



*THE CIRCLE CHURCH NEWS*  
*April 2015*

*North Madison Congregational Church*  
*1271 Durham Road*  
*Madison, CT 06443*

From Pastor Jim . . .

“Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.” James 4:8

During a presidential election a while back a friend told me that he just couldn't get himself to vote for one of the candidates because the candidate “lacked gravitas.” Gravitas. “The guy speaks well enough,” he continued, “but he doesn't have the depth of life experience needed to lead our country.”

Gravitas. Depth. As your pastor my wish is that your Easter has gravitas. And gravitas comes with experience. “Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you,” James writes. Put another way: the ball is in your court. It's up to you to make the first move. *The Message* phrases it: “So let God work his will in you...say a quiet *yes* to God and he'll be there in no time...quit playing the field.”

That's why we have Lenten Holy Week special opportunities to deepen your experience of God - your encounter with the Holy, your journey with Jesus. It's a prime opportunity to make your move toward gravitas.

- Maundy Thursday - April 2 - 6:00 p.m.
- Good Friday Tenebrae - April 3 - 7:00 p.m.
- Easter Vigil - April 3-5
- Easter Sunrise - April 5, 6:00 a.m.
- Easter Traditional - April 5, 10:00 a.m.

Hear it from a fellow NMCC member:

“I have been on a Spiritual journey for over 25 years. A loving and caring Higher Power led me to the steps of this church where I made a decision to deepen my relationship with Jesus. The Lenten services have made a big impact on my life from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday. I follow the path that Jesus took starting on Palm Sunday where his glorious entrance into Jerusalem was met with crowds singing his praise to Maundy Thursday ( the Last Supper) where bread is broken together, to Good Friday where we follow Jesus in the scriptures all the way to the cross with our service ending in darkness. It is an honor and a privilege to take part in the Easter Prayer Vigil at the cross, a vigil that lasts from Friday evening until the Sunday morning dawn service. It is an honor to be able to give back what Jesus has so freely given for me (His Life).”

“Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.”

An Easter with gravitas.

Blessings on your Holy Week,

Pastor Jim

## Included in this Newsletter:

### Getting Focused with Purpose Christian Education

Children's Church - Junior Youth Group Mission Trip

### Missions

St. Martin de Porres Academy

### Fund Raisers

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### Get Involved / Stay Connected

Holy Week Schedule - Yoga - Fire in the Kitchen Concert -  
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Andrew Murphy - Don Epperson, Sr., Raise the Roof - Fire in the Kitchen - Tom Hansen

## - Getting Focused with Purpose -

### Getting Focused With Purpose



*GFWP is a process designed to help us effectively link the internal with the external by matching the gifts/talents of NMCC with the needs of the wider community. In theological terms: what particular impact for the Gospel of Jesus Christ is God calling us to make in our community?*

Energy is growing as we embark fully on the GFWP initiative. Each of the leadership teams is active and our NMCC community is celebrating the enthusiasm generated from our two congregational events in February and March.

The March 1 event was led by the Engagement Team and attended by more of us (55) than participated in the February event. The goal of this session was to continue the journey of understanding ourselves, our talents, our gifts, and our passions. In five separate groups, we brainstormed and transcribed our thoughts regarding:

- What behaviors do we demonstrate that make us Inclusive? (i.e., what does warm and friendly look like?)
- What skills and talents are required to be inclusive?
- What are the ways, we as a church express our spiritual lives?
- What work do we do as a congregation that enhances our individual and collective journey?
- What environment is required to encourage each person to continue to grow as a disciple of Christ?

At the end of the event, each attendee was asked to consider the opportunities and challenges in being able to collectively share our gifts outside of our church. We posted our ideas on a flip chart to conclude the session.

The next event will be after worship on April 19<sup>th</sup>. Again, lunch and child care will be provided. The Discovery and Engagement Teams will lead, as we begin to match the community needs with our gifts and passions. We will imagine what it would be like to explore several externally-focused scenarios.

Please attend if you can, help us move forward, add your two cents, and learn what your neighbors are thinking about the GFWP initiative.

**GFWP IMAGE:** A new image (above) depicting the GFWP initiative is now mounted on the front wall of the sanctuary and on the bulletin board outside the church office. It shows two hands (representing community needs on one side and our gifts on the opposite side) meeting in the middle of a heart. Little hearts outside the big heart contain suggested community needs and NMCC gifts and passions. When we agree on a match, the little hearts will be joined together and moved inside the big heart.

Keep your eyes on Facebook and church e-mails to follow the GFWP progress and results. Shalom !

## - Children and Youth Ministries -



**Children's Church** *preschool - eighth grade:* Our children have been busy learning about God and his light during Children's Church. Not only have they found themselves engaged in science, crafts and games revolving around this theme, but our children have participated in community work. Our oldest children have made yummy dinners for our church members in need of a good meal made with love. Our 2nd-4th graders have made body lotion to add a touch of softness to those church members who need a little extra softness in their lives. And our preschoolers - first graders have made yummy dog biscuits to donate to a local animal shelter.

**April 5th:** NO children's church. Please worship on this holy day as a family at either our sunrise or 10:00 service.

**April 12th:** new unit of study for our children begins.

**Volunteering with children calling your name?** Please contact Rene Chin at [02bachin@comcast.net](mailto:02bachin@comcast.net) or Karen Murphy at [timmurphy6050@att.net](mailto:timmurphy6050@att.net) to teach, lead a Children's Message, help with Junior Youth Group, join the Board of Christian Education or help in other ways. Your support fills us with love and gratitude.



**Junior Youth Group** *7th - 8th graders:*

**Our April meeting is our Mission Trip to Boston! We leave Friday April 24 and return Sunday, April 26th.**

Under the guidance and leadership of City Mission Society, we will be staying at the Wollaston Congregational Church in Quincy, MA. We will serve the homeless on Saturday and participate in other activities aimed at empowering us in our understanding of those who are homeless. Please email Mrs. Chin or Mrs. Murphy if you are planning on joining us!



For further questions, information and/or to be added to the email distribution list, please contact Rene Chin at [02bachin@comcast.net](mailto:02bachin@comcast.net) or Karen Murphy at [timmurphy6050@att.net](mailto:timmurphy6050@att.net)

## - Missions -



**St. Martin de Porres Academy:** At NMCC your Missions Committee seeks to discover needs and direct the flow of our resources--talents, passions and funding--into the world beyond the church doors. We seek ways to bring Christ's love to those in need. We work to be a voice for Justice. And we invite you share your ideas and energy with us.

Nearly everything that we support financially--dollars that are a percentage of your pledge to NMCC--has a direct connection to a member of our church family. This month, we want you to know more about St. Martin de Porres Academy.

St. Martin's is celebrating its 10 year of providing a faith-based, tuition-free, exceptional and holistic education to middle-schoolers living in poverty. Our own Allison Rivera is President of SMPA. Several of our congregants, including Rev. Jim, volunteer as tutors each week.

Look at how the students' lives have been transformed through this vital educational experience: Of the more than 150 graduates, 100% have graduated from high school. 81% were accepted at prestigious private or parochial high schools. 90% of high school graduates are enrolled in college 10% of high school graduates are serving in the military.

NMCC is enriched through our contributions to St. Martin de Porres Academy.

## - Fund Raisers -



**NMCC Virtual Tag Sale:** After our very successful 2014 tag sale we agreed the effort involved required too many resources to repeat it in 2015. However, we did experiment with some of the unique remaining tag sale items by posting them on Craig's list (we have an NMCC account) and reaching out to local consignment and resale shops and dealers with some success. Optimistic, we decided to move forward with a "Virtual Tag Sale" in 2015.

Here's how you can participate:

- **Donate items** - To make this worth the time involved, our goal is to sell each item (or collection) for at least \$25 profit to NMCC.
- **Consign items through NMCC account** - if you have a pricey item you'd like to sell and are willing to donate a portion of the sale with NMCC, let's talk about how we can make that work. Contact Roberta Hanlon.

As you know we have very limited space to store items but for safety sake, we'd like to stage the items at NMCC for viewing and pick-up so the number of items we can handle depend on their sizes! You can also be a buyer! As we post items on Craig's list, we will provide you with the link to the item so you can make arrangements to view and purchase on site! The two items we have now are:

**Wood Mobile Pet Pen - \$65:** <http://newhaven.craigslist.org/for/4909679588.html>

**Petmate Ultra Vari-kennel - \$25** <http://newhaven.craigslist.org/for/4909666801.html>

For questions or to donate, please send a photo and description of the item (dimensions, condition) to Roberta Hanlon. [robertahanlon@msn.com](mailto:robertahanlon@msn.com) or call/text 203-500-8311 for consideration, pricing and handling.



**Grocery Card Fund Raiser:** Feed the church when you buy groceries using grocery cards purchased at NMCC. Grocery cards are available every Sunday morning after service in fellowship hall for Stop and Shop, Robert's, Big Y, and Shop Rite. Buy these grocery cards from us to use at the grocery stores where you normally shop. You pay face value, your grocery card is worth face value, and NMCC earns five cents on the dollar of every grocery card you purchase. It's really that simple! We're looking for volunteers to help sell cards after church. Please contact Calvin Price at [wildwood9@msn.com](mailto:wildwood9@msn.com) or 203-245-8566 if you're able to help out.

## - Get Involved / Stay Connected -



There are so many ways to get involved in making NMCC a vibrant community not only through the work of the Missions Committee but helping out, sharing your skills, learning new ones enjoying the fellowship that naturally follows through working on projects together. Visit our "[Get Involved](#)" web page for ongoing news at [northmadisoncc.org](http://northmadisoncc.org).



**Holy Week Services: Invite a friend to join you for these spiritually rich special services:**

**Maundy Thursday Fellowship Supper and Service of Remembrance - April 2 at 6:00 PM:** Join in our family-friendly potluck supper and service of remembrance this Holy Thursday. We remember the Lord's Last Supper and his prayers in the garden for guidance and strength. We will share communion and a service that celebrate the events of the Last Supper in manner of the first century church. Before there were churches and long rituals, the 'Lord's Supper' was simply done in the homes of the faithful. Everyone would gather for a 'pot luck' supper. During the meal, they would share their thoughts/experiences as followers of Jesus. When everyone had eaten, they would come together for prayer and share bread and wine repeating the words of Jesus as recorded in our Scriptures. At this table of fellowship and communion, they experienced forgiveness for sins, healing for their brokenness, and shared love which they could bring to the world. If you plan to attend but have not yet signed up in Fellowship Hall, please contact the Office with number attending and what you plan to bring.

**Service of Tenebrae on Good Friday - April 3 at 7:00 PM:** In this Tenebrae (Latin for "Shadows") Service, the most somber day of the Christian calendar, we follow Jesus from the prison all the way to the cross. This deeply moving service of lessons and hymns, accompanied by the encroaching darkness, recalls the trial and death of Jesus our Christ. We begin with light and music, and we end in silence and darkness. We invite you to linger in the darkness of the sanctuary, aware of your many feelings and thoughts as you contemplate the meanings of the death of Jesus, mourning the loss and



considering all that it means for the hope of the world and the transformation of your life.

**Prayer Vigil – Good Friday - April 3 at 8:00 PM through 6:00 AM, Easter Morning - April 5 at 6:00AM:** Our Prayer Vigil begins after the Tenebrae service. You are invited to spend an hour praying in our sanctuary which is open all weekend until early Easter Sunday. To ensure continuous coverage throughout the Vigil, we encourage you to sign up in Fellowship Hall for a specific time to experience the quiet peace of the sanctuary. If you have not signed up for a 1-hour slot, please contact the Office to find out what is open or sign up in Fellowship Hall.

**Easter Dawn Service – April 5 at 6:00 AM:** This special simple service recalls the gift of life eternal. It is held (weather permitting) at the NMCC Cemetery where all can experience the quiet beauty nature offers, while celebrating the Resurrection of Christ with music, readings and prayer. The cemetery is located less than a mile on the right on Route 80, east of the 79/80 Circle, just before Summer Hill Road. A church-wide notice will be sent out before Sunday if the service will be held in the Sanctuary, or contact the Office by Friday noon.

**Easter Sunday Service – April 5 at 10:00 AM:** Join us in this communion service of celebration and the hope of everlasting life. The triumph of the Christian story is celebrated in this Festival of the Resurrection, characterized by a sanctuary filled with beautiful flowers, joyous music, inspired scripture and a special message to give God thanks for showering us with blessings.



**Yoga:** Take some time for yourself this spring and join us on Monday nights for Yoga at the Circle! Our next session begins on Monday April 6, and classes run each Monday evening from 6:30-7:30 until May 18th. The session price will continue to be \$49.00 (7 weeks) or drop in at your convenience for \$9.00. New participants are always welcome. Blocks and straps provided, just bring your own mat.



**Fire in the Kitchen Concert: Katie Glassman and Snapshot - April 18, 7:00 PM:** Katie's a 2-time National Fiddle champion, has won Winfield and Rockygrass. She's also got a degree in classical music performance, one in jazz music performance, and is only the second American accepted to the Centre Musique Didier Lockwood in France. That sounds great, but when you hear she and the band, it becomes almost irrelevant. They hail from the high plains of Colorado, and the

music shows. It's blend of vintage Western Swing, Western Jazz, and small town back room blues. When Katie sings, it's a timeless voice that could come from anywhere, anytime. The band? Effortless perfection. She may be a relative unknown on the east coast, but it won't stay that way for very long. And yes, there's a free workshop at 3:00 PM, where you can get a hard-core introduction to the world of contest fiddling by one of the best there is. Adults, \$20; kids high school and under, \$5.00. Reservations or information: 203-668-3735. Artist website: [katieglassman.com](http://katieglassman.com)



**New Member Sunday – May 3<sup>rd</sup>:** New Member Sunday takes place this Spring on Sunday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> during the worship service. This is always a special time where we welcome and commit to our new members is a simple ceremony, followed by our new member reception. To prepare for this event, we ask prospective new members to join us on *Sunday, April 26<sup>th</sup> at 11:45* for New Member Orientation in the

Sanctuary. Pastor Jim and members of the Board of Deacons will lead the orientation during which we get to know each other by sharing our faith journeys. We will explore what it means to join NMCC, how we fit with the United Church of Christ and what you can expect on New Member Sunday. If you are interested in joining, please contact Pastor Jim, Roberta Hanlon or Dawn Barber.



**Annual Consociation Choir Festival - Sunday, May 3 at 4pm at the North Haven Congregational Church!** Come for the joy of hearing wonderful music from area UCC choirs, including OURS! Wonderful MEN'S CHOIR anthems, featuring men's voices from NMCC and North Guilford. The finale includes ALL the choirs singing . . . very powerful!

Our choir loves looking out into the congregation gathered and seeing smiling faces of NMCC members!!!! COME --- ENJOY --- and cheer your choir on!



**Nominating Committee Expo Thank You:** On March 8<sup>th</sup> we had our Nominating Expo and have had the various lists of the volunteer opportunities in Fellowship Hall for the last few weeks. Thank you for the many of you that have signed up for helping our church grow in faith.

In finding our new church direction as we journey with the Getting Focused with Purpose process, I challenge you to consider taking a "leap of faith" and consider testing or joining one of our many wonderful committees or outreach missions here at NMCC.

In today's crazy world, helping others, meeting new friends, and putting someone else's needs first is just what we need. Don't worry if you have time or are qualified, we have no requirements for volunteering, just a willingness to give it a try. Consider helping our wonderful Church. Happy Easter! - Peter Haff

## - In the News & 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 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](mailto:office@northmadisoncc.org) and we'll be sure to include them!

Congratulations to **Andrew Murphy**, the February Youth of the Month! Andrew and his parents, Scott and Wendy were pictured in a February 26 article of "The Source". Andrew was honored by

The Exchange Club of Madison with the David Bell Scholarship Award and the article includes his many achievements.

**Don Epperson, Sr.** was pictured in the article "Rotaries Raise the Roof" in the February 26 edition of "The Source" along with others involved in the **Raise the Roof** effort. The combined effort of Raise the Roof and Rotary will be showcased in a Build on the Guilford Green event on May 16.

Our **Fire in the Kitchen Concerts** received more publicity in the "The Source", featuring the March 7 concert at NMCC by The John Jorgenson Quintet.

**Tom Hansen** was pictured with Boy Scout Troop 494 in the March 12 edition of "The Source". The troop constructed a quinzhee hut, or snow shelter, which they slept in overnight.



## Office, Board and Committee Contacts:

|  |                              |   |              |
|--|------------------------------|---|--------------|
| Rev. Jim Latimer, Pastor                                 | 203-421-3241                 | Office Managers, Cathy Meier & Jackie Fix                           | 203-421-3241 |
| Christian Education                                      | 203-421-3241                 | Minister of Music, Linda Juliani                                    | 860-399-0210 |
| Senior Youth Group Leader, Jeff Chin                     | 203-421-3498                 | Choir Director, Bill Clemmons                                       | 203-421-3484 |
| Junior Youth Group Leaders, Rene Chin or<br>Karen Murphy | 203-421-3498<br>203-481-7597 | Circle Nursery School Co-Directors:<br>Donna Perry, Kathy Niejadlik | 203-421-0997 |

### OFFICERS

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| Executive Committee Chair, Tom Lauher               | 203-245-1203 |
| Executive Committee Vice Chair, John Nassif         | 203-421-5374 |
| Members of the Board of Deacons*:                   | See Below    |
| Clerk, Eileen McCann                                | 203-318-0068 |
| Assistant Clerk, Eric Piekarz                       | 203-421-8569 |
| Treasurer, John Gallops                             | 860-460-8573 |
| Assistant Treasurer, Calvin Price                   | 203-245-8566 |
| Financial Secretary – Disbursements, Cathy Meier    | 203-421-8377 |
| Financial Secy. of Receipts, Susan O’Connor         | 203-457-1559 |
| Asst. Financial Secretary – Receipts, Mike Effenecy | 203-457-6901 |

\* Roberta Hanlon 203-421-4891; Karen Chapman 203-421-4834; Peter Haff 203-203-421-0295; Bruce Whittaker 860-669-5208; Jim Connolly 203-421-1184; Kate Davis 203-421-5848; Dawn Barber 203-457-1868; Sandy Dickson 203-421-1178; Beth Berestecky 203-421-3210

### BOARDS/COMMITTEES

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| Board of Christian Ed Chair, Rene Chin  | 203-421-3498 |
| Board of Deacons Chair, Roberta Hanlon  | 203-421-4891 |
| Board of Finance Chair, John Nassif     | 203-421-5374 |
| Communications Chair, Roberta Hanlon    | 203-421-4891 |
| Deacon’s Service Chair, Melissa Blundon | 203-996-0671 |
| Fellowship Chair, Orlene Gallops        | 860-339-5844 |
| Human Resources Chair, Holly Francis    | 203-245-7331 |
| Missions Chair, Dawn Korik              | 203-298-8574 |
| Music Chair, Eileen McCann              | 203-318-0068 |
| Nominating Committee Chair, Peter Haff  | 203-421-0295 |
| Pastoral Relations, Chair, Peter Meier  | 203-421-8377 |
| Property & Planning Chair, Jeff Chin    | 203-421-3498 |
| Quiet Ministry Chair, Linda Young       | 203-457-0723 |
| Stewardship Chair, Jim Farrales         | 203-421-9323 |



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