



THE CIRCLE CHURCH NEWS
November 2014

North Madison Congregational Church
1271 Durham Road
Madison, CT 06443

From Pastor Jim . . .

Our "Getting Focused with Purpose" Initiative

It's hard to believe but I have been serving as your pastor for nearly two years. Much good ministry has and is happening. It seems that we are now on firm footing to begin the next phase of our ministry: Discerning and clarifying our underlying purpose as NMCC. To phrase it some other ways: Why do we exist? What is God calling us to do and be at the time and place?

Management guru and man of faith Peter Drucker said, "The purpose of a corporation is to satisfy people; the purpose of a church is to transform them." The "Getting Focused" initiative will help us determine in what particular way we feel called to the transformation of people - ourselves and others.

You may be thinking, "Don't we already have a mission statement?" Yes and no. NMCC's existing Mission Statement is: "We are a community seeking to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk together humbly with our God." But here's why I also say "no:"

1. This mission statement is 15-20 years old. Since we and our environment have changed significantly since then we need to update it.
2. Our current mission statement lacks an important component: it doesn't speak to what kind of transformative impact we seek to have on our community. It gives "umbrella" guidance on our daily walks, but provides little guidance on the when, where, and how to carry out our Mission.

During its August meeting the Executive Committee unanimously voted to embrace the "Getting Focused with Purpose" initiative and to make it a top priority for this program year. And during its October 11, 2014, retreat the Executive Committee Retreat began creating the overall process to engage the entire congregation in this initiative. We hope to have a new NMCC Purpose Statement by our Annual Meeting in May 2015. I should also add that since this is a congregation-centered process (not pastor-centered) the name of this initiative may change. In fact, someone has already suggested, "Growth Through Prayer and Purpose." (Not bad!)

So, what's in this for our church - for you? An effective Purpose statement allows:

- Us to set a Vision(s) and to collectively celebrate when we realize them.
- Opportunity to live more fully our faith journey
- Focused congregational decision-making and budgeting
- Greater visibility In the shoreline communities

After Fellowship Hour on Sunday November 23, we'll have a congregational workshop to begin sharing the details of "Getting Focused," and how you can be involved.

I urge each of us to prayerfully consider this exciting opportunity to growth.

With love,
Pastor Jim

Included in this Newsletter:

Christian Education

Children's Church - JYG - SYG - Coat Drive

Fund Raisers

Harvest Dinner - Christmas Craft Fair

Get Involved / Stay Connected

Thank You from Reverend Dr. John B. Pelletier - Online Giving Now Available -
Season of Generosity - Fire in the Kitchen Concert - Finding Light in the Darkness -

"Yoga at the Circle" - NMCC Board of Finance - Interfaith Service Sunday -

Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving - Help for the Bernier Family: Fundraiser Success! -

Update on Sandra Stella - Get the Word Out on Facebook - Photos Wanted -

Sanctuary Cleaning Volunteers Needed - Nursery Help Needed -

Coffee Hour and Flower Sponsors Needed

In the News and Noteworthy

Susan Frankenbach - Harvest Banquet Fundraiser - Don Epperson, Sr.

- Children and Youth Ministries -



Children's Church: The children continue to learn about the different Heifer Project animals through crafts, food, stories, and conversation. Our dedicated teachers are building great relationships with their classes, and the children enjoy their time together.

Third Grade Bible Sunday will be on November 23rd, the first Sunday of National Bible Week. If you are a parent of a 3rd grader, or a 4th or 5th grader who is new to NMCC, please be sure to contact Morgan regarding Third Grade Bible Sunday, as there is an opportunity to get involved prior to November 23rd.

If you are interested in serving our children's church in the New Year, please contact Morgan. Volunteers are already stepping forward, and we want to place adults in the best-fit classroom.

A reminder that November 30th, the Sunday following Thanksgiving will be a Family Worship. Children are welcome to worship with their family.

Youth Groups



Junior Youth Group: On October 26th the Junior Youth Group hosted Chapel on the Green in New Haven. Following worship, more than a dozen youth and nine adults prepared more than 200 lunches which were given to approximately 165 food-insecure individuals including men, women, and children. Our youth participated in an outdoor worship service where they sang, prayed, and helped serve communion to fellow worshippers. Our youth joyfully served those in need, and were humbled by their gratitude. We all look forward to more opportunities to serve the homeless and hungry.

November 9th 6:30 – 8:30pm JYG Teambuilding in the Youth Room (Room 9)
November 23rd 5:30 – 8:30pm Cookie Baking for the NMCC Craft Fair (Kitchen)

Senior Youth Group: Imagine the Sanctuary filled with 19 high schoolers trying to do the *Crow* position. The Senior Youth group gathered on *Sunday Sept 28* and began their meeting with *Yoga with PJ (Pastor Jim)*. For over 45 minutes, Pastor Jim led the youth in stretching and Yoga positions that looked easy but as a novice were difficult. **Thank you!** Pastor Jim for teaching us a little Yoga and Linda Lefante for chaperoning.

Our next SYG event is November 2- for more details to Jeff Chin (jrchin5@comcast.net, cell: 203.901.3498)

The Senior Youth Group is a part of the NMCC family and is open to all high school students that are willing to have some fun, volunteer helping others and open to spiritual based belief discussions. SYG meets twice a month at the church and during the summer goes on a week-long Mission trip. If you are interested in being a part of the SYG visit the SYG webpage: <http://northmadisoncc.org/youth/senior-high-youth-group/>.



Warm Up Boston: In partnership with City Mission Society of Boston, the JYG will be collecting NEW winter coats (and monetary donations to purchase coats) which will be distributed to the children of Boston to keep them warm this winter. All donations are requested to be delivered to NMCC by November 23rd for distribution by CMS Boston by December 1st. Coats will be distributed in Dorchester, Roxbury, Mattapan, and South Boston where 58% of the population live below the poverty level. The child poverty rate in Greater Boston is 42%. New coats provide necessary warmth to these precious children and allow a sense of dignity for having a new coat like many of their classmates have. For more information, or to make a donation, please contact Morgan at CE@NorthMadisonCC.org.

- Fund Raisers -



Harvest Dinner: Come join us for an evening & meal to remember! Called the "*Cadillac of church dinners*" by the Shoreline Times, you won't be disappointed!

Dine in, or – back by popular demand – our fabulous *take-out option!* The delicious meal starts with salad and our famous dressing, homemade pumpkin muffins followed by platters of roast turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes and gravy, mashed turnips, fresh green beans, cranberry sauce, ending with home-baked apple or pumpkin pie and beverages. **Wow!**

When? **Saturday November 1, 2014**
2 Seatings: 5:30 pm and 7:00 pm

Where? North Madison Congregational Church
(The church on 'the circle') Rte 79 and 80
1271 Durham Road, Madison CT

Cost? \$20 per person
\$16 seniors (age 65 and over)
\$10 children 12 and under
\$16 generous take-out meal

Reservations required. Email Debbie Gilbert at gilberts8@hotmail.com and note on the subject line "Harvest Dinner" or call Debbie at 203-421-4560. Parties of 4 or more should send payment in advance to NMCC Harvest Dinner, 1271 Durham Road, Madison, CT 06443.

See you there!



Crafters Needed for 20th Annual NMCC Holiday Craft Fair:
Saturday, December 6th from 9am-2pm: 40 Quality Artisans; Bistro; Over 4000
Homemade Cookies; Gifts. There is still space available. Contact Christine
Hopkins at 203-421-3358 or visit our website, northmadisoncc.org, for an
application. Hope to see you at the fair!
Cookies Bakers - get your best Christmas Cookie recipes ready . . .

- 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.



From: Reverend Dr. John B. Pelletier

October 16, 2014

Dear brothers and sisters,

You are the wondrous handiwork of God! I was privileged to have shared so much of life with you! Although *Pastor Emeritus* is an honor recognizing whatever my ministry as pastor achieved, it really is a validation and celebration of who we all became in our 15 years together. Standing at the pulpit again, I was overwhelmed by the loving energy that you generate when you gather in the sanctuary. A million memories flashed before me as I looked out, drinking in the presence of those with whom Louise and I shared a journey; the journey super-charged by the Spirit who took us

places which we could only imagine as possibilities for us. God's embrace was never as palpable in your sanctuary. I could barely draw a breath.

Thank you from Louise and me for the memories, the challenges, and the surprises of God that we wove together into a way of living. I pray that your legacy will support everyone, young and not so young, who comes near you to experience your divinely inspired love.

Pastor Jim is an amazing man! I was blown away as he so eloquently brought to life the parable of the seed. His sermon was an extraordinary reflection based on material gleaned from your ministerial profile, along with comments he elicited from you about the growth of NMCC. He masterfully tied it all together with his personal witness of 20 months as your Pastor. Kudos, Jim.

Without listing names, lest someone inadvertently be omitted, thank you for a wonderful ceremony, and for such a great honor. I am humbled knowing that months of energy and love created such an elegant celebration. You revealed once again the true spirit and character that is NMCC.

Blessings for today and always, in humble gratitude,

Your brother, *John*



Online Giving Now Available: NMCC is excited to announce that you can now manage your giving online! Giving online is easy and allows you to set up automatic recurring contributions and view your complete online giving history from anywhere you have access to the Internet. Contributions can be set up to debit automatically from your checking or savings account or your credit card. (Please keep in mind it is less expensive for us to process a donation from your bank account because of credit card fees.)

Our electronic giving program offers convenience for you and much-needed donation consistency for our congregation. Thank you in advance! Simply follow these easy steps:

1. Visit the church website at www.NorthMadisonCC.org
2. Click on the Online Giving tab at the top of our home page (2nd line), then
3. Click on "click here to donate or pledge", then
4. Click on the **Create Profile** button, then
5. Follow the onscreen instructions to create an online profile and to schedule your recurring contributions.

Scan to pay or give:





Season of Generosity - October 19, 2014 - November 16, 2014:

During this year's Season of Generosity, we would like to bring a "pay it forward" experience to NMCC. On Sunday October 19th we introduced Paying It Forward, and on Sunday, October 26 Melissa Blundon shared the first of several real life testimonials of these experiences in the upcoming weeks. Over the course of the Season of Generosity, there will be opportunities to get involved with various community and church events culminating with the blessing of financial commitments pledged to our church on Gratitude Sunday, November 16, 2014.

Generosity Season Schedule of Events for November

Sat. 11/1 Food Drive at Stop & Shop, Madison, for Madison Food Bank/Pantry 9-1:00 pm

Sun. 11/2 Second testimonial shared during Worship; Children's Church to decorate shopping bags for food drive

Thur. 11/6 Generosity Dinner: prepare & serve at Madison Senior Center 5:30-7 pm

Sun. 11/9 Third testimonial shared during Worship

Fri 11/14 Generosity Pot Luck Dinner 6 pm - 7:30 pm

Sat. 11/15 Food Drive at Roberts for the Madison Food Bank/Pantry 9-1:00 pm

Sun. 11/16 Gratitude Sunday; blessing of the pledges



Fire in the Kitchen Concert - Ben Sollee - Saturday, November 8, 7:00 PM:

Ben Sollee continues our tradition of showcasing young musicians who were at one point classical prodigies, but then turned to the music that was in their hearts, not on the page in front of them. Instead of being a faceless performer in some orchestra, they get to see what life has to offer. In Ben's case, it means performances at Carnegie Hall, some of his tunes being used as soundtracks in shows like Parenthood, or movies. It results in his being a TedTalks fellow, guest appearances with orchestras and ballet companies, and feature stories by papers such as the Wall Street Journal or the New York Times. All these are just pins on a map, though, as Ben is about far more than just the music, it's about inspiration. Adults \$25, kids high school and under, \$5. Filling up fast!



Finding Light in the Darkness: On November 9 and 16, Tom and Ann Whitaker will facilitate a two-part series focusing on issues that have led us into negative feelings or a sense of powerlessness in the dark world that seems to be around us or in us. These are not clinical sessions but opportunities to read, respond, and express our inner thoughts and feelings.

In our first session--"Walking in the Dark"--we will read and respond to a few poems that face aspects of that darkness, and we will discuss passages from Barbara Brown Taylor, Pema Chödrön, Mark Nepo, and Richard Rohr that point toward the possibility of light.

In our second session--"Coming into the Light"--we will respond to some poems that describe ways of coming into the light, and think about passages from Mark Nepo, Richard Rohr, and others that explore this process.

Sessions will start promptly at 11:30 in the downstairs Community Room, run until 1:00, and will open and close with music and meditation. A sign-up sheet will be posted, or call the office at 203-421-3241 to register.



“Yoga at the Circle”: Our next 7 week session of yoga will begin on Monday November 10th and run through Monday December 22nd. All levels welcome. The session price will be \$42.00 with a drop in rate of \$9.00/evening. As the colder, sloppy weather approaches, please remember to take off your shoes as you enter to keep our practice space clean.



Introducing the 2015 NMCC Budget and Getting Focused with Purpose Initiative - November 23: Please join us on November 23 after Worship for lunch and fellowship and 2 informative sessions to prepare us for 2015 planning.

2015 Budget Preview: The Board of Finance will hold a budget hearing shortly after Sunday service. The purpose of the meeting will be to receive the input of church members and friends on the proposed 2015 NMCC annual budget. There will be no vote to approve at this time, the meeting is informational only. The 2015 annual church budget will be voted on for approval at the December 14 Congregational meeting.

Getting Focused with Purpose Initiative: As described in Pastor Jim's letter above, join to learn how you can get involved in the Getting Focused with Purpose Initiative.



Interfaith Service Sunday November 23, 4:00 pm: This year's Madison Interfaith Service of Thanksgiving will be held at St. George in Guilford at 4:00 pm. NMCC choir members will be joining the choir from all participating churches.



Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving: Again this year we will hold a special worship service on Sunday, November 9, a day in which the church remembers those faithful people who have gone into eternity and live now with God. We invite you to submit names of loved ones who you would like to honor in this way. The names will be read during our worship and prayers of thanksgiving to God will be offered.

Last year this quiet and reverent service was deeply appreciated by many. Whether the death was a recent event or many years ago, your memories sanctified by the prayers of your friends in the church will make this meaningful.

Please submit names for this service to the office at office@northmadisoncc.org or 203-421-3241 directly to Pastor Jim for inclusion in the necrology.



Help for the Bernier Family - Fundraiser Success! Fabulous food, fine wine, and fun auction items set the theme for the “Harvest Banquet” honoring Amanda and Chris Bernier. Teaming up with our sisters and brothers from North Branford Congregational Church resulted in over 60 guests enjoying the

gala event at Nataz Restaurant. Chef Rick McLain's cuisine was complemented by an assortment of Connecticut wines provided by Jerram Winery & Vineyards of New Hartford. In addition to many wonderful silent auction items donated by members and friends of NMCC & North Branford Congregational Church, a live auction was also conducted for a chauffer-driven tour and wine tastings at four Connecticut vineyards, courtesy of Exclusive Car Service (mylimo5.com) and Preston Ridge, Dalice Elizabeth, Walker Road and Jerram wineries. All together, nearly \$2000 was netted to help Amanda and Chris. Thanks to all those who attended and to those who donated!

Below are ongoing ways to help NMCC members Amanda and Chris Bernier. In case you're just hearing about their story for the first time, Amanda was diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) and they are expecting a baby girl in November. Articles from the New Haven Register and Shoreline Times can be found on the bulletin board or the newspaper's websites.

- **Facebook** updates at <https://www.facebook.com/AmandasAngelsALS>
- **Sign up for the lotsahelpinghands website:** email Chris Steines at: chris.steines@gmail.com
- **Donate to help cover medical costs:** Visit Amanda's gofundme.com website at: <http://www.gofundme.com/a5yejk>. Or if you wish to write a check or make a cash donation instead of donating online, you may bring your check to NMCC, made out to Amanda and Chris Bernier and give it to Melissa, Roberta or John Gallops we will make sure the treasurer of their team receives it.

Any questions, please contact: Melissa Blundon cell/text: 203-996-0671 or pmblundon@aol.com or Roberta Hanlon cell/text: 203-500-8311 or robertahanlon@msn.com.



Sandra Stella: Your prayers are needed for the Stella family as they must make some difficult decisions. You can also check with Peter Haff, who keeps up with how Sandra is doing and sees to her current needs for each week. Your prayers are what make the most difference in Sandra's fight against breast cancer and she'd like to thank you all. The help website for the Stella family is <https://www.mylifeline.org/sandrastella>



Please Help us Get the Word out on Facebook: If you are have a Facebook page, and you see something on the church Facebook page you like, such as an event or a generosity story, it would really help if you could share it on your page. A lot of people already do this, but we want to remind everyone that it's a great way to add to our visibility and increase publicity.

You can add our Facebook page to your friends list too! Thanks for helping get out the word on all the great things going on at our church!



Photos Wanted: Our Communications team is looking for your high quality photos of church members and friends at NMCC functions or events. We want to let others know about all the good things going on at NMCC! They will be used in our advertising and publications, like the website, Facebook, posters, newspaper ads, etc. Please deliver them to Carol Anne Bachhuber, either via flash drive or email, carolanne@mosaic247.net. Also feel free to contact her if you have any questions, via email or phone 203-747-4840. Thank you!



Sanctuary Cleaning – Volunteers Needed: Volunteers are needed to clean the Sanctuary (and the rest of the upper level) once a week. Invite a friend or enjoy the solitude of our church by yourself. It takes approximately two and a half hours to vacuum the carpets, mop the floors, clean the bathrooms and empty the trash. Cleaning of the upper level can be completed anytime during that week based upon your schedule (and church functions). No prior experience needed as we can train you.

There is a sign-up sheet on the church bulletin board for your convenience. If you would like more information talk to Jeff Chin or Tom Lauher.



Nursery Volunteers Needed: Playdates now available in our Nursery – and we need your help to help staff this room, even if it's only once a month! There is a sign-up sheet in the nursery, so please sign-up if you're able to volunteer. If you have any questions please contact Heather Ignatuk at 860-663-3432 or divajones30@aol.com.



Sunday Coffee Hour/Flower Sponsors Needed: If you would like to donate flowers for a Sunday, or “sponsor” coffee hour by providing snacks (like bagels, muffins, fruit, cheese & crackers, etc.) or with a monetary gift, please sign up on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall or contact the church office at office@northmadisoncc.org.

- 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 and we'll be sure to include them!

Susan Frankenbach was pictured in the article “Framing for a Cure” in *The Source*, October 9. Checks were donated to Closer to Free and After the Storm in recognition of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month from The Frame Shop on Wall Street.

The **Harvest Banquet Fundraiser** for the Berniers was highlighted in articles in both *The Source* and *The Shoreline Times* on October 16. See the picture and article on the bulletin board.

Don Epperson, Sr. was recognized in *the Source*, October 23 as the new President of the Board of Directors of Raise the Roof. Don has worked on 10 – 15 houses in New Haven over the past several years, and joined the board in 2013.

Office, Board and Committee Contacts:

Rev. Jim Latimer, Pastor	203-421-3241	Office Managers, Cathy Meier & Jackie Fix	203-421-3241
Children's Church /Youth, Morgan Aery	203-421-3241	Minister of Music, Linda Juliani	860-399-0210
Circle Nursery School Co-Directors:		Choir Director, Bill Clemmons	203-421-3484
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, Keith Luckenbach	203-421-5054
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 Effency	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