



THE CIRCLE CHURCH NEWS

January 2023

North Madison Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
1271 Durham Road
Madison, CT 06443

PASTOR'S NOTE

So, congratulations! You've made it through the holidays, the shortest daylight hours and the longest night of 2022! Whew! Way to go, Rockstar!

The daylight is growing again now, and a brand new year is dawning on the horizon. In the words of Anne Shirley of Green Gables, "Tomorrow is always fresh, with no mistakes in it yet!" and there is a whole new batch of days on our doorstep.

In this time of transition, in the words of Mary Oliver, "*What is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?*"

No pressure...

I'm never sure at times like this if I feel the optimistic relief of opportunity or the pressure of impending failure and doom. Both responses are to my mind legitimate, and possible in impressively myriad combinations. It's a bit maddening, really. I apologize if I've stirred any of your sleeping demons in bringing it up.

In the belief that I am not alone in this human experience; in fact, in the observation that our uncomfortable confusion between hope and existential doom is amplifying, I commend to you, and to myself, to all of us...the consideration of self-care as a practice and a goal for this new year. Seriously. I would like to suggest that we set ourselves a collective NMCC goal of learning, pursuing, experimenting with, practicing, and reflecting on our individual and collaborative growth in tenacious, creative, committed, self-care. What do you say?

Here's my thinking: the first and greatest commandment, according to Jesus and pretty much every other spiritual practitioner of merit, is to love OTHERS as you love YOURSELF as the path to or realization of LOVING GOD. If loving ourselves is a prerequisite (or a practicing ground?) for loving God and our companions in this, God's beloved world, WHY SCRIMP? Seriously, let's go all in. We have been navigating an unprecedented pandemic, people, and you and I are still here. Let's ask ourselves with deep curiosity and attention what God's dream for us and our lives is, and let's lean in.

This is not about caring for ourselves out of selfishness or narcissistic over-indulgence. Rather, I am suggesting making a commitment to doing powerful research using the most available, accessible lab subjects we have—ourselves—and observing what best effects healing, wholeness, (generosity, forgiveness, releasing tension and fear) and general positive transformation--and using our first-hand learning to apply it in our interfacing with one another and the world.

I am thinking that the more and better I learn to love and care for myself at a deep and committed level, the more I will have available to pour into the life I am cultivating in the world around me, and, I hope, the nearer I may draw to the dreams God holds for me, and to deeper, more familiar, relationship with the Holy One as I go.

It sure can't hurt! Afterall, healing ourselves is healing the world—one small, impactful, bit at a time, and greater healing begets greater healing—in all the places our healed parts touch.

As someone around here used to say, *Just a thought....* Happy New Year! Who's in? Let's go!

Love & Blessings,

Heather

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CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRIES



Happy New Year, NMCC Friends!

I hope you all enjoyed time with family and friends over Christmas break! Thank you to our all wonderful kids and adults for participating in our interactive, intergenerational Christmas pageant! Extra thank yous to Jackson for leading us with humor and love, to Melissa C. for whipping up head coverings for our choir seemingly overnight, to our choir for being amazingly musical shepherds, to the Lee family for starring with baby Reese, to Tom, Linda, Heather, Erica and Missy for all the assistance along the way . . . Please join us at Worship on January 8th, when we will celebrate Epiphany and the magi's visit with Jesus and his parents, almost 2 years after Jesus' birth. Come and wonder with us at the journey the magis undertook when they persisted in following a very special, very bright star.





Sharing Faith At Home - A Question to Consider & An Easy Activity to Do With Kids:

“What needs to be done?”

When we have an opportunity to work together in service as a church family, one of our first questions to the hosting organization or community we are serving is usually, “What needs to be done?” This question usually comes quite quickly after we try to understand the immediate needs of the people we will be serving. We want to know right away what tasks we will need to do, and when we will need to do them so we can start planning, and then get doing. You may remember that we did this when we hosted lunch at Chapel on the Green outside of Trinity Church this fall.

You and your family can identify mini helping opportunities quite easily in your neighborhood or town by asking that question too:

I wonder what would you see if you all got in the car or on bikes or started walking around your neighborhood or downtown area while asking yourselves, “What needs to be done?”

What would you see? What could you do - either immediately or with a little planning - to help?

And how does the meaning of the question, “What needs to be done?” change when we start to consider the possible root cause(s) of whatever we see that needs doing on that short trip around the neighborhood or town?

For example, if we see litter, we know it needs to be picked up. But when we consider why people are choosing to litter in that spot, does the answer to “What needs to be done?” change or deepen for us? Does it change our initial response or add additional ways to respond that may begin to rectify the issue that is causing the need?

And how does the question, “What needs to be done?” change if we consider WHY we want to be helpers as followers of Jesus? What qualities do we now need to try to bring into our thinking and our doing?

By engaging these types of questions with kids and teens while out in the neighborhood, we are encouraging them to begin to think in terms of creating lasting change while also addressing current needs with qualities that Jesus modelled like empathy and compassion. I’d love to hear if you give this a try!

Upcoming Events:

Kindness Club Winter 2023, K-2nd graders (and younger sibs): Wednesdays, NMCC Community Room downstairs and out in the community - details to come, 5:00-6:00: Jan 18, 25, Feb 1, 8. Please join us in sharing kindness with our greater community. Teen led/Adult supervised.

Girls Empowerment Winter 2023 Dates, 5th-7th graders: Sundays, NMCC Fellowship Hall, 2:00-3:30: January 22, 29 and February 5, 12. Girls, come and form empowering friendships with other girls while learning more about yourself, including cool ways to be your own best friend while discovering your unique path. Teen led/Adult supervised.

Summer Mission Trip to Maine for Rising 9th-newly graduated 12th graders: Here is more info on our mission trip with St. Andrew's Episcopal Church this summer to HOME in Orland, Maine! The dates are Sunday, July 9th @7:30 am – Saturday, July 15th @4pm, 2023. Pricing is \$475. per person.

This trip is open to rising 9th graders through those who will have just graduated from high school. Scholarships are available. We will be looking to take 2 chaperones from NMCC. To reserve your spot, please give a \$200. non-refundable deposit to St. Andrew's by Jan 15th. After Jan. 15th, the full amount will be required to sign up.

You may mail the check to St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 232 Durham Road, Madison, CT 06443 Attn: Mary Merkle-Scotland, or leave it in our NMCC office to my attention. Please text me to let me know you have left me a check or mailed it to Mary. My cell is 203-843-6206.

Please use this link to register. More details can also be found here: <https://standrewsmadison.org/summer-2023>

Please also see below for community building and fundraising events that participants are required to attend. Additional info:

Information on HOME organization's mission can be found here:
Learn about the work that H.O.M.E. does - www.homecoop.net

- Travel is by van and cars, chaperones/drivers are background checked per safe church policies of NMCC and St. Andrew's.
- Lodgings are in a local church in Orland, trip participants cook/prepare/clean up all meals, showers are located at the HOME site.
- Each evening has a fun theme that the older teens on the trip facilitate, there is a day off on Bar Harbor with time for shopping, a hike, beach, swimming. During shopping and dinner time, participants use the buddy system and can wander around Bar Harbor without chaperones.
- There is a swimming pond located at the HOME site.
- The week's job is dependent on current needs. Past projects have included landscaping, shingling, roofing, painting.
- Each person will need to bring a hammer and toolbelt.
- \$475 includes transportation and all food. Participants can bring extra money for shopping in Bar Harbor. Fundraising events this Spring will cover materials and supplies, and any additional money raised will be given to HOME as a donation.

Please contact Sue Timony-Hall as soon as possible if you would like financial assistance so your teen(s) may participate. We realize that these important developmental experiences can put a strain on family finances and do not want that to be a barrier to participation for anyone.

Key Dates:

- January 22nd - Sunday, 1 - 2:15P. Outdoor community building fun!
- Student leader application due February 21st. Opportunity for leadership for rising juniors and seniors.
- March 5th - Sunday, 5-6:30P. Meet the HOME crew for 2023 & make H.O.M.E. posters and flyers for upcoming H.O.M.E fundraisers.
- Sunday, April 30th - 8 AM - 12 PM. PANCAKE BREAKFAST! All HOME trippers are expected to take a shift and help out. PLEASE INVITE YOUR FRIENDS! This is a major fundraiser for building supplies.
- Sunday, June 11th - 11 AM - 3 PM. HOME CAR WASH at the Madison Service Center (across from Starbucks). All required to take a shift. Again, a major fundraiser for building supplies.
- Monday, June 19th - 6:30 PM - 7:30 PM. Trip launch and final parent meeting.
- H.O.M.E. TRIP - July 9-15, 2023 - please be at St. Andrew's by 7:30 AM! We will be leaving at 8AM. Return to St. Andrew's, Saturday, July 15th between 2-4P depending upon whether the group stops to shop in Freeport, ME.

NMCC Sparkle Box update:

A partial list of some gifts we gave to others for Jesus' birthday this Advent . . . (left in our NMCC Sparkle Box by members and friends)

1. Collected hats, scarves, mittens for shelter guests
2. Helped make breakfast for my grandma when she was sick
3. Gave money for drilling the well in the village in Uganda
4. Read a book about refugees and prayed for the family from Afghanistan
5. Held the door open for a man at the UPS store - his arms were really full of boxes all stacked up!

6. Went with my dad to buy Dunkin' cards for people who could use a hot drink when it is cold out
7. Helped my grandpa rake leaves before it snowed
8. Said hi to a new boy on the school bus (which is hard for me)
9. Went Christmas Caroling in my neighborhood
10. Made cards for service people who can't come home for the holidays
11. Picked up toys with my mom for a family who needs them
12. Let my sister pick the show we watched because she was feeling grumpy
13. Made extra blankets at home for Columbus House residents

Please Take Our Youth Programming Survey: The CE Board and I want to form a better understanding of what is feasible and comfortable for our families regarding their kids' participation in youth group this year. We know that families are extremely busy much of the week and that it is a challenge to juggle multiple schedules, so we want to make sure that we are offering youth programming when the most people are available to participate. We also want to make sure that we are offering selections that appeal to our youth from a community building, service, or spiritual perspective. Your answers will assist us in planning and using our Christian Education budget most appropriately. This survey should only take a few minutes to complete.

Take our Youth Programming Survey: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdNBj-pVqq8b70I7cTDt9INy9Ny5rIZEKB_XIHY-tMukLgDA/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1&flr=0



December Fun with Alfie the Christmas Tree, Alfie

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND FUNDRAISERS



Mission Ministry Team: Our Missions team has collaborated with all of you and multiple team with some great results this month. First, our Call to Care Uganda has amazing news to share! We not only reached our goal \$7500 to build a new well in Uganda but there's more!! Our plans for Christmas at Columbus House are ready to launch Christmas Eve morning thanks to your many donations. Our Food Pantry Missions partnership with our children and youth has had impressive results with the Coins for Food Jars designed by our children's church kids and the Craft Fair Raffle led by our youth. Our Prison Ministry updated the results of the November collection for our ministry partner Free Forever Prison Ministry and has approved an organization to partner

with, focused on new legislation for the plight of women in prison with children. Connecticut Quest for Peace donations were finally picked up and SMPA has a new volunteer to teach crocheting. A new pair of Yoga series will begin January 5 and 9.



Call to Care Uganda: Big changes to our Uganda well project!! We have COMPLETED THE WELL for Amidikan Village!! YAAAAY! NOT ONLY THAT...!!! -- We have collected \$5,079.33 towards well number 2! 🐸🐸 HALLELUJAH !!!! 🐸🐸 Only a bit more and we can supply water to TWO villages this Christmas!!! Martha Wells Hoffman is speaking in church on January 8. Wouldn't she be surprised if we could present her with money for TWO WELLS????!!! See us in Fellowship Hall Sunday or donations for our well can be made [HERE!](#) Champion, Linda Juliani



Columbus House

Columbus House: Many thanks to the 15 cooks, servers, singers, present givers joining us at Columbus House and the Men's Overflow nearby early Christmas eve morning. And it's been reported "Alfie" has agreed to join us to help distribute our gifts, thanks to Katie Holthausen:

- ✓ Hats, gloves and socks, greeting cards and Dunkin Cards from all you
- ✓ Fleece blankets and greeting from our youth for the Respite clients
- ✓ Cards from Karen Chapman's middle school kids in Guilford
- ✓ Bagged sweets from the Magee Family
- ✓ Socks, granola bar and Dunkin cards for Men's Overflow

Many thanks also to Jim Connolly and Esther Magee for offering to pick up the 27 dozen eggs with Ketchup, 225 sausages, 12 large bags of bread with butter, 7 gallons of orange juice and 28 pounds of Tater Tots. The Columbus House box has been found (thank you, Tom), cleaned and new provisions identified so we were good to go early Christmas Eve morning! Roberta Hanlon, Champion



Connecticut Quest for Peace: The pickup of CT Quest for Peace donations was delayed, but are now on their way to helping people in need in Nicaragua, Appalachia and Paraguay. You packed a delivery van to the top. There wasn't an inch of empty space. Thank you so much for your continued generosity!
Karen Miller, Champion



Food Pantry: A new year begins in our support for the Madison and Clinton Food Pantries and 2023 holds the promise of sustained support for those who are food insecure. Looking back on 2022, you donated over 600 pounds of food! NMCC generosity didn't stop there. The Youth Group, as they have in the past, donated all the money from their raffle at our Holiday Craft Fair which amounted to \$500 plus a vendor's additional contribution of \$60 and our silent auction of a sled which added another \$40 - for a total of \$600. Our Coins for Food donations from our jelly jars in just the last three months amounted to almost \$400. Adding out our Missions funds, we've had a great year!



It is obvious that you are keeping these families in need close to your heart thru your prayers at mealtime. The coin jars come in full of coins every communion Sunday and some of you are even giving paper money in addition. The volunteers and the recipients who use the pantries are incredibly grateful for your support. Thank you. Holly Francis, Champion



Prison Ministry: What wonderful and generous donations you gathered for the Holiday Collection for Free Forever Prison Ministry. Thank you, thank you NMCC! During November and December, we collected almost 250 items consisting of household items, personal products, a variety of basic foods, holiday groceries and goodies, as well as new toys for the children. We're sure you've made the holidays a little happier for the families of those incarcerated.

Prison Ministry and New Legislation: After reviewing past and present initiatives of this ministry, during 2023 we're partnering with the National Council for Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls. Their campaign and legislation are to keep incarcerated parents who are caretakers with their children through alternatives to incarceration. We will give updates on this important legislation as well as how you can participate. Peace and blessings, Nora Price for the NMCC Prison Ministry Team



St. Martin de Porres Academy (SMPA): Saint Martin de Porres students enjoyed the opportunity to learn how to crochet, during classes, taught by Lyn Boling. She had a large class of enthusiastic students, who learned the basics of the craft. Thank you, Lyn, for sharing your time and talents! If there is anyone who has a talent or interest to share, please call me at 203-915-2989 and I'll help you contact SMPA. Please check the Missions Bulletin Board to find out about the miracles that have changed lives, through you have support of SMPA students. Karen Miller, Champion



Community Yoga: We are celebrating 10 years of Yoga this month and appreciate your commitment to making this a success. If you're new to our Community Yoga, come see what we're about and see if self-care with us is for you. For the next series, we offer classes twice a week at 6:00 pm. Since Monday, January 2 is a public holiday, our 5 Monday classes will begin a week later, and we will hold 6 Thursday classes as follows:

- Mondays – in person or on Zoom - January 9 to February 6 – 5 classes in person and Zoom - \$35; Monday students are welcome to add a Thursday class for a total of 6 classes for \$42
- Thursdays – Zoom only - January 5 to February 9 - 6 classes via Zoom - \$42

If your friends or family would like to join, we'd love to have them - advising them previous experience is recommended. First class is free. Please mail your checks to NMCC, 1271 Durham Road, Madison, CT 06443 or visit www.northmadisoncc.org and follow the instructions on the "Donate" button. Either way, please CLEARLY mark the payment is for Yoga. Questions or to register, contact Roberta Hanlon robertahanlon@msn.com or 203- 500-8311.

Mission Ministry Team: If you are interested in starting a new Outreach Ministry, the Mission Ministry Team can help you with ideas, best practices, funding and resources to help you design and engage our NMCC community in supporting your ministry. Contact Roberta Hanlon robertahanlon@msn.com if you would like to learn more.



Grocery Cards: Please help support our church and community! Visit our team members Sundays after worship in fellowship hall and buy grocery cards. And thank you all for your purchases to date! For more information about this program or to be added to the schedule to sell cards after worship, please see Calvin Price, or email him at wildwood9@msn.com.

GET INVOLVED / STAY CONNECTED

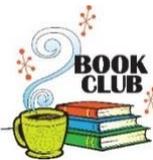


There are many ways to be involved in NMCC's vibrant community—serving in a missional outreach ministry, mentoring and teaching our children, joining in musicmaking or worship planning, helping out around the church building, singing in the choir, sharing the gifts God has given you, learning new skills from others, enjoying the fellowship of working on projects together. Visit our website, northmadisoncc.org to see all we do!



New Year's Day Brunch – 11:00 am – January 1: Sunday worship will begin at 11:00 am in Fellowship Hall with a potluck brunch. Start the new year in worship with friends, food and fellowship. It would help us plan (but not necessary) if you can sign up to bring a dish such as: egg dish, muffins, coffee cake, baked ham or sausages, salad, fruit salad, juice, rolls, cheese plate or pick your own side dish! this Sunday. Or send an email to Kate Holthausen kgholthausen@gmail.com with your dish and number of attendees expected.

Please note: This service will be in-person only (no virtual option).



Book Discussion Group: We are reading "Ordinary Grace" by William Kent Kruger. It's an easy read, but well written and touches on some good issues for us. Mark your calendars to meet on Tuesday, February 7 at 7:00 pm. (Also, please tell me if you would rather do our discussions by Zoom, instead of in-person.) - Peter Meier, peterm190@yahoo.com



NMCC Celebrates Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: Please join us on Sunday, January 15, 2023, as we celebrate the life and teachings of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. during a worship service and brunch. Worship begins at 10:00 AM and brunch begins at 11:30 am.

As our 5th year celebration, we are honored to have Ms. Janée Woods Weber as our special guest speaker. The theme of her presentation will be *"Choosing Love and Courage: Lessons from Dr. King."* Ms. Woods Weber is an activist, advocate, facilitator, and trainer for social justice issues. She is the Executive Director of Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF), a statewide nonprofit organization that uses a justice and equity lens to advocate for under-resourced and marginalized women and girls in Connecticut, especially women of color and women living with low income. She is the first Black women to lead the organization, which will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2023.



Janée currently serves as the President of the Board of Directors for PoliticaCT, Co-Chair for the State Committee for the Connecticut Working Families Party, on the Board of Directors for Universal Health Care

Foundation, and for Training for Change. She previously served for several years on the Board of Directors for the Greater Hartford Arts Council.

Following the morning service, plan on having fellowship with us during a catered brunch and more conversation about Martin Luther King's legacy. If you would like to attend the brunch, please [sign up HERE](#), or contact the church office at office@northmadisoncc.org. Indicate your name and how many will be attending. A good-will offering would be greatly appreciated. Final RSVPs will be due by Tuesday, January 10th.



Thanks to Our Choir!!! ♡ 🎄 ♡ Beautiful music is one of the greatest of life's blessings — and our superb choir creates that for us every Sunday! They have worked especially hard during the Christmas season to share some exquisite anthems with us all — often enhanced by adding percussion or other instruments.

Huge appreciation goes to our maestro Bill Clemmons, to Ann who plays many of those instruments (tenor recorder, dulcimer, violin, pennywhistle — to name a few). AND to every single member of our hard-working choir who happily rehearse every Thursday and Sunday. AND !!! -- MOST SPECIAL KUDOS to our amazing Holly Francis - Maven of Music - whose untold hours of organizing and filing and creating an entirely new music library system is SUCH A BLESSING!! Thank you, sweet Holly, for all your hard work and mostly for the LOVE with which you do it! Be sure to thank each them whenever you get a chance!!



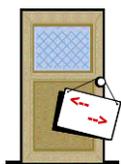
Live Streaming Sunday Worship Service: We apologize for troubles in live streaming Sunday morning worship on Facebook. Thank you for your patience as we work to rectify the problem. In the meantime, if you would like to worship with us virtually, the zoom link is always available in our Friday all church email and full recordings of each week's worship are posted to our website on the [Sunday Worship page](#) on Monday.



Flowers, Food and Fellowship: If you have been in worship recently, you know that we are slowly returning to our pre-pandemic practices around flowers, food, and fellowship. In order to keep these three important aspects of our life as a congregation moving forward, we need your help! Please sign up in the hallway outside the Sanctuary for:

- **Flowers** - Provide flowers for Sunday worship to honor or memorialize someone or just to provide beauty in the sanctuary. You can sign up for a Sunday in the hallway outside the sanctuary.
- **Food for Fellowship** - Sponsor food donations for coffee hour. Contact Kate Holthausen for details

And finally, consider joining Kate's team! She needs help with setting up and cleaning up in Fellowship Hall each Sunday as well as with the planning of future events involving food and fellowship. Kate Holthausen, Chair of our Congregational Life and Hospitality Team, (203) 982-0431 or at kgholthausen@gmail.com.



Main Sanctuary Doors: Please note, as we do each year, in order to keep the church clean and warm, we will be keeping the sanctuary doors locked during the cold winter months. Please use the Fellowship Hall or Narthex entrances. Thanks!



Tom Lauher Needs Our Help: As many of you know, Tom Lauher is very ill with Chronic Kidney Disease. Tom's best hope for survival is to receive an organ donation from a living donor. A team of Tom's champions has launched a social media campaign to get the word out. Please click here to see his story and learn how you can help by spreading the message to family, friends and acquaintances:

<https://www.thedonorapp.com/tomlauher/em/p/a>



If you would like to help out in another way, the link to Tom's story and GoFundMe page is <https://gofund.me/b2e5801d>.

IN THE COMMUNITY



Madison EMS Food Drive: Kindness is non-perishable, be part of our town's food drive! Donations can include canned goods, dry goods, non-perishable. No expired food please! Collection runs the entire month of January, 2023. Place donations in the Drop Off Bin at front door. For further info contact: Sherry White, Madison Emergency Medical Services, 9 Old Rte. 79, Madison, 203-245-9821, sherry.white@madisonctems.org.

IN THE NEWS AND NOTEWORTHY



NMCC and Members in the News: We often spot an article in the local paper, *Patch* or in other news outlets, and have been posting them on our bulletin board and our Facebook page. We'd like to expand the coverage and add a feature about this type of news in the monthly newsletter. Please send or drop off the news articles you find to the office at office@northmadisoncc.org and we'll be sure to include them.

Community Health Center unveiled a commissioned painting of Lillian "Reba" Moses, a founding member of CHC, at our Middletown health center last week. "Sowing Seeds" was painted by **Mary-Amma Grace Blankson**, artist and daughter of CHC's Chief Nursing Officer Mary Blankson. See Mary-Amma and her painting [HERE](#).

Chris Bernier was quoted in [this article](#) from *Patch*, *Madison's Newest Resident Made Her Debut In An Ambulance: Report*

Jen & Eric Munro were featured in the *Madison Neighbors Magazine*, January 2023! See cover on the right and full article below:





Meet Jen & Eric Munro

Living their passions! Jen & Eric in front of their plane.

By Lisa Lelas • Photos by Shantel Berg

Sparkes flew when Jen first met Eric at his sister's wedding in England. What's the old saying, when you know you know? Two weeks after the couple met, they were engaged to be married and many people were skeptical. Even Eric's mother said, "it will never last." Well, now 46 married years later, Eric and Jen still joke that they have 'annual reviews' not wedding anniversaries!

Jennifer "Jen" was born and raised in the small village of Thurmaston in Leicestershire, England, about 100 miles north of London. When she was 15, her dad died so her mother was forced to find work to support her four kids. Jen left high school and took a job at the Department of Health & Social Security so she could help support her family at the time. Since she worked for a government agency and they knew of her dire situation at home, the government actually paid for her to attend a college in North Wales. It was a three-year certification course but she stayed an extra year to achieve her Bachelor's in Education. After graduation, Jen began teaching in the east end of London at a high school. Shortly after she got engaged to Eric, he was offered a job in America. They got married in Jen's hometown and after she finished her first year of teaching, she joined him in America to begin their new life together.

With their immigration paperwork completed, the couple settled in Orland Park, outside of Chicago. Their sons were born there and Jen began storytelling in their elementary classes just for fun. The teachers took notice at how Jen was able to hold these young children's attention and urged her to continue storytelling in other classes and other schools. "I never actually looked for storytelling jobs," she explains, "people just found me." Jen continued storytelling and eventually began teaching 7th and 8th grade English. After 26 years in the Midwest, a job change for her husband brought them to Connecticut. Once Jen saw the shoreline, she knew they should buy a house here and they settled in North Madison.

Jen continued teaching for eleven years in Madison as an English teacher, and has since returned to her passion of storytelling. She is invited to speak at many storytelling conferences and festivals around the country and Jen has had the honor of appearing before large audiences, some as large as 5,000.

Eric Munro was born in Glasgow, Scotland but spent his early childhood in Cape Town, South Africa before eventually moving back to Scotland and then attending high school in Sutton Coldfield, England. He graduated from the University of Sheffield, England with a degree in Engineering

and a Ph.D. "I spent most of my career in telecommunications, working for manufacturers of cell tower equipment like microwaves, satellite and cellular systems, through a series of positions in engineering, project management, quality assurance, marketing, product management and sales. Much of my time was spent internationally with global companies like Andrew Corporation and Motorola. My last position was Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing for a division of Alcatel, based in Meriden. I also spent several years with Keller Graduate School of Management running their project management consulting group and teaching in their MBA programs." Eric retired in 2009 and has been volunteering since 2011 as a mentor with SCORE helping small businesses. "I also participate in webinars and workshop events presenting topics on sales, business plans and finances."

"Jennie and I moved to Madison in 2002. We enjoy the proximity to water and living in small town New England. After 20 years, we are not yet 'locals' but getting there!"

The couple have two now-grown sons, Benjamin and Andrew. Benjamin is 43 years old, married and living in the Chicago area. Andrew, 40, works nearby as a restaurant manager in Chester.

When they are not busy storytelling or mentoring entrepreneurs, the couple finds comfort in relaxing at home. He enjoys photography and flying their small plane. (20 years ago, they made a deal: Eric could take flying lessons on the condition that they both learn ballroom dancing!) Jen



FAMILY FEATURE



Storytelling with Jen from her new studio at home built by Eric

in their home for his wife so she can present professional storytelling appearances virtually. Jen does the cooking on the condition that Eric does the cleaning, which seems to work well for them. To unwind, the couple love practicing their swing dance lessons at home or watching QI, a British game show every evening and laughing together through the entire show.

"We make a great team," smiles Eric, "we have a strong sense of humor and I love her madly!"

Favorite places around town include Nick's for breakfast two days a week, RJ Julias and going to the Madison Cinemas. "We also love dining at



Jen does the cooking and Eric does the cleaning up!

Dalton's in nearby North Branford," Jen added.

The future looks bright for both of them. Eric wants to travel as much as they can while they are still active enough to enjoy trips and cruises. Jen also wants to continue traveling but has her eye on a bigger prize. "My greatest bucket list item is to get booked in Great Britain for a storytelling gig. Typically, they prefer shows consisting of myths, legends and fairytales, so I've cooked up an original myth to submit, hoping to perform professionally on my home soil!" Jen smiles, and adds, "we have no plans on ever leaving here permanently. We are US citizens. We are here to stay. We love America!"

Office, Board and Committee Contacts

Senior Minister: Rev. Dr. Heather Arcovitch	203-421-3241
Office: Jackie Fix, Office Manager; TBD, Bookkeeper	203-421-3241
Minister of Music: Linda Juliani	860-399-0210
Choir Director: Bill Clemmons	203-421-3484
Minister of Faith Formation & Youth Ministry: Sue Timony-Hall	203-843-6206
Property Manager: Tom Lauher	203-530-7467
Circle Nursery School: Kathy Niejadlik	203-421-0997

OFFICERS

Executive Committee Chair, Carol Luckenbach	203-530-9903
Executive Committee Vice Chair, Tom Lauher	203-530-7467
Board of Deacons Members*	See Below
Clerk, Eileen McCann	203-623-9155
Assistant Clerk, Kate Davis	203-421-5848
Treasurer, Calvin Price	203-245-8566
Assistant Treasurer, TBD	
Financial Secretary Receipts/Disbursements, Susan O'Connor	203-457-1559
Asst. Financial Secretary, Receipts/Disbursements, Calvin Price	203-245-8566

*Peter Haff, 203-415-2773; *Melissa Blundon, 203-421-4465; Dawn Barber, 203-457-1868; Sally Lottick, 570-510-8934; Kate Holthausen, 203-982-0431; Laura Prohaska, 203-467-2558; Carol Anne Bachhuber, 203-747-4840

BOARDS/COMMITTEES/TEAMS

Board of Christian Ed Chair, Erica McMillian	860-930-8014
Board of Deacons, Co-Chair Peter Haff	203-415-2773
Co-Chair, Melissa Blundon	203-996-0671
Board of Finance, Scott Chasse	860-663-0915
Circle Nursery School, Meredith Young	203-410-4487
Communications Team Leader, Roberta Hanlon	203-500-8311
Cong. Life Ministry Team Co-Chair, Ken Nichols	860-346-2000
Co-Chair, Kate Holthausen	203-982-0431
Generosity Team, TBD	
Hospitality Chair, TBD	
Human Resources Chair, TBD	
Mission Ministry Team, Roberta Hanlon	203-500-8311
Music Chair, Heather Crawford	203-421-5670
Pastoral Relations Contact, TBD	
Property & Planning Chair, Tom Lauher	203-530-7467
Quiet Ministry Chair, Linda Young	203 645-7582

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