

*THE CIRCLE CHURCH NEWS*  
*January 2015*

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

From Pastor Jim . . .

"The strangest thing about the Bible is God," wrote theologian Walter Brueggemann. He's got a pretty good point especially from the point of view of American culture. Think a moment: American culture says "bigger and stronger is better;" yet the Incarnate One, Jesus, comes as a tiny vulnerable baby. American culture says, "Light is good, darkness is bad," yet Jesus is born in the middle of a dark night. American culture says, "use economic and political influence to gain power over others so they will serve you," yet God moved through Jesus, Paul, Mary and others in such a way that made service to others for the sake of forgiveness, compassion and justice the main point, rather than being served.

"And Mary said, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant....he has brought down the powerful from their thrones..." (Luke 1:46, 52)

After the Christmas Season, the twelve days from Christmas day to January 5, we move into the church season of Epiphany. The spiritual theme of Epiphany is making the birth of Christ known, especially to "outsiders." This is what the Gospel of Matthew speaks to with the revelation of Jesus' birth to the "wise men" or "magi" - who come from "the East," non-Jewish lands.

So I wonder how you and I can make God's glorious move into human lives in the form of Christ - Immanuel, "God with us" - known to those who need to know that God *is* with us - all of us - here and now?

It would probably need to be something countercultural, something fundamentally spiritual and non-material. Given our culture's pre-occupation with the future over the present, it could be something as simple as living in the moment - the *now*.

Imagine making a New Year's resolution to practice mindfulness - bringing your attention and awareness into the same place where you are physically located. From experience I can tell you it isn't easy given all the distractions daily life serves up. And I can also testify that when you actually do this, such as actively listening to a loved one when they speak to you so that they actually feel heard, is a deeply spiritual practice. It is nothing less than honoring the Spirit of the Living God within that person. "Strange indeed," our culture says....

Wishing you a mindful Epiphany,  
Pastor Jim

## Included in this Newsletter:

### **Christian Education**

Morgan Aery's Resignation

### **Missions**

Columbus House Update

### **Fund Raisers**

Tag Sale

### **Get Involved / Stay Connected**

Pulpit Exchange - Getting Focused with Purpose - Fire in the Kitchen Concerts -

Raise the Roof - New Art Show in Fellowship Hall - Main Sanctuary Doors -

Visitors Appreciated by Kathy Dann at Gaylord Hospital -

Online Giving Now Available - Help Us Get the Word Out on Facebook - Photos Wanted -

Coffee Hour and Flower Sponsors Needed

### **In the News and Noteworthy**

Arabella Bernier - Andrew Esposito - Samantha Morin - Fire in the Kitchen Concerts -

Don Epperson - MaryAnn Epperson - Anthony Leo McDonnell - Phyllis Carlisle -

Leigh Higgins - Ken Munro - Roberta Hanlon - Dick Pryor

## **- Children and Youth Ministries -**

**Christian Education 201:** As you know from our previous announcements, Morgan Aery, Director of Christian Education, will be leaving our staff as of January 1, 2015, to pursue other opportunities. We appreciated her many contributions to moving our program forward and wish her well.

Our leadership team and Board of Christian Education is now working hard to ensure the continuation of high quality programming for our children and youth. We invite you to be thinking of how you might join us in making 2015 an outstanding year for our children and youth! We will provide more details in this week's Church Update on January 2.

We look forward to seeing your children this Sunday, January 4, for Children's Church. Classes will begin following Communion.

Yours in Christ,

Rene Chin, Chair, Board of Christian Education  
Pastor Jim

## - Missions -



**Columbus House - Christmas Eve Morning 2014:** To all of you who participated in the annual Christmas Eve morning event at Columbus House, THANK YOU.

Our singers brought smiles, inspiring some residents to sing from their seats and 2 women joined the choir. Our tenors and basses treated us all to an NMCC favorite *Whisper*. The amazing kitchen crew met the cooking challenge and then shifted to plating and handing trays of hot breakfasts off to our cheerful serving staff. We served many "seconds" or made sandwiches "to go".

The outpouring of gifts and giftcards was the most ever this year! We were able to leave additional gifts for those who left for work earlier than our arrival.

However you participated - food purchase, cooking, serving, singing, gifts or gift cards, the smiles that morning at Columbus House said it all.

Scott Conover, Roberta Hanlon and Peter Meier

*Columbus  
House*



**Columbus House - 2015:** Help us keep the spirit going the 23 other days we serve breakfast during the year.

We serve our hot breakfast the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday every month - youth are always welcome and add extra sparkle for our residents. What's involved? Sign up to purchase and cook eggs (9 dozen), toast (8 large loaves and spread), OJ (5 gallons plus 75-100 cups), potatoes (20 pounds) or sausages (150). We try to carpool or you can meet us at Columbus by 6:30 am so help prepare and serve to 60 to 80 residents. Minimal clean up involved. And you always leave feeling that you've made a difference.

If you have any questions, please contact [Peter Meier](#) (2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday teams) or [Roberta Hanlon](#) (4<sup>th</sup> Saturday teams).

## - Fund Raisers -



**2014 Tag Sale - the results!** Our tag sale this year too many forms, starting in February with the sale of jewelry for your Valentines, a couple of sales on Craig's list, the huge event in September after 3 months of preparation and finally in December during fellowship hour. Our budgeted goal was \$7500. Through our many efforts, we brought in 10,000!

Our plan for 2015 is to "go virtual" and see what donated items we can sell online. If you are interested in donating or helping out, please contact [Roberta Hanlon](#) 203-500-8311.

## - 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.



**NMCC to participate in Pulpit Exchange Sunday, January 11:** The UCC congregations in New Haven East Consociation have a wonderful tradition of exchanging pastors once a year in January. The date this year is Sunday, January 11. On that day, Pastor Jim will go to the North Haven Congregational Church, UCC, and Rev. Price van der Swaagh of North Branford Congregational Church, UCC, will come to NMCC.

As the congregations of our Consociation do not mingle frequently this is a wonderful way for the pastors to extend hospitality to each other's churches. Many congregations look forward to having a preacher visit from a sister church and enjoy hearing a different perspective.

The Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ consists of 253 individual congregations which are grouped into fifteen Associations. The New Haven East Consociation, the "association" of which we are a part, consists of twelve congregations.

Through our association relationship we support each other in many ways - most of which go unseen and unnoticed by the average church member. The Associations ordain and maintain discipline among clergy and hold the "standing" the individual congregations.

The Association's Committee on Ministry helps new pastors get their feet on the ground, including the formal Installation ceremony. In addition, individual pastors and lay members seek Committee on Ministry help with any number of the common challenges of pastoral ministry, including lay members considering a Call to ministry. Another popular Consociation event is the annual Choir Festival which we so much enjoy.



### GETTING FOCUSED WITH PURPOSE INITIATIVE

The "**Getting Focused with Purpose**" initiative is designed help us construct a clear **Purpose Statement** that reflects how we believe God is calling us to serve in our greater community. The current mission statement is a good start, but does not speak to how we impact our brothers and sisters outside of NMCC. Better clarity about this will help us grow as a congregation in both numbers and spiritual vitality. This focus will guide us for how to use our passions and gifts for the sake of the gospel in our greater service to God. It will also attract people in our community who are like minded and will also raise our profile in the community.

The initial GFWP post-worship meeting on November 23<sup>rd</sup> gave rise to important questions such as:

- What exactly is a Vision Statement and how is that different from our Mission Statement?
- How can we organize to accomplish the GFWP targets and by when?
- Is God leading the effort or is it a classical corporate-management deal?

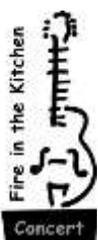
The plan for the second GFWP meeting on December 14<sup>th</sup> was to continue exploring the initiative. Given the all of holiday events and budget meeting in December and recognizing the above three questions required further short-term consideration the GFWP schedule of activities has been updated for both December and January. The next (second) GFWP meeting will now occur after worship on January 25<sup>th</sup>.

To those attending the budget meeting on December 14<sup>th</sup>, Pastor Jim passed out three documents with GFWP clarification: the first two are designed to address introduce the initiative: Differences between Mission/Purpose and Mission statements and the December newsletter article "Getting Focused with Purpose Initiative. The third document described the five GFWP "**Work-Streams**" (committees) that constitute an organization for GFWP that was adopted by the Executive Committee on October 11<sup>th</sup>. Each Work Stream is **actively seeking additional participants**. Here's how it stands now:

- **Engaging the Congregation in the process** - co-leaders are Jim Latimer and Peter Haff; other members so far: Beth Berestecky, Ann Damarjian, Carol Ann Bachhuber
- **Communication to the Congregation** - co-leaders are Sandy Dickson and Peter Meier; other members so far: Carol Anne Bachhuber, Ann Damarjian.
- **Discovery - Exploring and defining the needs of the greater community** - co-leaders are Jim Farrales and John Gallops; other members so far: Ann Damarjian
- **Project management** of the overall initiative - co-leaders are Tom Lauher and Roberta Hanlon; other members so far: Jeff Chin
- **Measuring Success** - leader is John Nassif

These documents are available from the church office, and you are urged to review, prayerfully consider the points and continue asking questions.

The next GFWP all-congregation event is Sunday, January 25, after worship. It will include lunch. We urge all who love NMCC to participate and add their voices.



### Upcoming Fire in the Kitchen Concerts:

**MIPSO - January 17; 7:00 pm:** After struggling to come up with an accurate description of their music, I had some pretty unwieldy combinations, from the familiar alt-grass, all the way to "bluegrass country blues." Like a lot of the young bands we choose to present, they have killer instrumental chops, and a unique take on the old-school sound that is at once a throw-back, but at the same time gets the hard core old guys saying "that ain't the way we played it." So, I'm settling for the best description of all, their album title of "Dark Holler Pop." Adults \$20, kids high school and under, \$5.00

**The Revelers - February 7, 7:00 pm:** It's a big band dance party, Cajun Style. Louisiana super-group The Revelers heats up a cold winter's night with a rollicking Cajun concert and dance party. Get them

while they're hot, as a week later they're back down south headlining for Mardi Gras! As always, Ashley;s ice cream after the show. Adults \$30, kids high school and under, \$5.00.

For reservations or information call 203-668-3735.



**Calling all Habitat Volunteers:** Raise the Roof is starting its 11th build at 603 Sherman Parkway in New Haven, Sat. Jan. 10th. Individual and/or group volunteers are welcome. Please go to [raisetherooft.org](http://raisetherooft.org) to see more information on how to register and become involved. Volunteers will be needed on Saturdays going forward as well as weekdays.

If you have questions or need help with the registration process, please do not hesitate to contact me by e-mail or cell phone.

Thanks, Don Epperson, [dcepperson2001@yahoo.com](mailto:dcepperson2001@yahoo.com), 203 915-3942



**New Art Show in Fellowship Hall:** Sanna Stanley is displaying colored etchings from her children's book *The Rains are Coming*. In addition, Mike DiGiorgio is showing some new limited edition prints depicting common birds of Connecticut.



**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!



**Kathy Dann enjoys Visitors at Gaylord:** Kathy would love to have visitors but is no longer using CareCalendar to schedule visits. Since her plans change each day, the easiest way to schedule a visit is to text her that you'd like visit (203-980-8593) and you can work out a time directly with her.



**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](http://www.NorthMadisonCC.org)
2. Click on the Online Giving tab at the top of our home page (2<sup>nd</sup> line)
3. Click on "click here to donate or pledge"
4. Click on the **Create Profile** button
5. Follow the onscreen instructions to create an online profile and to schedule your recurring contributions.

Scan to pay or give:



**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](mailto:carolanne@mosaic247.net). Also feel free to contact her if you have

any questions, via email or phone 203-747-4840. Thank you!



**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](mailto: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](mailto:office@northmadisoncc.org) and we'll be sure to include them!

**Madison Girl Scouts Build A Garden for Arabella:** Madison Girl Scouts Show Sisterly Love for Arabella Grace Bernier By Building Her a Play Garden and Earn Girl Scout Silver Award. The article includes a thank you to 2 generous project donors, one of whom is NMCC's Donna Segnere. You can see the article and pictures on the bulletin board or in this link: <http://patch.com/connecticut/madison-ct/madison-girl-scouts-build-garden-arabella>

**Andrew Esposito** was pictured in a December 4 article in *The Source*. Polson Middle School students were allowed to wear their Halloween costumes to school if they donated money to the Madison Food Pantry. They raised \$860 for families in Madison who need food.

**Samantha Morin** was pictured in a December 4 article in *The Source* with Daniel Hand High School Jazz Band members who ushered at a recent Jazz Trio Concert with Bill Charlap, sponsored by the Madison Winter Club.

Our **Fire in the Kitchen Concerts** were highlighted in the Weekend Section of the *New Haven Register*, December 5-11 edition. There was a nice write up on our December Barefoot Movement Concert held at NMCC.

**Anthony Leo McDonnell's** obituary was in the December 11 Community News section of *the Source*. Leo, **Gail Faithfull's** husband, died at the Hearth on November 28. A memorial service will be held at NMCC on Saturday, January 10 at 11am. In lieu of flowers, please send donations to St. Martin de Porres School in New Haven.

Works by Clinton Art Society members and our own, **Phyllis Carlisle** were featured in an article in the December 11 edition of *the Source* about their exhibit at the Body Karma Studio in Clinton from Friday Dec. 19 through Feb. 20, 2015. The public is invited to an opening reception on Jan. 20 from 7-9pm, featuring a champagne buffet with hors d'oeuvres.

**Don and MaryAnn Epperson, Leigh Higgins, Ken Munro, Roberta Hanlon, and Dick Pryor** were all pictured in the Winter 2015 edition of *Élan Magazine* as guests at the Raise the Roof Gala held on November 7 at the Madison Beach Hotel.

**Don Epperson**, Raise the Roof President, was also pictured in a December 11 Community News article in *the Source* about the Madison Foundation's \$1,000 grant supporting Raise the Roof.

## Office, Board and Committee Contacts:

Rev. Jim Latimer, Pastor	203-421-3241	Office Managers, Cathy Meier & Jackie Fix	203-421-3241
Director of Christian Ed, Morgan Aery	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
Circle Nursery School Co-Directors: 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*: Clerk	See Below
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