



THE CIRCLE CHURCH NEWS

February 2023

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

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PASTOR'S NOTE

Last month in this space I suggested that we embrace 2023 as a year for spiritual tending: for rest, renewal, and release of some of the weightiness we have acquired in these pandemic times. The pursuit of peace, though its urgency seems amplified these days, is far from new. Scripture reminds us that it was a prayer (and a teaching) oft on Jesus' own heart for those he loved. "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." (John 14:27) This sounds so poetic and beautiful. And, two millennia later, it is the rare one among us that has mastered this art.

So, what would it look like if we were to achieve inner peace? In fairness, Jesus was a little vague about how to get there or how we might know if we have arrived. Perhaps having a concept of what the goal may look like can help us set our sights for getting there. NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, is one of the leading organizations advocating for mental health in the United States. Launched in 1979 by a few families seeking peace and support for loved ones living with mental health challenges, they now serve the wellbeing of Americans in 49 states. Who better to provide us some insight about where, as we pursue the peace Jesus wishes for us, we are going?

In a "Family to Family" workshop I once attended, NAMI provided a set of twelve wonderful, wise "Symptoms of Inner Peace" upon which we may reflect and which we may pursue. See how these speak into your life right now:

Symptoms of Inner Peace

1. Tendency to think and act spontaneously rather than from fears based on experiences from the past.
2. The ability to enjoy each moment.
3. Loss of interest in judging self.
4. Loss of interest in judging other people.
5. Loss of interest in conflict.
6. Disinterest in interpreting actions of others.
7. Loss of ability to worry.
8. Frequent episodes of appreciation.
9. Contented feeling of connectedness with others and nature.
10. Frequent attacks of smiling through the eyes of the heart.
11. Increasing susceptibility to love extended by others as well as the uncontrollable urge to extend it.
12. Increasing tendency to let things happen rather than to make them happen.*

How do you feel taking this list in? I found my shoulders dropped and I took a big deep breath before I got even half-way through. "If you have all, or even most of the above symptoms," NAMI writes, "your condition of peace may be so far advanced as not to be treatable."* I'll be praying this month for God to sweep us all up in peaceful contagion. Let's spread these germs of peace everywhere across our households and our lives. I hope we all feel better soon...

Love and Blessings!

Heather

*NAMI Family-to-Family Education Program, National Alliance on Mental Illness, 2014, 9.17).

For more information about NAMI and the resources they provide, visit <https://nami.org/>.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRIES



Hi Friends! Lots going on at NMCC this winter for kids, teens and families! Please read on for ways you can be involved!



Girls Empowerment Workshops, Sundays 2:00-3:30 pm on 2/5, 2/12, 2/26, 3/5: Join us! Form empowering friendships while learning more about yourself, including cool ways to be your own best friend while discovering your unique path.

By Girls for Girls!

This free program has been developed by Delaney Belcourt as her high school senior project and is a continuation of a popular middle school series offered over the last three years at our church. At each session, girls will gather to learn from professional women (a life coach & yoga practitioner are two) and do a related fun activity, or have conversations about hot topics like social media use and making dreams reality.

Led by Delaney and Caroline Ignatuk, and supervised by Sue Timony-Hall and Missy Belcourt. Thank you to our yoga ministry for sponsoring that portion of our programming! Plan to attend as many or as few sessions as you like, beginning *February 5th*! Please use the form on our website <https://www.northmadisoncc.org/female-empowerment> to register, or email or call Sue, ce@northmadisoncc.org, 203-843-6206 with questions.

Calling all JYG and SYG kids and teens!

Snow tubing at Powder Ridge! Saturday, February 25 at 7:00 p.m. Cost is \$37.80 and payment is due (to the Church) by February 10. Drivers / chaperones needed- please let me know if you can assist. If you are able to drive you will need to have passed the church's background check. If you can drive, but don't wish to go tubing- no need to pay. Please let Sue know by 2/1 (email or phone Lyndia 203-640-6192/text) invite your friends!!!



Choose Love with Scarlett Lewis: What if we could prevent another Community shooting from ever happening again? Scarlett Lewis will be speaking to our Shoreline community to share her groundbreaking approach to social and emotional learning (SEL) and character development. CHOOSE LOVE is tailored for any age from toddlers through adulthood, free of cost, and put into practice in all aspects of life.

The program was developed by Scarlett Lewis after losing her son Jesse Lewis at the Sandy Hook tragedy. Originally designed for the classroom, her approach has organically expanded into home, sports, work and community to help ease anxiety and strengthen relationships. The mission is to create safer schools and a safer world by teaching people how to use nurturing and healing love in any circumstance. By practicing social

and emotional, we can all improve our culture and cultivate an environment that is welcoming, supportive, compassionate, and safe.

All are welcome to this profound experience! Please share and invite others! Good Will donations at the door will go directly [Choose Love Movement](#). Free childcare will be available for children 10 and under, if you are registered ahead. Please register to save your seat at: [Choose Love | NMCC \(northmadisoncc.org\)](#). Contact Sue Timony-Hall if you have questions

Kindness Club Update: Kindness Club is off to a fun start with a group of 2nd and 3rd graders (and siblings) playing Scattergories with 16 Hearth residents. Both those who are young and those young at heart are looking forward to building on new friendships over the coming weeks!



Church School Pics and Reese's Baptism:



Celebrating Reese



*Sharing love and discovering things
about each of us that make us unique!*

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND FUNDRAISERS



Mission Ministry Team: This month we met with the Champions, sharing what we've done in the past 6 months and discussed ideas of ways to enhance our plans going forward. Digging has begun on our 2 wells in Uganda! The Columbus House team will begin serving breakfast monthly at the main dining room once again. Our Prison Ministry will focus on legislation to keep incarcerated parents who are caretakers with their children through alternatives to incarceration! And a new pair of Yoga series will continue our Community Yoga ministry.



Call to Care Uganda Well Project: WELL — WELL! Our LOVE is really “WELL-ING UP!!!!!!”

We couldn't be more excited about TWO new wells being dug in Uganda — thanks to the generous gifts of NMCC members and friends!

The 896 folks of Amidikan Village in Kalaki and the 936 people in Anoceny Village in Kaberamaido will NO LONGER have to make the several kilometer trek to this unclean water source (with accompanying snakes.....aaaaaagh!!!!!!) .

As we speak, the wells are being dug! YAAAAY!!! A plaque will be placed upon each well. We were asked how we wanted them to read? They will say:

Living Water of Love for You
Given by North MADISON Congregational Church, CT, USA



THANK YOU EACH AND ALL for your gifts of love to make our first two WELLS OF LOVE a reality! Linda Juliani



Columbus House

Columbus House: *Saturday morning breakfasts are back!!!* We received news that we will be able to resume making Saturday breakfasts in February! We've assembled a team for February so will be cooking and serving breakfast in the main dining early Saturday morning, February 11. If you're interested in joining (or re-joining) the team, please contact Roberta Hanlon!

Our team did such an amazing job of serving Columbus House clients on Christmas Eve morning for the first time since 2019, clearly showing Columbus House staff we could pull off. Cooking and serving breakfast, distributing gifts and gift cards and singing Christmas Carols with clients had some “firsts” on several fronts: we pulled it off with 15 of us (way fewer than half the number we’ve done traditionally), distributing the abundance many of you donated. A small crew rolled 2 carts loaded with breakfast and gifts through a couple of parking lots before sunrise, into the Men’s Overflow. While the main dining room had fewer guests than normal, the gifts and gift cards we brought were soon distributed to those later in the day or brought to the Recovery House, a property housing 17 men, including veterans. It was easy to accomplish with 164 wrapped gifts of socks, hats and gloves, and 91 \$10 DD gift cards thanks to so many of you, and 24 fleece blankets thanks to our Youth. With the additional request for breakfast for the Men’s Overflow we served not only hot a breakfast, but were able to use over half of the 192 “goody” bags of various combinations of hot chocolate, greeting cards, cupcakes, granola bars and socks, thanks to Karen Chapman’s Guilford middle school students, the Magee family and Stacey Kivel. Finally, having a hot breakfast surprised and delighted those who were there to enjoy it, generously donated by the Connolly Family, Magee family and Linda Young. A final thanks to the 7 Choir members, some multitasking, who shared Christmas carols and succeeded in inviting some of the clients sing along. Roberta Hanlon



*Laura Prohaska, Roberta Hanlon, Jim Connolly, Leah Connolly, Caroline, Ryan McMillian, Kate Davis, Mike DiGiorgio, Emma Connolly, Peter Meier.
Missing: Rachel Lehman, Ann and Bill Clemmons*



Janice Wolf, Adam Lehman, Ian Lehman



Food Pantry: Reminders to bring your jar of coins the first Sunday each month. Empty ones are available at the back of the Sanctuary. For food donations, Madison asks us for tuna and chili. Clinton wants carbs such as cereals and pasta. Holly Francis



Prison Ministry and Free Forever Prison Ministry Collection: Blessings and thank you to our NMCC congregation who have continued to donate items to Free Forever Prison Ministry in the New Haven, CT area. Even though we have not organized a formal campaign, during the month of January 2023, we generously donated 67 food items consisting of cereals, canned fruits, vegetables, bread, soups, and snacks. Rev. Brixaida Marquez expressed her appreciation to those who have been continuously sending food. Their families have a great need. Thanks again NMCC!

Primary Caretakers Legislation: The NMCC Prison Ministry Team has been partnering with the National Council for Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls. We have met and been in contact with Louellyn Lambros, Policy Director of the National Council. Their campaign and legislation are to keep

incarcerated parents who are caretakers with their children through alternatives to incarceration. We are in the process of looking for a lead legislative sponsor for the Primary Caretakers bill. Hopefully a sponsor will be confirmed soon. More updates on this important legislation to come, as well as how you can participate. Peace and blessings, Nora Price for the NMCC Prison Ministry Team



Community Yoga: A reminder you can join our Community Yoga sessions at any time during a series. The current series runs through February 9th on Mondays and Thursdays. We will continue with 2 series on Mondays beginning February 13 , and on Thursdays beginning February 16 as follows:

- Mondays – February 13 – March 6 - 5 classes in person and Zoom - \$35
- Thursdays – February 16 – March 9 - 5 classes via Zoom - \$25

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!



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. via Zoom. The meeting link is in Friday's All Church email. - Peter Meier, peterm190@yahoo.com



Ken Shuey's Right Brain Drawing Workshop: Ken is a certified Betty Edwards Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain Teacher. All ages 8 to 100+ All Levels - whether you're an accomplished artist or a beginner, you'll see tremendous improvement. This 8-week course on begins on January 31 on Tuesdays from 5:00-7:00 pm, and Saturdays starting February 11 from

10:00- 12:00 pm in Fellowship Hall at NMCC. You can attend either one or both classes any week no matter which one you start with, \$20/week donation, nice but not required. Call or text Ken at (203) 376-8546 with questions or to reserve your space.



Invitation for You — To Sing!!! Rehearsals are beginning now to prepare selected movements from John Rutter's REQUIEM — to be sung during worship on Sunday, March 26. If you would enjoy singing for this particular performance, we invite you to join in our rehearsals — every Thursday from now through March 23, at 7:45 pm (choir gathers at 7:15 but will rehearse other music first.) Perhaps you have sung it before and would welcome the opportunity to sing it again? Or maybe you just want to give choir a try for a limited period of time?

If you think you might be interested, speak with Linda or Bill or any member of the choir We would love to have you! **IMPORTANT:** Masks are absolutely required at all times. Properly work over mouth and nose. 🧐



NMCC Women's Retreat: All fem-identifying adult members and friends are invited to join in a special time away together Friday, March 10-Saturday March 11.

We will stay at Peter and Lyndia Haff's ancestral home on the shore in Old Lyme Friday evening through Saturday afternoon. Details and cost will be forthcoming as plans are solidified. Financial support is available—do not let current resources keep you away! It will be a time of rest, renewal, deepening friendships, time in the beauty of the CT coastline, and some spiritual exploration that you won't want to miss. This retreat is sponsored by the NMCC Diaconate and Pastor Heather. Please contact Pastor Heather, the Church Office, or Lyndia Haff with questions or to share your interest. Please watch your email for more information and registration forms to come.



Notes from Your Church Council: At our December congregational meeting, we voted to change the name of our Executive Committee to Church Council. It recently occurred to me that many folks probably don't know what the Church Council does. The Church Council is a representative body made up of the church officers and all chairs of boards and teams. These are the voting members who can make decisions on behalf of the congregation. Prior to each monthly meeting, board and team chairs submit their most recent minutes for review by the Council. Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month from 7-8:30 PM via Zoom.

Each meeting begins with a reminder about our congregational Habits of Mind norms, followed by a member-led devotion. The Board of Finance then updates the Council on our current financial status. Pastor Heather gives a monthly report summarizing upcoming activities and any current concerns. An opportunity is given to ask questions about the minutes submitted by boards and teams. We then move into one or two substantive items for discussion based on what is current or upcoming in the life of the congregation. We conclude with a member-led prayer.

At our January meeting, the primary discussion was the upcoming Church Growth Retreat. Pastor Heather filled us in on the details of the retreat, which will be led by our Thriving Congregations coach Jim Merhaut. We then focused on the Habit of Mind of Thinking and Communicating With Clarity and Precision and looked at some strategies suggested by the Institute for Habits of Mind to help us use this norm more effectively.

If you have any questions about the Church Council, don't hesitate to contact me.

Carol Luckenbach, Moderator, csluckenbach@gmail.com



Thank You NMCC Members and Friends: Many, many thanks to all who helped make the January 15 MLK celebration memorable. Your gifts of song, helping hands, generous good will offerings, conversation and warm support are truly appreciated. May we continue to live out Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy for a more just and unified world motivated by "love and courage." (Thank you to Janée Woods Weber for this phrase.) With love and blessings, MLK Ministry

"God, we thank you for the inspiration of Jesus. Grant that we will love you with all our hearts, souls, and minds, and love our neighbors as we love ourselves, even our enemy neighbors. And we ask you, God, in these days of emotional tension, when the problems of the world are gigantic in extent and chaotic in detail, to be with us in our going out and our coming in, in our rising up and in our lying down, in our moments of joy and in our moments of sorrow, until the day when there shall be no sunset and no dawn." - Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.



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



Indaba – space to explore the question "But, what can I do about racism?":

We are looking to engage members of the business, education, law enforcement, civic, religious, municipal and residential communities in the Shoreline area to participate in this community building experience. Thanks to a grant and additional generous donor, it's FREE to you! It opens with a Moth-style storytelling concert followed by a retreat at the beautiful Mercy By The Sea. Subsequent sessions will be held at North Madison Congregational Church (Tuesdays 4:30 to 9:00 pm from March 21 to April 18). Final retreat will be held at Mercy By The Sea. Contact IndabaWorkshop@gmail.com for more information. Denise Page and Merrie Harrison

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.

Our Martin Luther King Jr. Event was highlighted in Zip06 in January: [NMCC Celebrating Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. \(zip06.com\)](http://NMCC.Celebrating.Legacy.of.Martin.Luther.King.Jr.(zip06.com))

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

Church Council Chair, Carol Luckenbach	203-530-9903
Church Council 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

Make a Gift on our Website! It's easy! Have a special occasion for which you'd like to thank God? Want an easy way to make your weekly offering? Like to establish a monthly automatic donation as a sustaining member? Visit www.NorthMadisonCC.org, click "Online Giving" at the top of the page, and just follow the instructions! Or TEXT "Donation" to **833-948-2188**. Or, just scan here with your phone. Thank you for your love and support of NMCC and our ministries.

