

THE CIRCLE CHURCH NEWS

January 2020

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

I keep a small copy of these verses framed on my desk, and read them at the dawning of each new year. They have inspired me at uncertain thresholds in my life:

And I said to the [one] who stood at the gate of the year:

“Give me a light

that I may tread safely into the unknown.”

[That one] replied:

“Go out into the darkness

and put your hand into the Hand of God.

That shall be to you better than light

and safer than a known way.”

Perhaps these words are familiar to you, too. They are the preamble to Minnie Louise Haskins’ poem, “*God Knows*.” King George VI read them in his 1939 Christmas broadcast to the British Empire as Britain stood at that moment on the threshold of World War II.

Princess Elizabeth loved the poem (published in 1908) and gave it to her father to read that day. Minnie Haskins, a modest congregationalist, missionary, and teacher, had no idea that her words would be used to inspire the nation — her family heard the king’s address over their radio along with the rest of the empire, and only realized later that his words had been Minnie’s.

I offer Minnie’s words again as a comfort and inspiration to you as we welcome another new year.

As we enter this new decade, we are at a critical juncture — social, political, economic, and environmental systems the world over are in flux, and many of us are looking for a leader, a movement, an inspiration of some sort, that will shift the moral narrative, reorganize policies and elections, and rebuild sustainable, healing paths forward.

As Americans, we find ourselves in a season of deeper and deeper disagreement and discord about what our most concerning challenges and hoped-for paths forward may look like. As Christians, we hear politicians, aspiring prophets, and leaders of all stripes, speak on behalf of “The Church” in contradictory, often deeply concerning, ways. Where are we to look to find our way through the murky confusion and darkness? How much difference can each of our single efforts make, anyway?

As a modest, missional, congregation here in North Madison, standing at the gate of the year, we will step forward into this new year, *NoMads* entering this new decade, together. We will do so with courage, hope, curiosity, vigor, compassion, and great love. We will do so with our hands in the hand of God. We will not turn away. And perhaps, in our own way, we will inspire our own neighbors, or even our own nation; or maybe we will just quietly do and be whatever God whispers in our ear...

And “that shall be to [us] better than light
and safer than a known way.”

Love & Blessings, Heather

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Matthew 2:1-12 (NIV): "After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, 'Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.' 3 When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. 5 'In Bethlehem in Judea,' they replied, 'for this is what the prophet has written: 6 "'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.'" 7 Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. 8 He sent them to Bethlehem and said, 'Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.' 9 After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. 11 On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. 12 And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route."

Our children tell us this part of the Christmas Story at the end of our yearly pageant. As we enter into a new year, we celebrate Epiphany. To have an epiphany, in a literary sense, is to experience an "Aha" moment - a realization that changes the rest of the story. In our faith, Epiphany is "the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles as represented by the Magi" (Matthew 2:1-12). The magi were the astronomers who travelled with only a star and a prophecy to guide them as they sought God's promise of a new beginning for all people. They wanted to honor the birth of Jesus Christ by welcoming new light and the source of all love into the world. As we enter into 2020 and a month with abundant physical darkness, I hope you will join me in looking for points of light, or love, around us. How can we honor the light we see and help to magnify it? How can we use our gifts to provide light where it may feel dark?

Please join us as we celebrate Epiphany and bless our Reverse Advent Calendar food donations on January 12.

Our junior and senior youth are invited to bring our community's Reverse Advent Calendar food donations to the Madison Food Pantry to sort, scan and stock the shelves on Saturday, January 18, from 11-12:30. Please RSVP to Sue.

If you and your teen are interested in learning about affirming their baptismal vows through Confirmation, please join Rev. Heather and Sue after coffee hour (at 11:30 or so) on January 12th for a chat about our program. Please RSVP to Sue.

Additional children and youth ministry events and programs are emailed out weekly by Sue. Please contact ce@northmadisoncc.org if you would like to receive these updates.



OWL Classes: Upcoming dates for OWL classes are January 5, 12, 19 and 26. Grades 7 - 9 meet from 12:30 - 2:30 in the Community Room. Grades 4 - 6 meet from 2:30 - 4:30 in room 9.

- Community Outreach / Fund Raisers -



Ministry Resource Team Update: ... now our service begins!" December was a busy month for our Outreach Ministry Champions in New Haven and Madison:

Columbus House - What a morning we had Christmas Eve morning - we shopped for and wrapped enough gifts for each client receive 2-3 gifts for themselves or family members. Over 100 \$10-gift cards were collected and have already been put to good use. Our carolers engaged the clients in singing their favorite Christmas songs and all enjoyed a hot breakfast served by our faithful kitchen staff. We served muffins before breakfast, baked by Karen Chapman's community service club at Baldwin Middle School. Baldwin participates in the Choose Love program created by Scarlett Lewis to honor her son Jesse, who was one of the children killed during the Sandy Hook shootings. Their theme this month is gratitude: 6E hallway team parents donated the cocoa and the children made the holiday cards and added hot cocoa packs to each as a treat, which were also distributed by our team.

Our had SYG made 9 blankets and 26 scarves made of fleece donated by the Nichols; these were wrapped in holiday ribbon and tagged with a note of love from NMCC. The blankets were delivered to the Respite (3rd) floor at Columbus, dedicated to patients experiencing homelessness and recovering from surgery. And the scarves will be gifted to those who missed our Christmas Eve event.

While most of NMCC's donations to Columbus House come from personal donations of food and gifts, we were also able to provide Columbus with a check for \$500 this month. Thank you all for your part in making this such a special event this year - the clients were amazed and some wanted to know how they could come visit our church to let us all know what a difference it made to them. Roberta Hanlon, Columbus House Champion.

Continuum of Care. In support of the first annual Holiday Bazaar held at Continuum of Care in New Haven on December 7th, NMCC sponsored a wreath-making event creating 10 wreaths that were sold or donated to clients' homes. There were 15 NMCC members/friends who participated in the November 24th wreath making event. Ken Nichols and Peter Haff were judges for the event. Debi Cocco's wreath was selected as most creative and Melinda Clemmons for most whimsical. Thanks to the Congregational Live Ministry Team and CE for organizing the event. The ten wreaths were added to other wreaths created by Continuum of Care staff teams and altogether the wreaths made about \$400 that will go to fund client basic needs. Any wreaths that did not sell were donated to clients to decorate their homes.

Loaves & Fishes Ministry: John Gallops delivered 160 lbs. of groceries to the Madison Food Pantry in December, including 54 cans of tuna – Hurrah for the Tuna Church! The JYG collected over \$700 during the Craft Fair Raffle, also delivered! The Reverse Advent Calendar was launched by Linda Juliani on December 3rd – in which we were provided with a list of 24 items to collect through December 24. See related article below for more details.

Raise the Roof/Habitat New Haven – Frank Walsh introduced Laye and Fatomata Camara and their children during worship on December 1 where they received a warm welcome and were amazed when Heather incorporated their appearance into worship and spoke to them in French! Frank is their Family Partner and there was an urgent need at the time to help the family with volunteer hours toward their home that would be ready for moving in early January. They also needed a pro bono lawyer to help with the house closing. And a number of NMCC members offered support. Ingela Helgassen and Dave Summerlin joined Laye and Fatomata and a handful of other volunteers on December 7th to work on a deck outside and put up cabinets in the kitchen. Robin Chasse found a lawyer willing to offer real estate services and the Laye and Fatomata closed on their house on December 20!!! They still need more volunteer hours to reach their 400-hour goal. When the congregation met the Camara family, a number of NMCC members offered support including furniture and clothing. Robin Chasse secured a pro bono lawyer who will close on the property Friday. Others offered furniture and clothing. Our congregation can continue to support this family beyond their move-in date if the family is open to it. Their home will need plantings at the house in the spring. Frank Walsh and Cal Price, Raise the Roof/Habitat New Haven Champions.

Youth Continuum. NMCC was very pleased to present Youth Continuum with an additional \$500 check in December. This will be used to provide the youth with bedding that they will use at the shelter, then take with them when they have permanent housing.

Supporting our Outreach Ministries in January: If you're looking for an opportunity to serve our local communities, consider one of our Outreach Ministries this month!



Breakfast at Columbus House: Upcoming dates are January 11 (led by Peter Meier) and January 28 (led by Dawn Barber). Meet at Columbus House at 6:30 am (or join a carpool). Sign up (back hall) to purchase and prepare eggs, toast, juice, potatoes or sausages. If you would like to serve breakfast, but find the cost of purchasing difficult, please contact Roberta Hanlon roberthanlon@msn.com, Peter Meier peterm190@yahoo.com to be reimbursed.



Loaves & Fishes Ministry: This quarter (January - March of 2020) our food collection & monetary donations will provide food support in Clinton. As the Madison Food Pantry's official "Tuna Church" we will also continue to collect canned tuna. To serve this ministry, please leave your canned tuna donation in the food pantry basket at the back of the sanctuary for pick up. And a reminder to bring in the bags of food you collected under the Reverse Advent Calendar offering by January 12 (see below for details). Questions? Contact John Gallops, Loaves & Fishes Ministry Champion, jgallops@aol.com or 860-460-8573.



Reverse Advent Calendar: Please bring the food you collected from the Reverse Advent Calendar drive to our huge in-gathering of food on Sunday, January 12 (Epiphany celebration), bringing God's love into the world in a wonderful way!! Our teens will bring our bounty to the Madison Food Pantry on January 18 from 11:00 to 12:30 when they will sort, scan & stock, as well as hear more about the pantry/clients/etc. Questions: contact

Sue Timony-Hall.



Raise the Roof: An update on the Camara family for January: The house is almost complete. Bathrooms, kitchen and heating will be completed by professionals. The family is hoping to move into their new home at 39 Elliott Street on January 5th. To help with their volunteer hours, Frank and Cal are working on assembling folks

interested in forming build teams with other religious groups in the area, including youth. Frank will also offer other ways to support the family to meet the required goal of 400 hours. Stay tuned! Frank Walsh and Cal Price, Raise the Roof/Habitat New Haven Champions.



Yoga: Come join us and combat those post-holiday blues by doing something positive for your body and spirit. Our next yoga sessions begin the week of January 6th.

Monday's 6:30-7:30 pm session runs from 1/6 through 2/24 with no class on 2/17

(President's Day weekend). Thursday's 6:15-7:15 session begins 1/9 and runs through

2/27. The price for the Thursday class is \$60. Monday night's session cost is \$55.00. Combine both sessions for \$110.00. Drop ins continue to be welcome at \$10.00. Questions? Contact Karen Chapman at krchapman@comcast.net or via text at (203) 314-9299.

Contact Ministry Resource Team members Lyn Boling lboling123@comcast.net, Roberta Hanlon (Team Leader) robertahanlon@msn.com or Cal Price wildwood9@msn.com if you have any questions.



Grocery Cards: Please support our church by purchasing Grocery Cards on Sundays after worship in Fellowship Hall. There's no extra cost to you, but the church receives a percentage of the sales. Team members on duty for January are:

January 5: Nora and Calvin Price

January 12: Felicity Doyle

January 19: Mike Efenecy and Nannette Paul

January 26: Martha and Ken Nichols

Please see Calvin Price with any questions about the program.

- Get Involved / Stay Connected -



There so many ways to get involved in making NMCC a vibrant community not only through the work of our Outreach Ministries 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.



Fire in the Kitchen Concert: Sam Reider and the Human Hands, January 18 at 7pm. Yes, Sam was here just a short bit ago with the unbelievable Jorge Glem, and the show was so well received, we're doing it again in January, where the house will be packed. Many felt this is was their favorite show ever. EVER. And that includes folks like Crooked Still, Solas, John Jorgenson Quintet,

Hot Club OF Cowtown, etc. We're not messing around with this one! Pack this house!! Adults \$25, kids high school and under, \$5.00. And as always, ice cream after the show. Please contact Charlie Shafer at workdog@mindspring.com for tickets.



Celebrating the Life and Teachings of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King:

Please join us on Sunday, January 19 and bring friends and family. We will observe the life and teachings of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King during worship service and will host at a brunch with guest speaker, Dr. Donique McIntosh, who will speak on "A Restless Determination", is currently serving as our Racial Justice Team Leader of the newly-formed Southern New England Conference, United Church of Christ.

Dr. King would have turned 91 on January 15, 2020. He was assassinated 50 years ago. Dr. King spent his life working for justice, unity, peace and preserving rights for all people. We should remember those lessons, share them and see how we can move forward with that vision.

To make reservations, there is a sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall or you may call or email the office to make your reservations, office@northmadisoncc.org, 203-421-3241. Speaker biography and comments from Rev. Heather are details are available on our web page: <https://northmadisoncc.org/calendar-events/rev-dr-martin-luther-king-jr-event/>. If you have any questions about the event, please contact Rev. Heather or Nora Price, or wildwood9@msn.com.



AddYour Voice

Intergenerational Choir: All youth singers welcome and encouraged to come for our next presentation! We will be singing a really FUN song called "Aardvarks on the Ark" (or "How Did Noah Stand It?") featuring rhythm instruments and animal sounds! Rehearsals are January 12, January 26, and February 2 (after

church in the sanctuary) and we will sing on February 9. Join us!



Kindling Spirit Winter Discussions: Please join us as the Congregational Life Ministry Team and the Pastoral Relations Committee are preparing wintertime pot lucks and other gatherings for discussions and sharing of spiritual journeys. While this is an opportunity to meet our settled pastor in a more intimate setting, it's also an opportunity for our congregation to get to know one another through sharing of thoughts and ideas. These

gatherings will take place during the months of January and February before the Lenten Season. Look out for a sign-up sheet for opportunities to get together. If you'd like to host a pot luck dinner, appetizer gathering, breakfast club, or have other ideas to share, please contact Ken Nichols at kennichols39@att.net or Jim/Christine Farrales at farnavos@comcast.net



A Note From Rev. Heather: *Tikkun Olam* is a Hebrew phrase Meaning “healing the world.” Tikkun/Tikun (תיקון) can mean "fixing/rectification" or a book of Torah. Social justice-minded Jews organize advocacy, hands-on community ministry projects, and justice work under the umbrella of tikkun olam initiatives – acts of kindness made to perfect or repair the world.

The phrase is found in the Mishnah, a collection of rabbinic teachings.

As I get to know you better as individual members and congregation, I am very interested in what acts of kindness, advocacy, and social justice most concern and interest you. If you would like to share with me what you are working on or what is nagging at your heart (maybe that you would like to find a way for us to work on together at NMCC), please call me! Let's set a time for a cup of tea and a chat. I would love to know more about where God is working on your heart, where you are working in the world, and where we may as a congregation feel called to go together. -Rev. Heather



ONA Letter:

Dear Open and Affirming family:

The second decade of the 21st century was a time of unprecedented growth for our movement — in numbers and in the depth of our commitment to build a church and a world where all of God's children are needed, wanted, and loved.

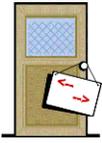
On New Year's eve, 2009, there were 847 ONA churches. Today, there are 1,600 Open and Affirming congregations and ministries in the United Church of Christ.

In the past decade, the Coalition has reinvented our relationship with existing ONA churches: our extensive training programs, including workshops and webinars, are helping congregations revive their ONA commitment and learn new ways to advocate and grow. When a congregation adopts an ONA covenant, our work is just beginning: we want to support each and every church on its ONA journey.

Every church we reach is a victory of life over death: ONA churches have saved countless lives, but our work is not complete until not just 33 percent, but 100 percent of our beloved church is a safe community for LGBTQ seekers and their families.

Yours in hope,

Andy Lang
Executive Director



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!

- 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!

There was an article in the December 5, 2019 edition of *The Source* about Madison Earth Care and our own **Bob Blundon** entitled "Cohen Tours Madison Earth Care with Agriculture Commissioner"

Our own Circle Nursery School Director, **Kathy Niejadlik** was the Person of the Week in the December 12 edition of *The Source* in an article entitled, "Teaching the Next Generation and Loving it."

Calvin Price was the Person of the Week in the December 26 edition of *The Source*. The article highlighted his volunteer work since his retirement.

Circle Nursery School's Pancake Breakfast with Santa was pictured on the front page of the Source December 19.

Office, Board and Committee Contacts:

Senior Minister: Rev. Dr. Heather Arcovitch	203-421-3241
Office: Jackie Fix, Office Manager; Susan O'Connor, Clerk	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	203-245-1531
Circle Nursery School: Kathy Niejadlik	203-421-0997

OFFICERS

Executive Committee Chair, Jim Farrales	203-421-9323
Executive Committee Vice Chair, Tom Lauher	203-530-7467
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Assistant Clerk, Kate Davis	203-421-5848
Treasurers, Michele Mauro and Keith Luckenbach	860-663-8009 203-421-5054
Assistant Treasurer, John Gallops	860-460-8573
Financial Secretary/Disbursements, Open	
Asst. Financial Secretary/Disbursements, Open	
Financial Secretary/Receipts, Susan O'Connor	203-457-1559
Asst. Financial Secretary/Receipts - Calvin Price 2	03-245-8566

Carol Anne Bachhuber 203-747-4840; * Kate Summerlin 203-453-0700; Susan Christiano, 203-314-8853; Peter Haff, 203-415-2773; Melissa Blundon, 203-421-4465; Orlene Gallops 860-339-5844; Dawn Barber, 203-457-1868; * Sandy Dickson 203-421-1178; Susan Kenney 203-530-1153

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Board of Deacons Co-Chair, Kate Summerlin	203-988-1993
Co-Chair, Sandy Dickson	203-421-1178
Board of Finance, John Gallops	860-460-8573
Communications Team Leader, Roberta Hanlon	203-500-8311
Hospitality Chair, Martha Nichols	860-346-2000
Human Resources Chair, Jim Farrales	203-421-9323
Ministry Resource Team Leader, Roberta Hanlon	203-500-8311
Music Chair, TBD	
Pastoral Relations, Chair, Carol Luckenbach	203-530-9903
Property & Planning Chair, Tom Lauher	203-530-7467
Quiet Ministry Chair, Linda Young	203-457-0723
Cong. Life Ministry Team Co-Chair, Ken Nichols	860-346-2000
Co Chair, Jim Farrales	203-421-9323



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