village Ringers handbell choir will be gearing up for the autumn and Christmas season soon! **Starting Tuesday September 8, 2026**, we will meet every Tuesday night from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm in the Taylor Room, barring bad weather and holidays. All are welcome to attend practice, current and prior members as well as new friends; whether you've been into music for decades or you've never looked at a piece of music before, please feel free to join us. Handbells are a unique instrument that are inherently cooperative, beautiful to listen to, and fun to play! We will see you soon in practice or during some church services. Email the director, Kristen Dorrell, at bells@nmchurch.org with any questions or concerns!





The Women of the Bible study group

This group chooses books, scripture and current topics to discuss. It is a round room discussion and safe place for all to share viewpoints. The group meets on Mondays at 1pm in the Chapel.



The Chapel Stitches Prayer Shawl Ministry



The Chapel Stitches Prayer Shawl Ministry of the First Congregational Church of New Milford was formed in 2009. Since its inception over 1000 shawls have been given away. The ministry meets on the 2nd Sunday of the month following coffee hour in the Chapel from September to June.

Our membership is open to anyone who knits/crochets or would like to learn how to knit or crochet. The prayer shawls are given for comfort to those in need and in times of joy.

We provide baby blankets for church baptisms and shawls/scarves for our confirmation class. Projects are made at home by members and worked on/shared at our meetings.

Our prayer shawl ministry is patterned after the group formed 28 years ago in Hartford CT, info at **www.shawlministry.com** Each November a few of our members attend the annual prayer shawl gathering in Hartford. It is a time for collaboration, yarn swapping, and meditative stitching.

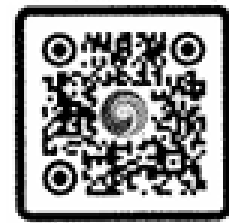
In addition to the prayer shawls, members create items to sell at the annual Apple Festival and craft fairs held at the church. Proceeds have benefited Baby Bundles and the General Fundraising line for the church.

National Make-A-Will Month

UCC National Ministries and Pension Boards have partnered with Together for Tomorrow to provide access to a free and easy estate-planning tool for you at **freewill.com/ucc**.

In just 20 minutes, you can:

- Make plans to care for people you love.
- Share your faith and values with future generations.
- Leave a legacy gift to foster a stronger and more sustainable denomination.



Together, we are spreading God's love across generations and for all time.

Community Outreach

During the month of August we will be hosting the Association of Religious Communities (ARC) overnight homeless guests in Fellowship Hall. One thing that is very different from our local homeless coalition organization is that ARC provides its own, trained chaperones.

We share this opportunity on an alternating month schedule with St. John and we also anticipate that this will be a year-long arrangement rather than just the winter months.

Church Directory



Strengthen your Church Connections	Connect with Church Groups	Connect with your Church Friends
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Connect with Church Members

Have you needed to contact a church member but didn't have the phone or email? The church directory has been on Instant Church Directory for several years but has not been well-publicized. We want to make sure you have the information you need to connect with your friends. We need your help in keeping your family data up to date. Information provided for Instant Church Directory will also be used to update the Power Church, the church management system.

If you have changed your phone number, email address or moved, the church may not have been notified. Please log in to Instant Church Directory to check your information. You can access the directory from a computer or phone or tablet. There are apps for your phone that make access easier.

To access the directory from your computer, go to **members.instantchurchdirectory.com**. If your email is not found in the system, notify us at **updates@nmchurch.org** or call the office.



From our A. Russell Ayre Scholarship Recipients

Dear First Congregational Church, I am one of the recipients of the very generous A. Russell Ayre scholarship, as a graduating senior of New Milford High School. I wanted to write and directly thank the church for choosing me. My academics are the most important to me, and your financial contribution makes my educational journey so much easier and less stressful to embark on my first year of college. Thank you very much for your generosity and I wish all church officials and attendants a fantastic rest of the year.

Sincerely, Cara F.

A. Russell Ayre Scholarship committee, for awarding me this generous scholarship. This fall I will be attending WCSU and your support will be making a tremendous impact on my path to becoming a nurse. This scholarship will completely cover the nursing fees, reducing the financial strain on my family and I. I am deeply grateful for your investment in my future.

Sincerely, Lourdes L.

Dear scholarship committee, Thank you for recognizing my efforts and accomplishments. Your generosity will be helpful as I pursue my studies at Springfield College. I am honored to receive this award and grateful for your investment in my future goals.

Sincerely, Mikayla T.

Office Information/Updates

- * Are you looking for a space to host a meeting, class, birthday party or other? The Church and Parish House has a few available rooms for rent on a daily and weekly basis. All room requests should be reserved through the office to avoid scheduling conflicts.
- * Bulletin announcements are a great way to share upcoming events and gatherings. Information should be emailed to the office no later than Monday of each week for the upcoming Sunday.
- * We would like your feedback.
 - * Do you like the current word format in which you receive The Steeple or would you like a flip page booklet , similar to the printed copy available in the Sanctuary?
 - * What additional information would you like to read about?

Birthdays and Meaningful Dates



In upcoming Steeple issues we would like to celebrate and acknowledge our members by sharing birthdays, anniversary and other meaningful dates. If you would like to be included please email the office with information that you would like to share throughout the year. Name(s) to be listed, day, month and what you are celebrating.

Information should be sent to
Carole at czeigler@nmchurch.org

If you would like to make a donation, Digital Giving is available.		
Please scan the QR Code to donate. We kindly ask that you use the comment feature to direct your contribution.		 
Your continued support to the church is appreciated.		

August 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 Worship 10 am Coffee Hour 11 am	3 Woman of the Bible Study Group 1 pm	4	5	6	7	8
9 Worship 10 am Coffee Hour 11 am	10 Woman of the Bible Study Group 1 pm Church Council 6:30 pm	11	12	13	14	15
16 Worship 10 am Coffee Hour 11 am	17 Rev. Marie Vacation Woman of the Bible Study Group 1 pm	18 Rev. Marie Vacation	19 Rev. Marie Vacation	20 Rev. Marie Vacation	21 Rev. Marie Vacation	22 Rev. Marie Vacation
23 Rev. Marie Vacation Worship 10 am Coffee Hour 11 am	24 Woman of the Bible Study Group 1 pm	25	26	27	28	29
30 Worship 10 am Coffee Hour 11 am	31 Woman of the Bible Study Group 1 pm					

September 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 Lunch & Learn 12:30 pm	3	4	5
6 Worship 10 am Coffee Hour 11 am	7 Office Closed Woman of the Bible Study Group 1 pm	8	9	10	11	12
13 Welcome Back Sunday Worship 10 am Coffee Hour 11 am Chapel Stitches 11:30 am	14 Woman of the Bible Study Group 1 pm	15	16	17	18	19 Men's Breakfast 7 am
20 Walk a Mile Worship 10 am Coffee Hour 11 am Bible Study 11:15 am	21 Woman of the Bible Study Group 1 pm Church Council 6:30 pm	22	23	24	25 SNEUCC Annual Meeting	26 SNEUCC Annual Meeting Apple Fest
27 Worship 10 am Coffee Hour 11 am SNEUCC Annual Meeting	28 Woman of the Bible Study Group 1 pm	29	30			

October 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4 Pastor Emeritus Celebration Worship 10 am Coffee Hour 11 am	5 Woman of the Bible Study Group 1 pm	6	7 Lunch & Learn 12:30 pm	8	9	10
11 Worship 10 am Coffee Hour 11 am Chapel Stitchers 11:30 am	12 Office Closed Woman of the Bible Study Group 1 pm	13	14	15	16	17 Men's Breakfast 7 am
18 Worship 10 am Coffee Hour 11 am Bible Study 11:15 am	19	20	21	22	23	24 Trunk or Treat
25 Worship 10 am Coffee Hour 11 am	26 Woman of the Bible Study Group 1 pm	27	28	29	30	31 Halloween on the Green