



THE CIRCLE CHURCH NEWS

April 2020

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

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[Click Here](#) for the Link to Sunday's Virtual Worship!

If you have problems logging in please contact:

Sandy Dickson 203-376-7075 -- Orlene Gallops 860-339-5844 - Carol Luckenbach 203-530-9903

This Sunday is Palm Sunday! It is also Communion Sunday.

To prepare, please have a small piece of bread (Your morning toast or roll?) and a cup of beverage (Coffee? Orange juice?) ready by the screen on which you'll be joining us, so we may celebrate at our tables together.

We have discerned that distributing palms is not honoring social-distancing. Remember, though, that the people of Jerusalem waved palms and clothing to welcome Jesus because that was what they had! What do you have around your home that you might post on your door or fence to welcome him? A forsythia branch, a sprig of evergreen, some willow? Perhaps this year's Palm Sunday will be the most authentic one we've celebrated yet. See you at 10:00a.m. in our virtual sanctuary!

Watch Your Inbox for full details for the Holy Week and Easter Schedule

4/5 Worship this Sunday 10:00 a.m. – with your communion elements ready in front of you
4/9 Maundy Thursday - A liturgy to do together in your household
4/10- Good Friday Tenebrae 7:00 p.m. virtual service on Friday
Virtual Prayer Vigil: April 10 at 8:00 p.m. - April 12 at 6:00 a.m. Easter Morning
4/12 Easter Sunday - 10:00 a.m. service in the virtual sanctuary

- How to Give Without a Plate! – Supporting our Congregation Financially During Self-Quarantine

Please click here for a video: [Message from our Executive Chair, Jim Farrales](#)

Now, more than ever, our financial support of our ministries is essential. Have you kept your pledge up to date? Can you give a little more to cover those who cannot give? Here are the ways to give:

- 1) Become a Sustaining Member by
 - Signing up through your bank's online banking bill pay for automatic drafting to NMCC, or
 - Go to our website and sign up for recurring payments: <https://northmadisoncc.org/>
- 2) Mail checks payable to NMCC. Mail and deposits are being processed weekly.
- 3) Make a donation through our website: <https://northmadisoncc.org/>
Click "Online Giving" at the top of the page, and just follow the instructions, or scan here with your phone →
- 4) **NEW** – Make a mobile donation using + or by Texting – See details below*.
Contact [Cal Price](#)
- 5) Donate stock. Contact to [Michele Mauro](#).
- 6) Buy grocery cards for Stop & Shop, Roberts, Big Y and ShopRite and support your church.
- 7) Have you included NMCC in your will? John Gallops would be happy to talk with you.
jgallops@aol.com



Thank you for the many ways you contribute your love and support of NMCC and our ministries!

***Mobile App and Text Giving Program:** We have enhanced our Electronic Giving platform. This platform will allow you to express your generosity through Electronic Giving, from the palm of your hand. Simply download the GivePlus+ App from Vanco Co., our online give partner. Or you may text NMCC using a 10-digit number (see below).

MOBIL APP

Download the Give Plus+ App from the Apple or Google Store. Four steps to give:

Step 1: Select NMCC as your church

Step 2: Designate the giving amount 00.00 and frequency

Step 3: Complete your Credit Card or Check info

Step 4: Submit

A Receipt will be sent to your email. Done

TEXT GIVING

Step 1: Text 833 948 2189 (this is for NMCC only)

Step 2: Send Text amount of your gift 00.00 and frequency

Step 3: You will receive a Text link to follow. Complete Credit Card and Check information.

Step 4: Submit

Receipt will be Texted to you. Done

- Pastor's Note -

Roll Call: So How ARE You? Really?

So much has changed in the last month, and it seems we have only begun to experience the depth and breadth of the ways this pandemic will shape our lives before it's through with us. We're going through a lot as individuals and families. Our concerns about our vulnerable neighbors and service providers continue to grow. Even how we are church together is transforming into something new.

Our journey this Lent has been challenging, but how very blessed I feel to be making this journey with you, NMCC! It feels as if we have been ministering together for years, but do you know April 11 will be only our five-month anniversary? It seems impossible. I am so grateful and inspired by all of you with whom I interact regularly – and looking very much forward to growing in relationship with you whom I am only beginning to know. My pastor's heart is holding all of you close.

We have come far and learned lots, creating a warm, meaningful, online worship experience that keeps NMCC's personality and mission at its center; remaining connected to ongoing pastoral care needs; and ensuring that we care for vulnerable neighbors as we do for one another.

One of the great gifts of this congregation is how wonderfully well we care for one another. I am so moved watching your love in action. Pansies delivered as blooming prayers, loving thoughts in our livestream worship chats, thousands of dollars in grocery cards given for hungry children and unhoused adults (those offerings remain open, and the need continues, if you are able to give), the new Tuesdays in the Garden Facebook/YouTube series, wonderful worship songs and children's stories recorded from your homes and shared, virtual youth groups, parent meetings, and book clubs...in just a few weeks, we have collectively grown a whole new crop of caring ministries and kept the NMCC spirit of loving, creative, connection vibrant.

And, now I want to call a Roll Call! How are you? Do you feel looped into the NMCC community? Have you been able to access our virtual worship or vespers? Would you like someone to call or pray with you? Do you need help with groceries, or a lawn mowed, or tech support? How is your household's employment stability so far? How is your physical and mental health? Can you use some coaching or pastoral care?

Church leaders have called everyone for whom we have correct numbers. (Please, will you call the church office with your contact number if you haven't heard from us?) Jackie and the deacons are now mapping NMCC's households by neighborhood for me to start making "Yard Visits" this week (thanks, Sue Kenney, for mapping our first group!). I'll call or text when I am nearby and invite you to come outside for a short, very well-social-distanced, outdoor "hello." We can chat and/or pray. I'll even pull a few weeds, if that's what you're up to. I want you to know I and your church are here for

you, and if you want someone to call sometime if you're not doing ok, I want you to know you can. If I don't get to your house, please know I'm driving through somewhere near, praying for you and each neighborhood as I go.

We are in this together. Please keep in (very well social distanced) touch...and keep loving yourself and one another. You are not alone!

With much love,
Heather

- Children and Youth Ministries - A Note from Sue Timony-Hall



Hi Friends,

I feel more blessed than ever to be with you all together in our NMCC community even as we are apart in our respective homes. It still seems surreal to me that the ways that we conduct our daily lives have changed so drastically and abruptly. I am going to make a prediction that "Zoom" will become the Merriam Webster Dictionary word of the year for 2020.

As I have been meeting virtually with our kids and teens the word "uncertainty" has come up again and again. And I think that it is the part of this new reality that is making us all most uncomfortable. We are a society that plans, and most of us are used to having most of their days and evenings scheduled out. With all of that busyness cast aside for a while, we sit with the questions. The what ifs. How long will this go on for? When can I see my friends again? Will I stay healthy? Will my parents get sick? What does the future look like?

This is the new wilderness that we find ourselves in, and I am thankful that we are all here together. We can all see positives that are already occurring in nature and our environment due to our reduced movements and resource use, but what positives can we cultivate in ourselves during this time? How can we grow spiritually?

For me, I am thinking that the first step is attempting (again and again) to increase my acceptance of uncertainty. But, how?

My feeling is that acceptance comes through remaining in the moment we are in as much as possible, focusing on the task at hand, nurturing our relationships, looking to fill our neighbors needs no matter how small, and continuing to breathe and pray with intention.

As a church community, we are here to be the church together. To love each other and to help in our world, now more than ever. We were born for this time, and we are meant to be together in it. As we work together to help our world heal from this crisis, we are called to find new ways to be in relationship. I invite you to take comfort in the idea that each small act of connection that we engage in will add up as we move through this time.

Some of our teens suggested that sometimes a meaningful quote can provide motivation and strength when we are feeling afraid or uncertain. Here are a few favorites:

“It is not how we live in the light that enlightens us, it is how we live in the dark.” – Rune Lazuli

“Happiness can be found, even in the darkest of times, if one only remembers to turn on the light.”
– Albus Dumbledore

“If uncertainty is unacceptable to you, it turns into fear. If it is perfectly acceptable, it turns into increased aliveness, alertness, and creativity.” – Eckhart Tolle

“Sticking with that uncertainty, getting the knack of relaxing in the midst of chaos, learning not to panic – this is the spiritual path.” – Pema Chödrön

Please let me know if you have ideas about how we can nurture our connections with each other and help our neighbors. I am also here to chat about anything at all - call me 203.843.6206.

With much love,
Sue

- Music Notes -



Greetings – dear NMCC friends!!

“Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, and life to everything.” Though Plato wrote those words thousands of years ago, they remain so true – especially so in these days of isolation.... Music can lift our hearts in praise or in prayer... it can be tender and poignant or uplifting and FUN! Pepper Choplin (and yes, Pepper is his real name!) has written over 200 anthems in ALL of those forms. He is one of NMCC choir’s favorite composers – You have heard us sing at least a dozen of his anthems over the years!

If you are feeling stressed or worried, you may wish to listen to his anthem “[We Are Not Alone](#)” – A beautiful testament of faith for us all. Take a moment to sit quietly... Then click on the link below and listen... The text is simple – sing along and pray the words or just let them soak into your spirit. Maybe you will want to listen each night before you sleep?

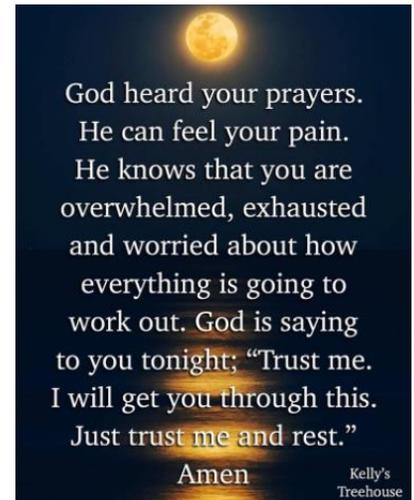
“We are not alone.... we are never alone – for God is with us.
Through all our days God will make us strong
We will press on – forever and forever
God is with us now.”

Amen and Amen.

With loving hugs to all of you Linda

- Reflections During This Time of Isolation -

From Sue Kenney: We are all in this together and will get through these hard times one day at a time. Let your fears be overcome by faith.....and remember this too shall pass. During this Lenten season, this is our 40 days or more in the desert or wilderness. Let this be a time of reflection. A time where we can be grateful for our blessings. Perhaps a time where we can connect with one another and rekindle friendships and relationships remotely for now. Time is precious and let's use it wisely to reach out to the ones we love.



From your Office Manager - Jackie Fix: Hello... from a socially acceptable distance! Although I've been physically banned from the office, I'm fortunate to be able to log into the church computer remotely, retrieve voice messages, and complete most of the other tasks I usually do!

I want to thank NMCC for the beautiful pansies and note that were left at my house! Whenever anyone asks me where I work, I tell them how fortunate I am to work with such nice people! I am lucky to have you as my second church family (I'm a member at FCC Guilford). I miss your faces and chatting with you when you visit the church or call on the phone. Thank you NMCC; I feel your virtual hug!

During this time, I've been trying to practice gratitude, and am thankful for so many things... all my children home safe, a church that values its employees and their contributions, a wonderful staff to work with, ample food to eat, beautiful days for daily walks, extra time with my family and furries, learning new things, keeping busy, and so many, many more!

I know this Congregation's spirit will survive and flourish after all this is over! I wish you all health, happiness, and above all...love. - Jackie

ADVANCE DIRECTIVES

How do you share your healthcare wishes if you're too sick to speak for yourself? Complete your advance directive documents and know that your wishes will be fulfilled, no matter what.

FILL OUT A LIVING WILL

-  Define quality of life, and what really matters to you
-  Determine if you want CPR to resuscitate your breathing and heart beat
-  Share if you would want feeding tubes if you could no longer eat

FIND A HEALTHCARE PROXY

-  Designate a trusted person to speak for you in case you can't speak for yourself.
-  Share your living will with your proxy so they know your wishes

COMPLETE AN ORGAN DONATION FORM

-  Share if you're open to being an organ donor
-  Give specifics about which organs you want to donate, and which ones you don't

PlanBeyond.com

COVID-19 Tips to share:

While you are healthy, it is a good time to write up a medical history and medication list for each member of your family and put it somewhere easily accessed (and in the ICE file on your phone). Many hospitals and EMS are not allowing ANYONE to accompany patients to the hospital. If you or a loved one has to go the hospital for ANY reason you don't want EMS, doctors, or nurses missing key information that could keep you safer.

Updating Our Advance Directives

While this pandemic has caused many of us to have extra time to reflect...this is a perfect time to take the opportunity to write or update your advance medical directive. Being prepared, and documenting your wishes in writing, is a gift to those who love you, and peace of mind for you.

Below are some helpful resources to ensure those close to you are aware of, and prepared to carry out, your wishes if you become sick and cannot communicate on your own behalf.

Consider taking this opportunity to talk together as a family about each of your end of life wishes. You may also want to talk about favorite poems, passages, musical selections, or even quirky things unique to you, that you would like included in your celebration of life, when that day comes.

We would be glad to hold a copy of all of this in the church office, if that is helpful.

Thoughtful resources from the National Hospice and Palliative Care Foundation on Advanced Directives and End of Life Planning:

<https://www.nhpco.org/patients-and-caregivers/resources/>

Connecticut's Advanced Directives Form:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/AG/Health-Issues/advdirectivescombinedform2006alt-pdf.pdf?la=en>

- Community Outreach and Fundraisers -



Ministry Resource Team: “.....now our service begins!” During these challenging times we’ve had to step back from some of our Outreach Ministries and for others we’ve been able to identify areas where we can continue to make a difference and serve our community.



Breakfast at Columbus House: We served our last NMCC breakfast at Columbus House on March 14, 2 days before the kitchen was closed to volunteer preparation. Thank you Peter Meier and team!! March 28 was a different story. We delivered eggs, bread/spread, OJ, potatoes and sausages for 80-100 people to the kitchen staff on Thursday, March 26! When we committed to providing breakfast foods, little did we anticipate the challenge of finding everything needed with one trip to a grocery store.

Thanks to Dawn Barber, who has not only been to the Wilderness with me where Jesus walked and prayed, joined me (on socially distanced separate trips) in channeling the power of prayer in our search. Though we encountered per-item store limits on eggs, empty shelves and high prices, we finally gathered all items Thursday morning. The kitchen staff met me in the parking lot with a cart to transfer everything to their kitchen.

I just learned from Peter that Lyndia Haff has returned to work for Columbus House. She is working from home “doing what she knows best” - helping Columbus House clients find apartments. Columbus House is opening additional seasonal locations to spread out their clients so they can improve social distancing and keep clients and New Haven safer. This means they may stay in during the day, so the kitchen staff could use financial help with lunch for those who do, and we’d like to support them with your donations. Volunteer food/meals are a vital part of one of the many pieces it takes to keep Columbus House running.

We have yet to perfect our loaves and fishes skills but are confident we can continue to support this ministry, one meal at a time, with your help. Your generous donations to date have helped us cover breakfasts at least through the end of April and we should be able to provide some Stop & Shop gift cards to cover lunches as well. If you are able, it’s easy to donate [online](#) (forward a copy of your receipt to the [Office](#) so we can match your donation is intended for Columbus House). Or you may mail a check to the office.

Many thanks for your help! [Roberta Hanlon](#), NMCC Columbus House Champion



Loaves & Fishes Ministry: This quarter (April - June of 2020) our food collection for Killingworth is on hold until it NMCC reopens and we can accept your donations.

Many thanks for your generous breakfast foods donations in the first quarter to the Clinton Food Pantry and canned tuna to the Madison Food Pantry! If you have questions, contact John Gallops, Loaves & Fishes Ministry Champion, jgallops@aol.com or 860-460-8573.



Raise the Roof/Habitat New Haven: All volunteering at Habitat for Humanity of Greater New Haven build sites, including Raise the Roof's sponsored build at 2 Button Street and the ReStore, has been cancelled through Sunday, April 12.



St. Martin de Porres Academy: With your help, NMCC made a generous donation of grocery cards for many of the families of students.

Allison Rivera shared her JOY during worship on March 29: "All of us at Saint Martin de Porres Academy are so very grateful for the overwhelming generosity of the NMCC Community. The gift cards that you have provided for so many children and families in New Haven were such a blessing! We can't thank you enough for your response to meet the needs of the least of these in our world. How very blessed they are to have your care!"



Continuum of Care Needs Face Masks: Thank you all for your help in making face masks. Some of the staff are quite anxious about going into the group homes and potentially exposing the clients given staff are out and about in the everyday world. So many of the clients have not only

developmental or psychiatric disabilities or histories of substance use but many also have underlying medical conditions putting them at higher risk. Many of the staff members at Continuum are concerned that if they can't keep the clients safe and inadvertently infect them, the clients could end up in the hospital taking up beds that they could otherwise have prevented.

There are many sites online offering instructions on making masks. The best ones are the ones that have a pouch that allows you to insert a coffee filter, but ANY mask is better than not having anything. <http://www.continuumct.org/newsItem/coronavirus-face-masks>

You can drop the masks off at the church in a bag left on the porch of Fellowship Hall and send me an email and I will stop by at the end of the day and pick them up. If you're not able or prefer not to go out, just email me and I would also be happy to stop by and pick them up off your front porch. Thank you so much and stay healthy and safe! Jim at farnavos@comcast.net



Community Yoga: While our yoga classes have been put on hold, our Yoga instructor, Kathy Bannon, recommends we try working out with Yoga with Adrienne <https://www.youtube.com/user/yogawithadriene>.

- Get Involved / Stay Connected -



There are many ways to be involved in NMCC's vibrant community – serving in an Outreach Ministry, mentoring and teaching our children, joining in musicmaking or worship planning, helping out around the church building, sharing the gifts God has given you, learning new skills from others, enjoying the fellowship of working on projects together. Visit our [Get Involved](#) page for opportunities at northmadisoncc.org.



Join Us for Tuesdays in the Garden: Spring has Sprung and we at NMCC have sprung into action to share our garden experiences. What better way to keep busy, safe and connected to the earth that supports us than working in the garden? Each Tuesday, we invite you to take a stroll with one of our gardeners as they share their expertise, bounty and blooms through short videos posted on [our church website](#) and Facebook page. Look for information about composting, salad gardens, hydrangeas, dividing perennials, transplanting, invasive species and so much more. If you are a gardener and would like to be part of our Tuesdays In the Garden videos, please contact: Melissa Blundon at: 203-421-4465.



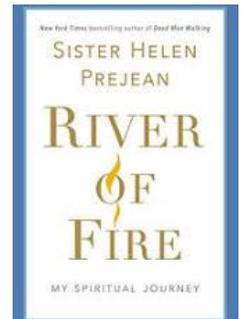
Book Discussion Group – April 28, 7:00 p.m: Our new book is "The River of Fire" by Helen Prejean. You may know her as the author of "Dead Man Walking," made in to a movie, starring Sean Penn and Susan Sarandon. Our discussion will be held on Tuesday, April 28 at 7:00 p.m. by Zoom. Peter Meier is our facilitator.

Here is the Zoom link:

<https://zoom.us/j/139798540?pwd=YXRTRkhpSzVhUHNUNFc2NG9ndWtaQT09>

Meeting ID: 139 798 54 Password: 647374

Please stay tuned for potential further updates on the mode, time, and date.



Circle Nursery Greetings Posted on our Facebook page: Our Circle Nursery School teachers sending love out to their beautiful children and their families. Here's [a special video from all of us at Circle Nursery School](#) to all of our wonderful families.



Altar Flowers: Since we have moved to online services, we are not doing altar flowers. If you signed up for flowers and would like Heather to say something during her prayer (like what you would have put in the bulletin dedication), she's happy to do that. Just email her at harcovitch@gmail.com to let her know.



Have you "liked" us on Facebook?: Please share the love and a glowing review there~tell our neighbors what you love about being part of NMCC and what God is doing here. You never know who may be looking for a welcoming church

home as Easter approaches, or whom you may inspire!



Another Way You Can Serve NMCC – Treasurer: Are you looking for a new way to serve NMCC? Has God gifted you in the area of finance or accounting? NMCC is looking for a new Treasurer. As an officer of the church, the Treasurer must be a member in good standing and have a general understanding of generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP). Your time and talents will be needed at least two hours per week to review timesheets, sign paychecks and checks, review A/R for coding and proper documentation, and read and address the Treasurer's email. An additional 2-4 hours per month would be invested in reviewing bank reconciliation reports and the general ledger (including income and expenses) and preparing monthly reports and meetings with the Board of Finance and the Executive Committee. At year end, the Treasurer prepares annual financial reports and works with the Board of Finance in developing annual budgets with each of the Teams/Committees and Boards, and works with the Audit

Committee in carrying out an annual audit. If you are interested or would like to learn more please contact John Gallops, Chair of the Board of Finance, jgallops@aol.com.

- 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 board and our Facebook page. We'd like to expand the coverage and add a feature about this type of news in the monthly newsletter. Please send or drop off the news articles you find to the office at office@northmadisoncc.org and we'll be sure to include them.

Office, Board and Committee Contacts:

Senior Minister: Rev. Dr. Heather Arcovitch	203-421-3241
Office: Jackie Fix, Office Manager; Rhonda Spencer, Bookkeeper	203-421-3241
Minister of Music: Linda Juliani	860-399-0210
Choir Director: Bill Clemmons	203-421-3484
Minister of Faith Formation & Youth Ministry: Sue Timony-Hall	203-245-1531
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
Board of Deacons Members*:	See Below
Clerk, Eileen McCann	203-623-9155
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

* Kate Summerlin 203-453-0700; * Sandy Dickson 203-421-1178; 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; Susan Kenney 203-530-1153

BOARDS/COMMITTEES/TEAMS

Board of Christian Ed Chair, Janice Wolf	203-809-0877
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 Contact, 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

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

